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THE MAIN THING —

PROGRAM JESUS!

WordAlone Network Annual Convention

April 26-27, 2009

Calvary Lutheran Church
Golden Valley, Minn.

Pastor Steven Dornbusch will be the preacher and there will be workshops on evangelism for churches in various settings

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Laypersons are 'last defense' against new gospel in ELCA

by Betsy Carlson, editor

Laypersons, especially those who realize that God's mercy is the final word, are the last defense against a new gospel that is afoot in the North American churches.

Changes in the day-to-day theology of main-line U.S. Protestant denominations have been subtle and just below the radar in the past 20 or more years, said speakers at this fall's WordAlone Theological Conference.

Pastor Scott Grorud, a WordAlone Network board member, and Episcopal Bishop C. FitzSimons Allison, speaking at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fridley, Minn., each described various ways in which this new theology, or gospel, has crept into their denominations.

Grorud gave one address and said, "The crisis in Christianity today is not a minor dispute over side issues. Christians have always been fighting about something and often, with time, those disputes seem to be much ado about very little.

"The temptation is to dismiss this also as one more dust-up over adiaphora [a church practice that is neither commanded nor prohibited by Scripture]. We in the reform movements are often charged with 'majoring in the minors.'

"But in this crisis, I believe the faith

that was handed down to us is hanging in the balance."

To Allison, who spoke twice, it is the yeast of the Sadducees, "yeast that is seldom seen but that is powerful." It is self-centeredness along with the illusion of freedom of choice, which is actually freedom to sin and brings with it bondage to sin.

Grorud, meanwhile, said that to him the most compelling diagnosis came from Philip Turner, a member of The Episcopal Church and a former dean of the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University, who distinguishes "official theology" as the "theology of divine redemption," and the new day-to-day "working theology" as the "theology of divine acceptance."

He said, "The 'theology of divine acceptance' distorts the very essence of Christianity and turns it into a gospel without a cross, without Christ and without conversion."

But each man was optimistic that the theology of salvation, of redemption, will triumph through Christ's cross.

Grorud said it is common to hear laypeople confess their inability to understand Scripture and theology, leaving them to

(Continues on page two)

(‘laypersons...’ Continues from page one)

pastors and theologians. He said he sympathizes with laypersons because the issues are complicated.

“But you who are laypeople have to understand that you are the last line of defense here,” Grorud said. “You can ‘smell a rat’ before anyone else and you must take up the challenge of preserving the faith.”

Allison asked rhetorically if sinners would win. Were Alzheimer’s disease, abuse of all kinds, dementia, abortion or depression the final words, he wondered?

“No, God’s Word is the Alpha and the Omega,” Allison said. “Every man must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. . . God’s mercy is the final word.”

He said Sadducees didn’t believe in resurrection and their teaching was a rough equivalent of secularism, “‘this-world-is-all-there-is-ism’ as Reinhold Niebuhr expressed it.”

Allison asserted, “The Episcopal Church has been increasingly choking on this Sadducee yeast, this continuous accommodation to the secular culture. Our churches are pandering to a secularism that is characterized:

1. by our believing that ideas, doctrines and teachings are without consequences;
2. by an arrogance based on a cruel Pelagian naiveté regarding sin and evil [Fifth century heresy that man is basically good and that original sin does not exist.];
3. by ethics without moral foundations;
4. by reductionist art devoid of transcendent hope;
5. by inescapable idolatry; and
6. by depression.”

In other words, doctrine is not taken seriously; humankind is seen as good, has no sense of transcendent justice in its standards of human conduct, does not have art with transcendence or any sense of purpose, can make a god of its own creation

two

and liking and thus is left with only sadness and depression but without hope.

“It behooves us to understand what a sadness there is,” Allison said, “and what a need there is for a confident witness to the faith we have been given.”

To counter the new theology of acceptance, Grorud said, Christians with traditional views must learn and renew knowledge of the faith, hold pastors and teachers accountable to the faith, cling as never before to the great *solas* of the Reformation, overcome the legendary shyness of Lutherans and learn to witness, testify, preach, teach “in the most gracious, winsome ways” to family members, friends, pew mates and church leaders.

