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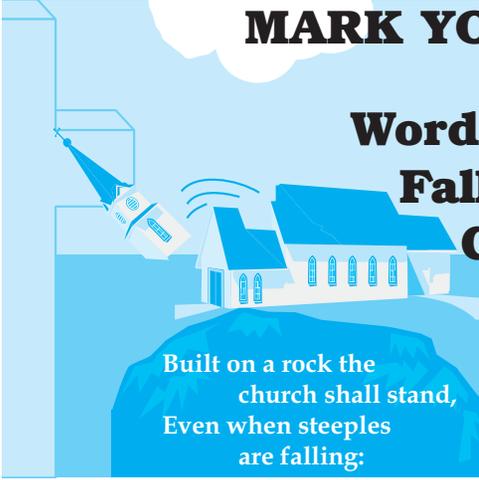
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NETWORK NEWS



Volume 9, Issue 5

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2008



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!
for the
**WordAlone Network
Fall Theological
Conference**

Nov. 9-11
**Redeemer Lutheran
Church**
Fridley, Minn.

Built on a rock the church shall stand,
Even when steeples are falling:

A different gospel—Christianity at risk

Many observers, some leaders and even official task forces acknowledge that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a denomination deeply divided over full communion agreements, sexuality and interpretation of the Bible. Though serious divisions, they are on the surface. Beneath them lies a much deeper division – the proclamation of a gospel other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

WordAlone's 2008 fall theological conference and speakers will examine in depth the different gospel being proclaimed in the ELCA and other denominations and contrast it with the true Gospel. The different gospel is cloaked in biblical language –

“God is love.” However, in many ways it denies the basic truths proclaimed in the Bible and ecumenical creeds.

Keynote speakers will be retired Episcopal Bishop C. FitzSimons Allison and Pastor Scott Grorud of Faith Lutheran in Hutchinson, Minn. Allison has served as a rector in a parish, as a professor, and has been an author and essayist. He was bishop of the South Carolina Diocese from 1980 to 1990. Grorud serves on the WordAlone Board of Directors and the Steering Committee of Lutheran CORE.

Registration materials have been mailed or are available online at www.wordalone.org or by calling 888 551-7254. ♦

SAVE THE DATES!!

2008 synod assemblies fire early volleys on same-sex issues expected at 2009 CWA

by Betsy Carlson, editor

Ordination of persons in homosexual relationships and blessing such relationships in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America came up during at least three synod assemblies this spring and early summer, possibly setting the stage for a showdown at the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly on the denomination's stand on homosexual behavior.

ELCA assemblies have been arguing about such issues regularly since 2001 and earlier than that in some synods. A task force on sexuality is expected to make recommendations to the 2009 churchwide assembly on the issues of blessing homosexual relationships and allowing persons in such relationships to be ministers in the ELCA.

According to reports on their web sites, the Saint Paul Area Synod, Minnesota, and the Northwest Washington Synod assemblies each approved resolutions, also known as memorials, asking the ELCA Church Council to begin processes to "develop resources" for pastoral care of "same-gender couples" or collect services of "blessing the union of a same-gender couple" respectively.

The Saint Paul Area Synod resolution, while using the language of providing "pastoral care," which was similar to a 1993 Conference of Bishops pastoral statement against the blessing of homosexual relationships, made it clear that this pastoral care was meant to involve "witnessing or affirming their [a homosexual couple's] promises of lifelong fidelity, and by invoking God's guidance and offering the congregation's support as they fulfill these promises."

In addition the Saint Paul synod assembly voted to ask the churchwide council to recommend to the 2009 churchwide assembly changes in ordination and discipline stan-

dards, known as "Vision and Expectations" and "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," to allow ministers and pastors

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An open letter

to the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality and the ELCA Church Council and Conference of Bishops

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — both pastors and lay people — we care deeply about the life and ministry of the ELCA. Because of our commitment to Christ and the Church, we cannot support the adoption of **Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality** in its current form. We respectfully request that the social statement that you recommend to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly be significantly different from the current text.

