



ATFE

Association for
Theological Field Education

2017 ATFE Biennium

**HUMAN SEXUALITY AND THE
CHURCH**

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Human Sexuality and the Church

ATFE Break-out Session

January 2017

The Problem

- Churches aren't talking about sexuality
- We aren't teaching future ministers how to facilitate these conversations
- The Supreme Court was deliberating about same-sex unions
 - An affirmative ruling would raise the issue for churches in a new way

The Solution

- Design and propose an elective course on Human Sexuality and the Church
- To be developed during 2015-2016 sabbatical year
- Concurrently, the church where I attend decided to offer a 13 week Wednesday night series on Human Sexuality during the fall of 2015. My colleague Art Wright and I developed and co-taught this course. Our pastor largely sat back.
 - Pod casts are available at <http://tbcrichmond.org/tbc/communication/media/>
Look in the archives

Working Premises

- People need a safe place to discuss these issues
- Sexuality was created by God
- Four Ways to Read Scripture
 - As a Guidebook/Rulebook for Sexual Behavior
 - As an Artifact (“The Rules Don’t Apply Anymore”)
 - As a Narrative of Desire
 - As a Foundational Text

The Church Curriculum

- Week 1 – Intro, Ground Rules, Assumptions
- Week 2 – Culture and the Objectification of Women
- Weeks 3-6 – Scripture
 - 2 weeks OT
 - 2 weeks NT
- Week 7 – Biology
- Week 8 Healthy Sexual Relationships
- Week 9 – Talking to Children about Sexuality
- Week 10 Talking to Teens about Sexuality
- Week 11 – Difficult Conversations
- Week 12 – Dealing with Shame and Guilt
- Week 13 – Wrap Up

Results

- Participants grateful for safe place to discuss many issues
- Greatly informed the development of the seminary course
- Laid the ground work for Fall 2016 conversation about how and to what extent we will welcome persons of LGBT orientation into the life of our church

Seminary Course

- Week 1 – Assumptions
Contextualization/Objectification, Difficult conversations
- Week 2 – 3 Scripture
- Week 4 – Church history and current denominational positions
- Week 5 – Biology
- Week 6 - Homosexuality
- Week 7 – Healthy adult relationships
- Week 8 – Human trafficking, abuse, healing from guilt and shame
- Week 9 – Talking to Children and Teens
- Week 10 – Sexuality in Preaching and worship
- Week 11 – Professional Sexual Ethics

Major Course Assignments

- Theological Reflection on a Scripture text of their choice
- Book Review on a text from the bibliography
- Development of a 4-6 week curriculum related to an area of human sexuality
- Final paper on their own theology of human sexuality

Two Church Processes

- FBC Greenville SC
- TBC Richmond