

A Message on . . .

COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

“**S**exual Exploitation in any situation, either personally or commercially, inside or outside legally contracted marriage, is sinful because it is destructive of God’s good gift [of sexuality] and human integrity.”¹

Commercial sexual exploitation is an organized form of this sinful behavior. It is especially demonic when it exploits children and youth. Commercial sexual exploitation is widespread throughout the United States and around the world, and it continues to grow. To a large extent, this exploitation remains hidden from public attention and ignored by church and society. It includes what customers do by:

- viewing pornographic videos
- downloading pornography from the Internet
- visiting strip clubs
- engaging in simulated sex by phone or computer
- using escort services
- participating in sex tourism

While customers may think they harm no one but themselves, the truth is that they are swept up in a sex system that degrades all participants, both providers and customers.

With this message, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hopes to raise awareness of the industry that sexually exploits vulnerable persons, principally women and girls, but also men and boys. It calls upon members to examine how this industry might affect their lives. The council urges members, congregations, synods, churchwide units, and affiliated agencies and institutions to renew their care and concern for children and youth, recognizing that there are those who prey upon young persons in their dependency and vulnerability. Love born of faith in Jesus Christ calls us all to attend to, discuss, resist, and change the system of commercial sexual exploitation.

The Sex System

Commercial sexual exploitation includes the businesses of prostitution, pornography, and stripping. Prostitution, the paradigm of these businesses, involves selling and buying sex on the streets, in brothels, massage parlors, saunas, bars, and through escort services. Pornography involves selling and buying demeaning sexual images in movies, videos, magazines, and on the Internet and cable television.² It includes phone sex, which is sometimes accompanied by live images on the seller's Web site. Stripping involves selling and buying live sexual performance in strip clubs, adult theaters, bars, peep show booths, and at private parties.

These businesses, all built on the exchange of some sexual activity for money (or some other form of remuneration), overlap and interlock, and together form the *sex system*.³ What drives those who operate the sex system is the desire to make money. Its product is sex, deemed to be simply another commodity to sell and buy. Persons who sell and buy the product are a means to make profit; their well-being is normally an incidental concern for those who profit from them.

To ensure demand for its product, the sex system strives to make its businesses attractive and accessible to its potential customers, almost entirely men and male youth. It appeals to their conflicted sexual desires with a variety of images of its "commodity": some paint a picture of glamorous, harmless, uncomplicated fun among consenting equals; others speak to the excitement of crossing forbidden boundaries, to becoming or being "a man," or to sexual addictions and aberrations (child pornography, pedophilia, bestiality, sadomasochism, orgies, and so forth). It offers a hierarchy of providers for different budgets. It provides videos for hotel rooms and call girls for the traveler, establishes its businesses near military bases, entices customers to distant, exotic lands for "sex tourism," and offers "mail-order brides" who often end up in prostitution or as personal sex slaves.⁴ The sex system makes its products known through ads in city and community newspapers, in the Yellow Pages®, sex guides, by flyers and word of mouth, and has found in the Internet an effective new tool for advertising. In a sex-saturated culture where the media celebrate casual sex, feature increasingly explicit sex scenes, and sell products through the allure of sexuality, the sex system thrives and flourishes.

Prostitution, pornography, and stripping are indeed huge and profitable businesses. People in the United States spend more on pornography, for example, than on movie tickets or on all the performing arts combined. The low estimate of \$10 billion paid for pornography annually makes it a bigger business than professional football, basketball, and baseball put together.⁵ Prostitution in the United States is estimated to be a \$14 billion business that serves 1.5 million customers a week.⁶

To fulfill the demand for commercial sex, the sex system has elaborate means to recruit and maintain providers for its businesses. Poverty and homelessness are its allies. Predators (“pimps,” “boy-friends,” and others) actively recruit vulnerable persons for prostitution by manipulating them through apparent kindness, deceit, threats, and cruelty. They especially target alienated or troubled young persons, who often are barely surviving after being thrown out of or having left their homes. Pimps maintain control over their (usually) women and girls by keeping them, often through violence, in an isolated social world of degrading dependency, moving them from city to city. Strip clubs often function as another entrance point into pornography and prostitution.⁷ Television talk shows serve the recruiting process by featuring women in the sex system who claim their stripping or “sex work” is attractive, profitable, and, of course, temporary employment.