We are grateful for the members of the task force who have given themselves to this difficult work for the sake of the church. We realize that very different theological perspectives on human sexuality are represented on the task force and are present in the ELCA. Coming to agreement on language that would be acceptable to all must have been difficult. However, as a document that will provide teaching and policy for the ELCA for years to come, a social statement on human sexuality must be more than acceptable, it must be faithful to the consistent witness of Scripture on human sexuality.

We are very supportive of portions of **Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality**. We support the affirmation of marriage as a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between one man and one woman and as the most appropriate place for physical intimacy. We appreciate the concern expressed about cohabitation, promiscuity, premarital sex and our sexualized society and its many victims. We support the call for pastoral care and compassion for all people.

The ELCA Confession of Faith states: "This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation,

faith, and life" (ELCA Constitution 2.03). However, **Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality** distances us from our biblical heritage. We ask that you allow Scripture to be the source of the statement's teaching on sexuality by moving clearly from biblical interpretation to practical application in dealing with issues of marriage, family and sexuality. We also ask that you allow Scripture to be the norm of the statement's teaching on sexuality by clearly affirming biblical norms for sexuality and sexual behavior.

Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality confuses the role of Law and Gospel in addressing human sexuality. A social statement naturally flows from the law. It describes God's intention for us and for society. God uses the law both to order the world and to reveal our sinfulness. The Lutheran tradition places sexuality within the doctrines of creation and the law. The draft attempts to place sexuality within the saving work of Christ, the Gospel. Incarnation and justification are key to understanding salvation, but creation and God's law shape Christian understandings of sexuality and ethics. God uses Christ's birth, death and resurrection to provide salvation, but God uses creation and the law — including Jesus' own teaching — to reveal God's intentions for sexual morality. We ask that you affirm human sexuality as a part of God's created order for the world and affirm marriage as God's intention for humanity "from the beginning of creation" (Mark 10:6-9, Genesis 2:24). We also ask that you affirm the role of the Ten Commandments in sexual ethics, especially the Sixth Commandment. We recommend that you rewrite the theological foundation for discussing sexuality in a way that acknowledges the role of God in shaping

(Continues on page four)

creation and the role of God's law in ordering society.

Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality rightly affirms that we are justified by grace through faith. We ask that the social statement you present in 2009 affirm that all are sinners who are justified by grace through faith but also recognize that God justifies sinners rather than justifying sins. We also request that you note the difference between forgiveness and acceptance. God forgives sinners and accepts them, but God's acceptance of sinners does not mean that God accepts sins. We request that you maintain the relationship and order of the two great commandments from Jesus: love for God and love for neighbor (Mark 12:29-31).

Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality fails to acknowledge the Scriptural prohibitions of homosexual behavior in both Old Testament and New Testament. It also fails to recognize the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly decision to "continue to respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops" which clearly stated that "there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship." We respectfully request that you acknowledge both the teaching of Scripture and the content of Christian tradition regarding homosexual behavior.

Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality does not provide a helpful framework for members of the ELCA to consider areas of human sexuality. ELCA social statements are to provide a framework for ethical decision making by ELCA members. They must be written in a way that most church members can understand and apply to their lives. The 1996 ELCA Church Council Message **Sexuality: Some Common Convictions** is much more helpful. The 1996 message and the social statements of the ELCA's predecessor churches explain matters of sexuality in a way that is both easy to understand and faithful. The ELCA would do better to continue to rely on these existing documents than to adopt

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'God's Reluctant Leaders'

"What ... send me, Lord?" The call of the Lord often catches us by surprise. Even some of the greatest figures in Scripture had to learn what it meant to be a servant of God, before they understood what it meant to be a leader.

This nine-session Bible study and leader's guide were written by Rev. Lisa Lewton for use by women's groups and small group fellowships. The Lord's Prayer is also now available in the Luther's Small Cat Series for children.