(Continues on page three)

Index

page one — Laypersons are ‘last defense’ against new gospel in ELCA

page four — ELCA council says majority vote enough to alter sexuality ordination standards

page six — An open letter on synodical option

page eight — A network for any and all confessional Lutherans

page ten — Reform groups form new North American Anglican church

page eleven — Lutheran Clergy Connect



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(‘laypersons...’ Continues from page two)

Grorud described the theology of acceptance using five key tenets given by author Turner:

1. It asserts that God is love, only love; pure, accepting, unconditional love. This love eliminates judgment and the need for salvation from sin and resurrection to new life.
2. God taking on a body was not for salvation of sinners from His wrath but rather as God’s unconditional affirmation and acceptance of all people, just as they are. The cross and even Jesus himself soon disappear from this theology.
3. Since God is love and Jesus was devoted to love, his followers must love others in the same way. Love is defined only as unconditional inclusion and acceptance of all people. It is not transformational love that puts sinners to death and raises them to new life in Christ.
4. Since the church no longer can proclaim God’s justification for the ungodly, its mission is social justice and justice is defined as including the rejected. The only intolerable sin is any hint of intolerance.
5. This new theology results in a peculiar form of North American or Western liberation theology, including all the excluded. This blurs the line between God’s kingdom and this world and is seen as a means to create God’s kingdom on earth.

Evidence of the crisis in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is abundant and disturbing, but it is also mostly anecdotal, according to Grorud.

“I do not see any organized conspiracy to destroy the faith,” he said. “I am not aware of any one book or movement that lays it all out. I am convinced that many who promote it would utterly deny that they are undermining the faith.

“There has certainly been no effort to change the official theology contained in the

Lutheran confessions and the ELCA constitution. Cultural and philosophical forces from outside the faith inspire ‘new,’ ‘creative,’ ‘modern’ and ‘relevant’ teachings.

“They undermine the Gospel subtly, by erosion, rather than by openly opposing or overturning it.”

Grorud listed some examples of the new theology in the ELCA: the claim of direct inspiration by the Holy Spirit apart from the Word; sharp erosion of the authority of Scripture; the diminishing acknowledgment of sin and its ongoing power in our lives.

Also: altering Biblical and Christian texts in service to various ideologies; inviting un-baptized people to receive Holy Communion for the sake of welcome and inclusion; the reduction of grace in Lutheran theology; strange teachings about Jesus, for instance rejecting the cross as the center of God’s salvation, some radically dismissing it as “divine child abuse;” and the debates over sexuality.

The text of Allison’s and Grorud’s keynote addresses can be accessed from the home page of the WordAlone Network, www.wordalone.org. ♦

(‘majority vote...’ Continues from page five)

years of ecumenical work and cut off the ELCA from most Christian churches?

Perhaps the most tragic dimension of the council majority’s decision is the certain damage that will be done to ELCA congregations should the ELCA change its ministry standards. Many congregations will lose members and many will be deeply divided—some already are.

The majority on the council is concerned about pastoral care for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, but seemingly oblivious to the overwhelming pastoral care that will be needed for millions of members and thousands of congregations should the majority on the council have its way. ♦

three

ELCA council says majority vote enough to alter sexuality ordination standards

by Mark C. Chavez, WordAlone Network vice president

The ELCA Church Council decided at its November meeting in Chicago to recommend a simple majority vote at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on recommendations from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality and the ELCA Church Council regarding the rostering of practicing homosexuals as pastors and ministers.

News and commentary

The Constitutional and Legal Committee of the church council had voted unanimously at its own earlier meeting, with some abstentions, to recommend a two-thirds vote at the 2009 churchwide assembly on all matters that relate to the subject of the social statement on sexuality, including the rostering proposals. The committee gave four reasons for recommending a two-thirds vote:

1. It sets a clear rule for all matters and heads off potential confusion and ambiguity.
2. Since the social statement needs a two-thirds vote, all matters relating to it should also require a two-thirds vote.
3. If the council wants the churchwide assembly to move toward communal discernment, then a two-thirds vote helps move the churchwide assembly in that direction.
4. The church council (and churchwide assembly) will have to deal with the rules anyway, so the committee's recommendation was a starting point for discussion.