Global sex trafficking is the largest source of recruits for the sex system. Anywhere from 700,000 to two million women and children are trafficked across national borders each year for prostitution.⁸ Among these are 50,000 trafficked into the United States annually, including 17,000 youth.⁹ Sex trafficking involves recruiting, harboring, buying, selling, and transporting persons into or within a country by force, deception, and inducement, in order to exploit them for commercial sexual purposes. Women and girls are almost exclusively the targets of this lucrative and fastest-growing criminal enterprise in the global economy.

Commercial sexual exploitation of youth and children is part and parcel of the sex system.¹⁰ Globally, two million girls and boys are forced or lured by broken promises into prostitution every year. 300,000 youth and children are thought to be in prostitution in the United States. Nine- and ten-year-olds are stolen from or sold by their poor families into sex trafficking in numerous countries and street children around the world survive by prostitution. Many

youth in the United States who trade sex for money begin when they are 14 years old or younger. Child pornography is sold on thousands of hidden Web sites originating in this and numerous other countries.¹¹

A Tangled Web

Even a glimpse of the sex system makes evident that this is not the way life is supposed to be. Sin is the proper term for speaking of what has gone profoundly wrong in God's good creation. Sin is an intruder in creation, resisting and distorting God's intention for human community. Sin is both personal and social. It finds a home deep in the human heart, turning us in on ourselves and away from God and others, and takes on a life of its own in our social structures.

Let us not blink at, gloss over, trivialize, or accommodate ourselves to the sinful evil of the sex system. It is social sin, a structure of evil that shapes and snares persons, and to which personal attitudes, decisions, and acts contribute. In its tangled web, we see the dynamics of sin at work.

Persons become objects to be used for the benefit of others. The sex system denies the human dignity bestowed by God on all. This denial is most blatant in sex trafficking, a form of slavery driven by greed in which captured persons become property, a mere extension of the will of the owner. Yet using persons as objects characterizes all parts of the system: For predators, owners, and managers of the system, "their" children and adults are instruments for generating income; for sellers, "johns" or buyers are objects for gaining money or favor with their pimps; and for customers, sellers are "pieces of meat" to satisfy their every want.

Sex turns into a commodity. The sex system corrupts God's wonderful gift of sexuality by reducing it to a marketable item. It rips sex out of the mutual relationships of trust, love, and equality intended by God and mocks the faithful, caring, life-long marital context for sexual intimacy. Those who sell sex use their bodies for sex they do not want, seeking only the money, gifts, drugs, or shelter they receive in payment. To survive they dissociate their business transactions from the rest of their identity. As their sexuality becomes a separate reality from who they are as persons, many face the threat of personal disintegration and its life-long effects.

Lust plays its role. The sex system creates the illusion of endless sexual opportunity. This system, which depends on the power of lust to move customers to purchase its products, does what it can to stimulate and manipulate this disordered desire, which is often bound up with emotional and relational problems. Sexual desire and appreciation for the beauty of the human body, part of the goodness of creation, bring joy and delight to human life. Sexual desire becomes lust when it breaks loose from our relationship with God and longs for fulfillment in the false god of sexual pleasure. Lust — an insatiable, unlimited desire to possess, to indulge, to take pleasure — enslaves and contributes to compulsive, addictive behavior.¹²