See solapublishing.org for more information or order from the WordAlone office at 888-551-7254.

the current draft. We suggest that you draw on these documents in significant ways in drafting the social statement that you will recommend in 2009. We ask that you draw content for the statement more directly from traditional Christian interpretation of Scripture and the Christian moral tradition. We offer this response to **Draft Statement on Human Sexuality** because of our commitment to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We will continue to pray for the ELCA and for you as you work to draft a social statement on human sexuality that is faithful to Scripture and to traditional Christian interpretations of Scripture and that will guide the ELCA and its members for years to come.

Signed (individually by members of)

Lutheran CORE Steering Committee

Lutheran CORE Advisory Council

ELCA members are invited to add their names to this open letter. You may request that your name be added to this open letter by sending an e-mail with your name and address to info@lutheran-core.org. You may also send your request to: Lutheran CORE; 2299 Palmer Drive, Suite 220; New Brighton, MN 55112.

The names of signers to the open letter are posted at www.lutheran-core.org/open-letter-subscribers.shtml. ♦



Critical observations on use of Scripture in draft statement on human sexuality

by Rev. Dr. Stephen Hultgren (assistant professor of theology, Fordham University, New York, N.Y.)

(Editor's note: This document is offered as a resource for discussion of the Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality. It may be cited, reproduced and shared with others. Hultgren also has written an open letter to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Task Force for Studies of Sexuality, bishops of the ELCA and the ELCA Church Council. It is posted at <http://www.wordalone.org/pdf/S-Hultgren-letter.pdf>)

Following are some of my critical observations on the use of Scripture in the statement, which was released by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- One might reasonably expect that in a **Lutheran** statement on human sexuality there would be copious references to what Scripture has to say specifically about various aspects of human sexuality—such as marriage, divorce, adultery, incest, prostitution, fornication, homosexuality and so forth—followed by deep theological reflection. In fact, however, the statement makes no reference at all to Scriptural statements regarding any of these topics except marriage. Therefore one cannot agree when the statement claims that "it taps the deep roots of Scripture" (line 30 of the draft statement). On the contrary, one can hardly avoid the conclusion that the statement was drafted in such a way as to exclude Scripture's specific statements about human sexuality. It is as though what Scripture has to say on these matters is of no relevance.

- Astonishingly, when the statement does cite the biblical account of creation and marriage, it is not in support of biblical teaching on marriage, but, implicitly,

against it. Genesis 1:27 is used to affirm the "basic equality of all people. In terms of sexual relations, this image of God...stands against all forms of discrimination..." (lines 358-361). The citation of Galatians 3:28 ("there is no longer male and female") in connection with Gen. 1:27 (line 361) is presumably intended to militate against the biblical pattern of creation and marriage (Gen. 1:27: "male and female he created them"). In the same way, in lines 341-347, 1 Corinthians 15:49 is cited against Gen. 1:26 and suggests that the biblical pattern of creation and marriage is no longer relevant to Christians. All of this (mis)leads the reader to the conclusion that the real point of Gen. 1:27 is not that heterosexual marriage is God's will but that humanity's creation in the image of God prohibits discrimination, that is, we must accept alternative forms of ordering human sexuality.

That is an abuse of Scripture. Jesus and Paul both affirm the biblical teaching on marriage (Mark 10:2-9; 1 Cor 7:9). Their eschatological outlook led them to value highly celibacy in the single life (Matthew 19:10-12; 1 Cor. 7:8, 40) but not to call into question the biblical pattern of marriage. In lines 438-443 the creation accounts are not used to affirm a biblical understanding of marriage but for an undifferentiated celebration of human sexuality. That too is problematic, because it sacrifices Scripture's clarity on the matter of marriage for the sake of an unclear, abstract celebration of human sexuality in general.

