



Objective 3.1: Proclaim the dignity of all women in the Church

Pastoral Center Action Steps 1995-96:

- 3.1.1. Establish an interdisciplinary Pastoral Center team, including at least one representative from the Women's Commission. The team will be convened initially by a designee of the Bishop and will have a designated leader. It will coordinate implementation of Goal 3 Action Steps
- 3.1.2. Provide models of collaborative ministry training at all levels of the diocesan Church; train diocesan/parish staff and lay leaders by June, 1996
- 3.1.3. Delegate to the Women's Commission the development of models for forums on issues of concern to women. These models may be used by parishes or regions to promote ongoing dialogue on such issues
- 3.1.4. By July 1996, develop diocesan guidelines and resources for inclusive language in all communications, including homilies, bulletins and correspondence
- 3.1.5. Initiate programs that explore sexism within the Church (*see Action Step 1.1.2.*)
- 3.1.6. Provide orientation and annual training to professional ministers regarding women's issues, including referral resources for women in crisis
- 3.1.7. Promote active participation of women in liturgical ministries wherever permissible
- 3.1.8. Promote active in personnel policies, procedures, compensation and funding for training in ministry

Parish Action Steps 1995-96: (*currently under consideration by each parish*)

Objective 3.2: Address women's issues in society

Action Steps 1995-96:

- 3.2.1. Develop regional programs that enhance family life in all its forms (parenting skills, support to single parent/blended families, marriage enrichment, etc.). Examine practices throughout the diocesan Church for their sensitivity to families and family issues
- 3.2.2. Develop educational opportunities and resources on women's issues for all persons in the faith community (gender bias, violence toward women, feminization of poverty, etc.) (*see Action Step 1.1.2.*)
- 3.2.3. Advocate for public policies that address critical issues affecting women (elder care, child care, domestic violence, employment, health care, etc.) (*see Obj. 2.3*)

Parish Action Steps 1995-96: (*currently under consideration by each parish*)

3.1.1. Parish responses to the Draft Plan stressed the importance of identifying responsibility for implementation of Goal 3. Since implementation of this Goal will require a variety of experience and expertise, coordination will best be accomplished by a cross-ministry team

3.1.2. "Collaborative ministry" is the mutual recognition of gifts and the ability to utilize them in a ministry setting

GOAL 4

There was overwhelming agreement on the parish survey responses that the essential elements of the Small Christian Community include:

- ❖ Prayer
- ❖ Mutual Support
- ❖ Scripture
- ❖ Faith Sharing
- ❖ Service

SOME HISTORY: The SCC movement began in the 1960s in the poor and isolated rural communities of Latin America. Because of the great numbers of faithful and the extreme shortage of priests in many areas, the Eucharist would be celebrated rarely, perhaps only on the most special feasts. Out of a need to keep their faith alive, the people organized into small groups where stories of the gospel could be shared. In 1968, the Latin American Bishops gathered for a conference in the city of Medellin. At that conference, the Small Christian Community movement was identified as the "hope of the Church." This attention sparked the spread of the movement throughout all of Central and South America and eventually to the North American church.

THE CHURCH TODAY: "A rapidly growing phenomenon in the young churches...is that of 'ecclesial basic communities'...These communities decentralize and organize the parish community, to which they always remain united. They...become a leaven of Christian life, of care for the poor and neglected, and of commitment to the transformation of society. Within them, the individual Christian experiences community and therefore senses that he or she is playing an active role and is encouraged to share in the common task. Thus, these communities become a means of evangelization and of the initial proclamation of the gospel and a source of new ministries. At the same time, by being imbued in Christ's love, they also show how divisions...and racism can be overcome." John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, December 7, 1990.

Goal 4: Promote the growth of Small Christian communities (SCCs)

Rationale:

Parishes and existing SCCs will be the focal points of implementation. It will happen in different ways in each place. The Objective and Action Steps are designed to establish a support structure for these groups. We seek to gather a network of existing communities which will both support one another and spread the SCC movement.



Objective 4.1: Develop SCCs by establishing a resource center, providing training, and forming a network of communities

Pastoral Center Action Steps 1995-96:

- 4.1.1. Reallocate part of an existing Pastoral Center staff member's time to gather and maintain information, serve as resource to parishes/faith communities and support the development of the SCC network
- 4.1.2. Create a network that coordinates and promotes the development of SCCs throughout the diocese. Identify and support leaders in each area as contacts to the network who share information and success stories
- 4.1.3. Train leaders in methodology of SCCs; offer short on-going seminars/workshops for growth/support/renewal
- 4.1.4. Collect materials and resources, making them available and accessible throughout the diocese
- 4.1.5. By July 1995, design workshops that can be offered in parishes to promote the introduction of SCCs
- 4.1.6. Gather the SCCs yearly for communication and self-evaluation

Parish Action Steps 1995-96: (*currently under consideration by each parish*)