Persons dominate women and youth. The sex system uses women and girls, young men and boys, to pleasure chiefly men. Strip clubs, organized according to unequal gender power dynamics, elicit and require expressions of male domination and control of women, which society often encourages of men.¹³ Pimps and customers, even police at times, abuse, assault, and threaten women, girls, and boys in prostitution with violence and death, and take advantage of their vulnerabilities to subject them to domination. Those who pay usually dictate what sexual acts their provider must perform. Much of the sex system lives from and reinforces culture's deeply ingrained attitudes and power patterns that assume that women and children are not fully and equally human and are meant to be subservient to others. The sex system actualizes a world of exploiters and the exploited, often incorporating the exploitation of racism and social-economic class. Prostitution, it is said, is the world's oldest form of oppressing women. The same dynamic of oppression is at work when adults make young men and boys their hired sexual objects.

Deceit reigns. The sex system from beginning to end is built on deceit. God gives humans abilities to communicate in order to speak the truth and form community, but the sex system twists these abilities in order to beguile and trick. Predators, including sex traffickers, make false promises to, and create illusory futures for, their prospective women; women deceive their consumers about how pleasurable it is; and customers hide or lie about what they have done. Strippers dupe their viewers with an air of artificial enjoyment, and pornographic stars fake sexual pleasure. Escort services claim to offer only non-sexual dates, and illicit massage parlors claim to be health services.

Misery abounds. The sex system depends on and magnifies human misery. Sex traffickers buy and steal women and children from poor families with limited options, and pimps find likely prospects in girls who have been abused as children by their fathers or other relatives. The need to support drug or alcohol addictions leads many into prostitution; others later become addicted to cope with the emptiness of constantly selling themselves; but almost all are addicted to drugs or alcohol. Diseases — sexually transmitted and other physical, psychological, and spiritual ones — take their toll; early death — sometimes by murder, sometimes by suicide — is common. Forced retirement without pension comes early, and women without skills and possibly with a police record must fend for themselves. Families and loved ones of persons in the sex system experience untold suffering, and children of prostitutes suffer consequences from their mothers' involvement in this tangled web, often becoming a part of the sex system themselves. Men with emotional or relational problems who are drawn into the sex system often find that their false and momentary pleasure deepens their problems, pushes them further away from their families, and compounds their pain. The sex system is not “victimless.”

Evil masquerades as good. To do its evil, the sex system strives to look good. It tells itself and the world that it is only providing goods and services that consumers want. It is only promoting business transactions between consenting adults. There are abuses, it may admit, but they are marginal to the industry as a whole. Apologists try to make the case that their enterprises are “normal mainstream” businesses, insisting that all are entitled “to do their own thing.” In such ways the sex system weaves the threads of self-deception and self-justification into its tangled web of sin and evil.

Young persons and children cry out. The sex system irresistibly entraps youth and children, girls and boys. It does not rest content with exploiting adults' vulnerabilities, but also takes advantage of those of young age. Driven in part by the (false) belief that younger persons are less likely to have sexually transmittable diseases, it seeks out ever younger victims. All youth and children are gifts of God, dependent on parents and family for care and nurture and on society for protection as they grow into adulthood. Their sexual exploitation for profit reveals the demonic depth of the sex system.

Arenas for Action

Even as we recognize the destructive power of this human system, we yet sing with joy, “This is the feast of victory for our God. . . . For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.”¹⁴ The victorious love of a suffering God has overcome the “powers of this present darkness” (Ephesians 6:12). In our time, before God’s victory is fully manifest, our faith in the Lamb struggles against our indifference and cynicism and gives us hope and courage to act. We are to repent of our own complicity in this tangled web, whether that complicity be through active involvement in the sex system, lack of love for our youth, denial of its reality, neglect of its causes, or failure to act. We are called to expose the destructive dynamics of the sex system, tell of the victory, forgiveness, hope, and new life in Christ to all caught up in it, and to join with others to combat its evils.