- The statement seeks to ground human sexuality in Christian freedom, with appeal

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to the apostle Paul (lines 175-185). But the statement ignores Scripture's own admonitions that freedom that is not disciplined by obedience to divine authority leads to corruption and loss of true freedom (2 Peter 2:19-21; 3:15-16). 2 Pet. 3:15-16 is a needed warning to the church that the attempt to establish a sexual ethic on Christian freedom is a misunderstanding of Paul and leads to "destruction." A genuinely biblical and Christian sexual ethic cannot be grounded primarily in Christian freedom.

- Not surprisingly, therefore, the voice of the Old Testament **law** is muted in the statement. Although there are brief mentions of the **law** as a guide to Christian life (59-60, 142-44, 266-69, 402-03, footnote 8), that theme is allowed little or no expression when it comes to discussion of specific matters of human sexuality. Lines 411-412, along with footnote 19, theoretically reject antinomianism [false teaching that those saved by grace are not subject to the **law**], and yet the law's specific guidance in matters of human sexuality is not allowed a voice.

- There is also a failure to properly correlate the Old and the New Testaments, and to properly correlate Law and Gospel. The statement fails to recognize that the apostolic church reaffirmed the Old Testament's teachings on human sexuality, so that the Gospel does not negate the Law. This applies alike to marriage, homosexual activity, incest and adultery (Matt 19:3-12; Acts 15:20, 29; 1 Cor. 5:1-8; 6:9; Gal. 5:19; among many other texts). It is an abuse of the Lutheran Law-Gospel dialectic to allow the Gospel to abolish the Law without regard for the way that Scripture itself correlates Law and Gospel.

- The statement runs the risk of confusing ecclesial discipline with discrimination. The church has explicit Scriptural authority to exercise internal moral discipline (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-8). That is neither discrimination nor unjust treatment. Therefore one would need further clarification about what constitutes "just treatment" before

one could agree to the declaration that "[t]his church must also attend to the cry for...just treatment within...the ELCA by those with varied sexual identities" (lines 1265-1267). Troubling also is the declaration that "the mission and ministry of congregations should be visibly open to all, including single adults, cohabiting adults, adults approaching marriage, families undergoing dissolution, blended families and same-sex couples" (1394-1397). Do these declarations entail acceptance of any kind of lifestyle without regard for the norms of Scripture? Do they commit the church to foregoing ecclesial discipline of any kind?

- Although the statement purports to work within a Trinitarian framework (lines 55, 438), the statement in fact disintegrates the integral work of the one, Triune God in creation, redemption and sanctification. Redemption is set against creation (see the second bullet point). Sanctification is neglected completely. So, for example, when the work of the Holy Spirit is discussed (lines 295-98, 305-08), there is no mention of God's sanctifying work. But Scripture clearly regards God's sanctifying work as relevant to human sexuality: "Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:18-20). Note the integrity of creation, redemption and sanctification in Paul's statement: Your body is not your own, for you were redeemed by God at the price of Christ's death, so that you could be delivered from sin and restored to God your creator (cf. Rom. 8:21-23). Therefore your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (sanctification). See also 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5: "This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication, that each of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, like the gentiles who do not know God." ♦

Issues concerning homosexual behaviors remain prominent among mainline churches

by Betsy Carlson, editor

United Methodist reformers remain vigilant in opposing efforts to liberalize church standards on homosexual behavior.

The Presbyterian Church USA reformers, though weary, are keeping up the good fight against allowing ordination of practicing homosexuals.

Traditional, orthodox Anglicans are taking action.

Orthodox Anglicans in North America and leaders of several Anglican provinces located south of the Equator started an "alternate" fellowship within the worldwide Anglican Communion in London at the first meeting of the GAFCON Primates Council August 20 to 22.

The global south primates, archbishops and bishops who lead provinces, also established an advisory board, a secretariat and the "laid the basis for the future work of both the council and the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans," reported a communiqué from the meeting.

GAFCON organized in July at a meeting called Global Anglican Future Conference in Jerusalem. It was attended by 1,200 representatives, including 303 bishops representing more than 70 percent of the members of the Anglican Communion, according to David Virtue of Virtue Online. Virtue Online describes itself as the voice for global orthodox Anglicanism.

