



Sexual Abuse Statement Summary of Table Responses

We received 69 table responses. All overwhelmingly approved this statement. Many indicated it did not go far enough for various reasons, but all thought it was a good beginning for the work ahead.

Many participants at tables expressed that their congregations had already made many of the suggested changes because of sexual abuse cases in their own congregations.

For full discourse: I at one point thought I might have someone finish this summary due to the fact I myself had a daughter abused by a church leader, and this continues to affect our family. When I decided to go ahead, I decided to use a method of capturing recurring themes and calculating the percentage of times each theme was stated per table. This allowed me to be as objective as possible. It was not always clear if an individual made just one statement or several statements on the theme raised. So that is why I went per table, rather than every time a similar statement was made from the same table.

Thirty-three percent of tables expressed:

1. There needed more specific plans and clear accountability as to how the statement will be carried out. This included oversight, regular review of the statement, and making sure we are moving forward and keeping the statement current.

Twenty-eight percent of tables expressed:

1. Concerns for the perpetrator: how to integrate them back into the church and reconciliation.

Seventeen percent of tables expressed:

1. There needed to be a stronger tie to LGBTQ persons in the document.
2. Concerns regarding power: how we name it, how we talk about it, and seeing the direct link to sexual abuse.

Sixteen percent of tables expressed:

1. The need to be more explicit about sexism, patriarchy and gender roles. This could have been put together with power, but it was named explicitly. So I felt it should be put into its own category.

Twelve percent of tables expressed:

1. Concern for how we deal with people who have been wrongly accused. How is that addressed?

Ten percent of tables expressed:

1. The need to talk about and educate the church on the issue of pornography.
2. Concern of the cost of background checks and resistance in congregations to do them.

The concerns below received less than four to nine percent of similar responses from the table groups:

1. Surprised how prevalent sexual abuse was in our churches after hearing from people at their table.
2. Questions about what type of training, if any, exists for pastors, in our colleges, institutions and agencies. Also a few wondered if MEA should monitor the training in our educational institutions.
3. Some felt cutting the mic time was unfortunate. Did not allow the chance to incorporate some good ideas.

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