This calling embraces all dimensions of life in society: personal character, family life, culture patterns, commerce, public policy, law and its enforcement, and social service and advocacy organizations. The sex system itself varies from place to place; some of its activities are illegal, and others are legal (which does not mean they are benign or morally acceptable). People in diverse places of responsibility bring distinct gifts to fight it. Equally committed people may disagree on what laws should be in place or what are the best measures to address prostitution, pornography, and stripping. In light of the scope and complexity of the action required, a multitude of creative and courageous responses are needed. The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America calls upon members, congregations, synods, churchwide units, and affiliated agencies and institutions to give serious consideration to what they should and can do. The following identifies some arenas to encourage reflection, discussion, and action.

Equip the Saints. May our action grow out of our faith as well as be informed by a comprehensive awareness of social evil. We esteem children and youth as God’s precious gifts to us, knowing that not only this is the right thing to do but also that it is the best way to keep them safe from the manipulative deceit of predators. We celebrate human sexuality as a gift from God, “created good for the purposes of expressing love and generating life, for mutual companionship and pleasure.”¹⁵ On the basis of this positive vision of sexuality, we teach the difference between loving sexuality and

sexual violence and exploitation. We teach a mutuality and respect between men and women that undercuts social dynamics of domination and submission. We attend to those who are exploited by caring for and empowering them, not by condemning and shunning them. We need to grasp how commercial sexual exploitation feeds upon global and domestic poverty, war, political and social turmoil, homelessness, child abuse and neglect, gender inequality and violence against women, racism, and related social ills against which this church has called for action, and to join with others to curb these ills.¹⁶

Find out what is happening in your community. Learn about the sex system locally, nationally, and globally. Read, consult studies available on the Internet, and invite police and other knowledgeable persons to talk in your congregation. Request persons who work with youth in prostitution to speak about the youths' life on the streets and in escort services. Discover how young persons are enticed into prostitution, whether in shopping malls or places where homeless youth hang out. Ask about the contributing factors that lead young persons into the tangled web of the sex system. Bring to light the evil that is too often hidden.

Prevent youth from becoming captives of the sex system. Members need to be aware that children in their churches and communities could be manipulated into the sex system. Prevention begins with a caring family and a nurturing congregation. It includes protecting children from abuse in their families and providing them safe and stable homes. Prevention involves teaching young persons about their marvelous bodies and how to set boundaries that others should not cross. Congregations have a part in assisting parents to talk about sex with their children. Our church's social ministry organizations¹⁷ may be a source for parental training and counseling with families and children, or a help in addressing problems of compulsive sexual behavior. Parents, congregations, and our day schools have a responsibility to make young persons aware in appropriate ways of the dangers posed by those who seek to entice them into the sex system and to teach them how to be as "wise as serpents" (Matthew 10:16). The Church Council commends the preventive work of A-STOP and encourages congregations to use its educational resources.¹⁸

Address the demand for what the sex industry offers. One way for congregations to do so is to provide safe settings for men and male youth to talk about their attitudes toward and struggles with prostitution, pornography, and stripping. In such settings they could explore together what makes them vulnerable to the lure of these activities, the false euphoria of a “sex high,” and the significance of loving and enduring relationships. Uncommon as such settings may be, they are vital if the baptized are going to find support in the Church to resist our culture’s ready acceptance of these practices. The Church Council urges congregations and men’s organizations to be pioneers in creating possibilities for this deliberation to occur.¹⁹

Explore the law’s role. Government has a God-given function to protect all persons, including children, from criminal acts through just, fairly-enforced laws. Strong and enforced laws intended to punish those who sexually exploit youth for commercial reasons are valuable instruments to hold these exploiters accountable and to ensure that there are consequences for their activity. Federal and state laws against child prostitution, child pornography, pimping, sex tourism, and sex trafficking need to be vigorously enforced. Local ordinances can be an effective way to regulate adult entertainment establishments. State and city laws relating to the sex system vary and often are difficult to enforce. Inquire about the legal situation in your locale, consider joining with advocacy organizations that address the issue, and support law enforcement agencies when they constitutionally crack down on predators. Investigate whether laws that target customers of prostitution and publicize their names in newspapers or post their pictures on the Web deter prostitution. Study whether the law provides for treatment programs for prostitutes and their clients in place of punishment, and ask about their effectiveness. This church’s state public policy offices are important resources for members in their efforts to make laws instruments to protect vulnerable persons.²⁰