Virtue called GAFCON's formation a "momentous decision, the likes of which we have not seen in 500 years of Anglican history."

In their communiqué from the primates council first meeting, the GAFCON leaders wrote: "We maintain that three new facts of the Anglican Communion must be faced. We are past the time they can be reversed."

The three facts listed were: some Anglicans have sanctified sinful practices (homosexual behavior); orthodox churches and even

dioceses affected by such disobedience have withdrawn from their territorial provinces and come under the authority of likeminded provinces (border-crossing); there is widespread and broken "sacramental communion" among global Anglicans.

"The hope that we may somehow return to the state of affairs before 2003 is an illusion," according to the communiqué.

In 2003, The Episcopal Church consecrated Gene Robinson, a homosexual man in a relationship with another man, as bishop of New Hampshire. The resulting uproar immediately resulted in several leaders of global south provinces to declare impaired or broken fellowship with the church in the U.S.A.

The Anglican Church of Canada has been dealing with priests and dioceses that are doing and allowing the blessing of same-sex relationships respectively.

In the past five years, the Anglican Communion has called at least four meetings to attempt to resolve the impasse that developed. Some of the sessions called for moratoria on ordaining any more homosexual bishops, on leaving the North American provinces, on suing parishes for their property as they left, on border-crossing and on blessing same-sex relationships.

The most recent call for moratoria came from the Lambeth Conference held in early August at Canterbury and from Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury. Lambeth is a meeting of all bishops once every 10 years. Many of the global south bishops stayed away this year, which was described as a meeting for fellowship and for discussion on controversial issues.

But, leaders from both sides of the issue have already stated they will not abide by all the moratoria.

In fact, GAFCON leaders have said they respect the historic nature of the

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(‘Issues...’ Continues from page seven)

Canterbury See, but they do not accept that Anglican identity is determined necessarily through recognition of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In another mainline Protestant church, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA argued last June over the definition of marriage and made “an end run” to eliminate behavioral standards for ministers and church leaders.

The general assembly used a ruling called a “supplementary authoritative interpretation” of the “Book of Order,” effective immediately, to allow ordinations of persons in violation of church standards, including fidelity in marriage and chastity in singleness, by “scrupling” or a declaration of conscientious objection, says a report by the group Presbyterians for Reform.

Sylvia Dooling, an elder commissioner, is reported by the church’s news service as saying that issuing such an authoritative interpretation is “an end run around presbyteries that would in effect give us ‘local option’ rather than to be held to constitutional standards for ordination.”

The assembly proposed a constitutional amendment to remove any references to ordination standards, including sexual behavior from the Presbyterian Church USA constitution. This proposed amendment requires approval of presbyteries (district governing units).

Similar amendments were defeated by the presbyteries in 1997 and 2000.

In response to this year’s conference actions, Presbyterians for Renewal is talking about beginning a “formally distinct” but “engaged” body without a “formal split in the denomination.”

The Presbyterian Lay Committee posted online tactics for opposing changes in sexual ethics through authoritative interpretations or constitutional changes. Strategies include churches forming alliances, sending contributions only to ministries trusted by the congregation and preparing to defend property rights against claims of ownership by the PCUSA.

Terry Schloss expressed weariness over constitutional and interpretive battles. She is former executive director of The Presbyterian Coalition and now coordinator of coalition efforts to defeat the latest proposed constitutional amendment.

“Our greatest challenge in facing this proposed amendment and reversing the actions of the General Assembly is weariness,” Schloss wrote online for the Presbyterian Coalition. “But friends, ‘let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.’ Galatians 6:9”

Apparently not as affected by battle fatigue from reportedly heated discussions of sexual ethics, this April’s United Methodist General Conference voted to retain language in the denomination’s “2004 Book of Discipline” that described homosexual practice as “incompatible with Christian teaching,” the United Methodist News Service reported.