Examine your spending and investments. Major corporations may profit from cable television pornographic networks, the availability of pornographic videos in hotel chains, and other products of the sex industry. After study of the relevant data, members may find themselves compelled to boycott or to divest from corporations whose earnings come from making, selling, and promoting these products.

Support social agencies that work with youth and adults who are in prostitution. Some agencies work with homeless youth to keep them from becoming trapped in the sex system; some offer a shower and a friendly hug to youth and women who sell sex to say that someone cares for them as persons; some provide support and a program for those who want to leave prostitution; and some advocate for shelter, health care, child care, and job training so that women and youth who are poor and prostituted may have new opportunities for a different future. Congregations should discover what social agencies offer in their communities and learn from and support them. Lutheran social ministry organizations are helpful resources for this search.

Curb sex trafficking. Because the grim realities of sex trafficking in distant lands and hidden places are all too easy for us to forget, the media have an indispensable, long-term calling to keep this contemporary form of slavery before us. The Church Council encourages synods and congregations to shed light on sex trafficking by learning from churches with whom they have a companion synod relationship or from ELCA missionaries serving in areas in which sex trafficking is active. This church supports international agreements and national laws to stop sex trafficking and calls for the will and the resources to enforce them. Because women and children who have been trafficked into the United States are victims of human rights violations, they should be given legal protection when they are discovered by authorities, not deported or detained.²¹ This church supports Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and Lutheran World Relief in their efforts to assist these victims in the United States and other parts of the world.²²

We tell of our new life in Christ when our congregations welcome in worship and befriend all whom Jesus defended when he said, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7). We do so when we offer hope in Christ to persons who have no hope, forgiveness to those who only know judgment. We do so when we pray for those who suffer because they are exploited, and, yes, for those who exploit others. We do so when God’s love sustains us when the task seems overwhelming. We make Christ known when we tell the powers of this age that their days are numbered because “the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.”

Implementing Resolutions

1. To adopt “Commercial Sexual Exploitation” as a message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
2. To direct the Division for Congregational Ministries, in cooperation with the Division for Church in Society, to prepare resource materials to facilitate discussion among men and male youth that address the meaning of their baptismal calling for their sexuality, especially in relation to prostitution, pornography, and stripping.
3. To direct the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in cooperation with this church’s Corporate Social Responsibility program, to be diligent in its review of investments in Social Purpose funds in light of the screen on pornography and to take appropriate action.

Endnotes

1. “Sex, Marriage, and Family” (Lutheran Church in America social statement, 1970), p. 4. “Among forms of exploitive sexual behavior against which Christians should be ready to work are those which: (a) exploit children and youth, men and women, as in pornography and prostitution.” From “Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior” (The American Lutheran Church social statement, 1980), p. 6. “A Message on Sexuality: Some Common Convictions,” adopted by the ELCA Church Council in 1996, names prostitution and pornography in a section titled, “Some Misuses of Sexuality.” This message also lists in the same section adultery, abuse, promiscuity, practices that spread sexually transmitted diseases, and sexuality in media and advertising, all of which are part of the commercial sexual exploitation of youth. The message introduces its list of misuses of sexuality by saying: “Sin violates what God intends for sexuality. It harms and demeans persons and relationships. This church opposes . . .” Pp. 5-7.
2. See “A Message on Sexuality,” which affirms that “Pornography is sinful because it depicts sexuality in ways that are violent and/or demeaning.” Ibid., p. 7. See also, “Pornography,” (The American Lutheran Church social statement, 1974, 1985), which includes a discussion on defining pornography; pp. 2-3.
3. Often “sex industry” is used to name what is here called “sex system.” “Sex system” is used to underscore that the often independent business enterprises that make up commercial sexual exploitation are linked together by common patterns of belief, attitude, and behavior. For information on the sex system, consult: Richard J. Estes and Neil

Alan Weiner, "The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Executive Summary (Of the U.S. National Study)," September 10, 2001 (<http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/csec.htm>); Anne Rasmusson, in collaboration with The Alliance for Speaking Truths on Prostitution (A-STOP) and The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Literature Review," (Unpublished manuscript, June 1, 1999, available through A-STOP, see endnote #18); Rita Nakashima Brock and Susan Brooks Thistlewaite, *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Coalition against Trafficking in Women, "Research Report: Sex Trafficking in the U.S." and "Factbook on Global Sexual Exploitation: United States of America," www.catwinternnational.org; Melissa Farley, "Prostitution: Factsheet on Human Rights Violations," Prostitution Research & Education, www.prostitutionresearch.com; "The Reality Is: How the Sex Industry Exploits Young People," available on video through A-STOP; "So Deep a Violence: Prostitution, Trafficking and the Global Sex Industry," a video distributed by Coalition against Trafficking in Women (2000), P.O. Box 9338, N. Amherst, MA 01059. See also the resources available at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (www.missingkids.org). See also the Web site of ECPAT-USA, an ecumenical organization, "End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes" (www.ecpatusa.org). Bibliographies may be found in Rasmusson and online at (www.a-stop.org). Rasmusson cautions about the limitations of our knowledge: "More is known about the volume and nature of shoplifting in the United States than about any specific offense relating to the sexual exploitation of children." P. 17.

4. "Just under 1.5 million hotel rooms, or about 40 percent of all hotel rooms in the nation, are equipped with television boxes that sell" sex films. The hotel industry estimates that at least half of all guests buy these adult movies, which "may generate about \$190 million a year in sales." Timothy Egan, "Technology Sent Wall Street into Market for Pornography," *New York Times*, October 23, 2000, pp. 1, 20. On sex tourism and how "militarization and organized prostitution are often closely linked," see "The Plight of Women and Children Forced into International Prostitution," approved by the 209th General Assembly (1997) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), pp. 2-3. In her review of literature, Rasmusson affirms the following: "The past 40 years have seen a clear trend toward the commercialization of sex within the tourist industry." "Sex tourism tends to emphasize the ready availability of young sexual partners in tourist resorts." "Many of the host nations exploit [sex tourism] as a vital component of national [economic] growth." "The main stimulus for sex tourism comes from customer demand." Pp. 19-21. A 1998 news story states that "the American mail-order bride industry has become a multi-million dollar business." Cited in "Factbook on Global Sexual Exploitation," *ibid.*, p. 5.
5. Frank Rich, "Naked Capitalists," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 20, 2001, p. 51. The \$10 billion estimate comes from a study from Forrester Research in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The buying or

selling of videos for home use amounts to \$4 billion, according to Egan, *ibid.* He notes: “Thirty years ago, a federal study put the total retail of hard-core pornography in the United States between \$5 million and \$10 million — or about the same amount that a single successful sex-related Web site brings in today.”