As the Presbyterian General Assembly had, the general conference also voted to retain the definition of marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman.

The conference approved presenting a proposed constitutional change to annual geographical conferences for consideration. The change would delete standards for acceptance for potential church members.

Dr. Bill Bouknight, a retired United Methodist minister and a reformer reflected on last spring’s general conference of his worldwide denomination. He wrote that the conference did not “overtly” contradict “clear biblical directives but it took us to the edge of that precipice” about homosexual behavior and the authority of the Bible.

He wrote in the May/June issue of *We Confess*, a newsletter of The Confessing Movement within the United Methodist Church, “The net effect of this change would be to nullify any pre-requisite standards for membership. The struggle for Methodism’s soul revolves around homosexuality. And underneath that presenting issue is a more fundamental one—the authority of Holy Scripture.” ♦

Draft statement on human sexuality???

Read the endnotes first!

by Betsy Carlson, editor

“The emperor has no clothes,” said the little boy.

The draft social statement on human sexuality has a strange looking theological foundation! It seems to build, by inference and in ambiguity, toward approving “committed same-sex relationships” by throwing out tried and true wisdom and Scripture.

The draft statement offers the incarnation of Christ and justification of humankind as the basis for the sexuality discussion, focusing on mercy and compassion.

Luther’s teaching that we are simultaneously saints and sinners is used to neatly tie up what looks to me as a “sin-no sin” package in lines 156-157 by stating, “Knowing that we can do nothing to bring about our own salvation, Lutherans reject the notion that we can perfect either ourselves or society.”

I respond, “Is this rationalizing so that homosexuals in ‘committed partnerships’ can continue sinning because mercy and compassion encourage and call forth a response of love?”

And cynically, I add, “Then why bother to work on social justice issues such as sexual exploitation or poverty if we can’t ‘perfect’ society?”

More importantly, I believe, what about changed lives through repentance in response to God’s love and sanctification by the Holy Spirit?

But the most pertinent reading is in the “endnotes.” Who reads those? Editors? So, if you missed them, I’ll quote from note 6:

Justification and incarnation provide the theological framework for this discussion of human sexuality. This may surprise some, but because sin has intervened, Christians cannot ground their understanding of sexuality in

nature or creation itself.

Is this subliminally telling us that we can’t define “committed partnerships” as only between one man and one woman because we can’t go back to the creation account in Genesis where God created Adam and Eve, man and woman? My reaction is, colloquially, “Sez who?”

EDITORIAL

Back to the endnotes, still number 6:

Lutheran discussions of sexuality have sometimes employed other theological categories as their primary framework. For example, “orders of creation” has been one of the most common, often used in tandem with a static biological understanding of “natural law.”... Gottkueb Christoph Adolf von HarleB...who proposed this term to highlight the provisional nature of human social arrangements. Later, it was linked to a static notion of creation and the idea of “orders” became fixed as one-time acts of God in the past. They indicated the establishing of human society in a hierarchy of fixed and final social arrangements. On this basis many in the church once objected to the democratic revolutions of modern times on the ground of the divine right of kings.

The concept of “orderings” assumed here is dynamic and provisional. It understands the orders of creation, or better, “orderings of preservation,” as subject to God’s ongoing creative activity. They are discussed, therefore, under the rubric of hope and the entire discussion of sexuality is grounded by justification and incarnation as the theological framework.

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Hmmmmmmmmmm? Sez who?

And, why not put it in the main body of the draft statement? This was a major change of foundational assumptions.

Basing the draft statement’s ethics of human sexuality on justification and incarnation was a huge change—from what I’ve been told by pastors who base their ethics of human sexuality on creation, the Old Testament and the Gospels. Introducing a change of this magnitude into the document’s endnotes seems hidden, maybe covert, or at least not “up front.”

More so, in this discussion of Lutheran sexual ethics, to whom is the change of focus onto justification and incarnation attributed?