6. Genesis House, “Prostitution Fact Sheet,” p. 1. Genesis House, 911 West Addison Street, Chicago, Illinois 60613. See “A Message on Sexuality,” which states, “Prostitution is sinful because it involves the casual buying and selling of ‘sex,’ often in demeaning and exploitative ways.” *Ibid.*, p. 6.
7. David Sherman, “Testimony before the Michigan House Committee on Ethics and Constitutional Law,” January 12, 2000 (unpublished manuscript from The National Organization against Lewd Activities, NOALA), www.a-stop.org/david%20sherman%20II.html. Sherman, a former manager of various strip clubs, offers an insider’s view of these businesses.
8. The U.S. Department of State puts the number at 700,000. Secretary of State Colin Powell and others in remarks at a briefing, July 12, 2001, on the “Release of the 2001 Trafficking in Persons Report” (www.state.gov). Advocacy groups estimate that a larger number of women and children are involved and insist the number is growing. Rasmussen, *ibid.*, p. 17. See also “Trafficking in Women and Children: ‘A Contemporary Manifestation of Slavery,’” *Refugee Reports*, 21, 5 (Summer 2000). “According to [then] U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, trafficking is the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world and the third largest source of profits for international organized crime, behind only drugs and guns.” P. 3.
9. Amy O’Neill Richard, “International Trafficking in Women to the United States: A Contemporary Manifestation of Slavery and Organized Crime,” Center for the Study of Intelligence (November 1999), (www.cia.gov/csi/monograph/women/trafficking.pdf). The author cites Central Intelligence Agency briefing, *Global Trafficking in Women and Children: Assessing the Magnitude*, April, 1999, as the source for an estimated figure of 45,000 to 50,000 women and children. Estes and Weiner “estimate that at least 1/3 of these smuggled persons are 17 years of age or younger, i.e., 17,000 children,” p. 29.
10. Estes and Weiner find that the existence of adult prostitution “markets” is a major contributing factor to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. P. 6. Julia O’Connell Davidson notes: “Although some children are prostituted by and/or specifically for pedophiles and preferential abusers, the majority of the several million men who annually exploit prostitutes under 18 years of age are first and foremost *prostitute users* who become child sexual abusers through their prostitute use.” “The Sex Exploiter,” a working paper prepared for ECPAT for the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (www.childhub.ch).
11. The 2 million figure comes from The Protection Project, Johns Hopkins University (www.protectionproject.org). The 300,000 figure comes

from a 1996 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Rasmusson refers to studies that estimate the number of juvenile male prostitutes to be a significant percentage of the total, p. 23. Estes and Weiner write, "At least 95 per cent of all the commercial sex engaged in by boys is provided to adult males. Many of the adult male sexual exploiters of boys are married men with children." P. 38. Rasmusson also summarizes findings of the age of entry for female prostitutes; some found girl prostitutes as young as five or six. "How ever, most find that the vast majority of female teens selling their bodies falls between the ages of 15 and 17." Ibid., p. 26. A 1996 report in the *Christian Science Monitor* quoted an expert who said, "Girls involved in prostitution are increasingly getting younger, dropping from 14, to 13 and 12 years of age. Child prostitution in the United States began to escalate in the late 1980s after new laws made it more difficult for officials to detain runaway children." Cited in "Factbook on Global Sexual Exploitation," *ibid.*, p. 7. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, April, 1998, there are an estimated 5,000 Web sites on child pornography. Cited in "Factbook on Global Sexual Exploitation," *ibid.*, p. 27.

12. The causes of sexual addiction are complex and often include biological and psychological factors as well as spiritual ones. Medical attention often is needed to treat chemical imbalance, for example. Ted Peters links lust and addiction in his discussion of "Concupiscence: Lusting after What They Have," in *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 123-160. Reinhold Hütter writes, "Freedom as slavery to one's desires is the result of living without God's commandment against coveting. That commandment directs our desire to the First Commandment, the one source that can give all our desires their rest and fulfillment. The fulfillment of the First Commandment through faith opens us for the presence and the need of the neighbor." "The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics: Christian Freedom and God's Commandments," in *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*, edited by Karen L. Bloomquist and John R. Stumme (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p. 48.
13. See Kelly Holsopple, "Stripclubs According to Strippers: Exposing Workplace Sexual Violence," (1998), (www.catwinternnational.org).
14. "Holy Communion," *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978), p. 61.
15. "A Message on Sexuality," p. 1.
16. See "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All" (ELCA social statement, 1999); "For Peace in God's World" (ELCA social statement, 1995); "Homelessness: A Renewal of Commitment" (ELCA message, 1990); "A Message on Sexuality," *ibid.*; "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture" (ELCA social statement, 1993); "Violence against Women," (Churchwide Assembly Action CA95.7.62, 1995) (www.elca.org/dcs/elca_actions/ca95_7_62.html). Also, Mary Pellauer, "Lutheran Theology Facing Sexual and Domestic Violence" (ELCA Commission for Women, 1998).

17. For information on the nearest ELCA social ministry organization having such programs, call Lutheran Services in America (LSA), 800-664-3838. You may visit LSA online (www.lutheranservices.org).
18. A-STOP, or Alliance for Speaking Truth on Prostitution, is a coalition of concerned citizens, directed by the Rev. Al Erickson, an ELCA pastor, to educate about and to prevent prostitution. Its “Wise as Serpents: A Christian resource to develop street-smart youth” is a six-session course for grades 7, 8, and 9. It also publishes a newsletter, “The Stop Light.” Some synodical organizations of the Women of the ELCA collaborate with A-STOP. For more information, contact A-STOP, 1901 Portland Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404; 612-872-0684; a-stop@honeycomb.net or visit its Web site at (www.a-stop.org).
19. There are few studies on men who use prostitutes. One study, based on research done in relation to a treatment program for men arrested for prostitution, found, contrary to a common stereotype, that most men thought prostitution was wrong. This finding of internal conflict regarding beliefs and behavior suggests that discussion by men of the sex system would need to deal with more than sexuality. Steven Sawyer, B. R. Simon Rosser, and Audrey Schroeder, “A Brief Psychoeducational Program for Men Who Patronize Prostitutes,” *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 26, 3/4 (1998), 111-125.
20. For information on how to contact your state’s ELCA public policy office, call your synod office or go to (www.elca.org/dcs/state.html).
21. “The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000” does this, making certified adults and persons under 18 “eligible for benefits and services to the same extent as refugees.”
22. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) has begun a Trafficked Children Initiative, which will focus on the policy, programming, and public education needs of children trafficked into the United States for sexual and other types of exploitation. LIRS can be contacted at Children’s Services, 700 Light Street, Baltimore, MD 21230 (lirs@lirs.org; 410/230-2700; and at www.lirs.org). Lutheran World Relief (LWR) supports programs that provide safe shelter, medical care, and psycho-social support for trafficked women. LWR is part of a coalition that does advocacy work on human trafficking (see www.womensedge.org/development/gains/trafficking.htm). LWR can be contacted at the same Baltimore address and phone number (lwr@lwr.org; www.lwr.org).

ISBN 6-0001-6286-3

For a partial listing of Web resources on commercial sexual exploitation of youth and for online discussion of this message, go the Division for Church in Society's Web page, *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* (www.elca.org/jle).

Copyright © 2001 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Produced by the Department for Studies of the Division for Church in Society, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois, 60631-4190.

Permission is granted to reproduce this document as needed providing each copy displays the copyright as printed above.

Scriptural quotations from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* are copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America and are used by permission.

Distributed on behalf of the Division for Church in Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by Augsburg Fortress, Publishers.

ISBN 6-0001-6286-3

Printed on recycled paper with soy-based inks in the United States of America.

This document is available in its entirety for free download at www.elca.org/dcs/commercial_sexual_exploitation.html.

Ordering Information

Copies of this message are available for 10¢ (plus shipping and handling) from: ELCA Distribution Service (800-328-4648, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN, 55440-1209). Single, complimentary copies may be obtained by calling 800-638-3522 ext. 2996. A Spanish translation of this statement is available using the same information. Find this and all the ELCA statements and messages online at www.elca.org/dcs/studies.html.