Besides that, I don’t see the logic of basing sexual ethics on the incarnation and justification. For one thing, Jesus was born of a virgin by the action of the Holy Spirit, Matthew 1:18-24.

Ah, turning the argument to say that God is doing something new in our time so we can dispense with teachings and guides that were old-fashioned, out of style or “static”?

The buzzwords for new standards? “Dynamic and provisional” and “subject to God’s ongoing creative activity.”

In my understanding of God, He doesn’t change. I would expect that in his timelessness, He has “seen it all,” good and bad. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever”—Hebrews 13:8. Since Jesus is the Word that was with God before all time, then God’s Word hasn’t changed.

I simply don’t believe God is doing something new in our day in all the changes we are seeing in society concerning sexual expression and behaviors. And I doubt very much that persons advocating for committed same-sex relationships have come up with a lifestyle that God didn’t already see and reject.

Yes, societal norms have been challenged,

ridiculed and overrun by the “sexual revolution” that started in the late 1960s. But I don’t assume that all of its fruits, or any of the fruits, are due to God’s “ongoing creative activity.”

In this time of gender confusion and sexual immorality, it is all the more important to turn to the Church’s long held reliance on the Bible as the foundation of the ethics of human sexuality.

I regret profoundly that the task force, which wrote the draft statement, did not include quotes from the tried and true Scriptures that address sexual sins, or even speak to those verses. For instance from Romans 1:

vv. 18-21 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

vv. 24-25 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

It doesn’t get much clearer than in Romans 1:26-27 to read how God looks at same-sex activities. As a matter of fact, the whole of first chapter of Romans is worth reading. ♦

Lutheran Clergy Connect

Clergy Connect is a way for churches seeking a pastor or other leader to connect with candidates who believe that Christ alone is sufficient for the unity of the church and that the Word of God is the authority for the church. A full list, including more listings and detail, is posted at: www.wordalone.org/clergy.shtml

To list your search on Clergy Connect, mail or fax your request on church letterhead, signed by an officer or call committee chair, to: WordAlone Network, 2299 Palmer Dr. Suite 220, New Brighton, MN 55112 - Fax: 651 633-4260. Include: title, church’s name (city and state), contact person with phone number and e-mail address. Please inform us when you fill the position.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Livonia, Michigan

Position: Pastor

Contact: (Primary) Travis Nixon, Call Team Co-Chair at nixontravis@sbcglobal.net or 248-349-8166, or (Backup) James Murphy, Call Team Co-Chair at murphy4550@sbcglobal.net or 734-266-0677.

Peace Lutheran Church Fremont, Nebraska

Position: Pastor

Contact: Send inquiry and mobility form to Lee Bohling, Call Committee Chair, at peacelutheranchurch@yahoo.com or call at 402-721-7598.

Bethesda Lutheran Church Dresser, Wisconsin

Position: Associate Pastor of Congregational Life

Contact: Please send resumé to Call Committee Chair, Laurie Johnson, to the church (Bethesda Lutheran Church, 1947 120th Ave, Dresser, WI 54009) or by email at laurkay@centurytel.net or Laurie.Johnson@thrivent.com.

Faith Lutheran Church Powell, Wyoming

Position: Associate Pastor

Contact: Pastor Clyde Seifert at ckseifert@bresnan.net or 307-754-5384.

(‘2008 synod assemblies ...’ Continues from page two)

to be ordained and serve in ELCA “called” positions even if they are “practicing homosexual persons.”

The Northwest Washington Synod referred a resolution on “full roster—policy change” to its synod council due to lack of discussion time, according to synod reports. This synod tabled a resolution affirming marriage. Both the Minnesota and Washington synod assemblies asked that the ELCA church council add the term “gender identity” to its policies and advocacy work against discrimination and violence toward minorities.

The Pacifica Synod passed a resolution asking for Scripture study on whether permitting blessings of homosexual relationships was analogous to the early Christian church’s acceptance of non-circumcised gentiles as members. ♦

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