During the council's discussion of the legal committee's recommendation, an amendment was offered to lower the bar from two-thirds to 60 percent, but that amendment was overwhelmingly defeated.

Next an amendment was offered to delete the two-thirds rule, thereby making it a

simple majority decision. After much discussion the council approved that amendment 19-10, with one abstention.

Council member Mark Helmke, from San Antonio, Texas, then offered an amendment to restore the 2005 Churchwide Assembly two-thirds rule, which applied to changes in existing ELCA policies. The 2005 rule was narrower in scope than the two-thirds rule recommended by the constitutional and legal committee.

A council member requested a written ballot (not normally used) for the vote on the Helmke amendment. The amendment was defeated 18-14 with two abstentions.

In my view, the constitutional and legal committee had done very good work. The committee's arguments for the two-thirds rule were articulate and logical, and the committee had demonstrated great care for the well being of the ELCA.

However, a clear majority of the council apparently was dead set on getting the ELCA to change its standards for ministry, willing to sacrifice just about everything to attain its goal. They want the ELCA to approve of rostering practicing homosexuals as soon as possible, which was stated in the discussion, and okayed a simple majority vote for the assembly's rules even though the decision flew in the face of all the council's other priorities, which focus on the vitality of the ELCA.

The rest of the council meeting was taken up with such serious matters as: how to reverse the steady decline in giving by congregations to the synods and churchwide organization; how to reverse the steady and accelerating loss of ELCA members; what to do about the worst ever drop in average worship attendance; how to increase the multiracial and multicultural composition

(Continues on page five)

(majority vote...' *Continues from page four)*

of the ELCA; how to move toward communal discernment at churchwide assemblies so there is less vying for votes, and outcomes with winners and losers; and how to strengthen ecumenical relationships.

The ELCA suffered a big loss in donations after the fiasco in 1993 with the first draft of a social statement on human sexuality and ELCA leaders know it may happen again if the 2009 assembly approves ordaining practicing homosexuals.

The council heard a report from churchwide staff and a consultant about a possible five-year major fund appeal in conjunction with the ELCA's 25th anniversary. The consultant said that in working with the churchwide staff it was clear that the major fund-raising initiative would need contingency plans for the possible outcomes of the 2009 assembly. He said the ELCA could be a very different church after next August, a clear reference to the question of rostering practicing homosexuals.

Does the majority on the council not realize that by pushing its homosexual agenda it could lead the ELCA into deeper financial troubles?

Every other denomination in North America that has approved of practicing homosexuals as ministers has suffered huge membership losses—30 to 50 percent. Most have done nothing more than approve of the equivalent of a local or synodical option. Does the majority on the church council think that the ELCA will be the exception and not suffer a huge membership loss?

The Rev. Stephen Bouman, executive director of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission churchwide unit, told the council that the ELCA's new mission congregations have not thrived, especially those connected with ethnic strategies. He said that thus far "ethnic strategies are just words" in the ELCA. Action and results are needed, he said.

ELCA Secretary David Swartling reported that most of the increase in the multiracial composition of the ELCA is the result of marriages—in other words, not drawing in new members who are not Caucasian.

Does the majority on the church council not know that non-Caucasians—Christians and people of other faiths—overwhelmingly disapprove of homosexual behavior?

If the ELCA changes its standards for ministry it will make it all the more difficult for ELCA congregations to reach Latinos, Asians and African Americans, not to mention immigrants from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Is the majority on the council willing to sacrifice its multicultural and multiracial goals for the sake of one narrow goal?

At its meeting the council expressed concern about the divisive votes at recent churchwide assemblies, but I believe the surest way to increase the divisiveness is to lower the bar to a simple majority for very important decisions. The legal and constitutional committee had it right—raise the bar higher, not lower so that everyone knows there must be overwhelming consensus before making serious changes. Is the majority on the council unable to see that its decision will make assemblies even more contentious and divisive?

The Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox churches have made it very clear that their relationships with The Episcopal Church are severely ruptured because of the diocesan local option on ordaining non-celibate homosexuals that exists in The Episcopal Church. Churches in the Lutheran World Federation in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America have made it very clear that if the ELCA and other Lutheran churches approve of homosexual behavior, the unity of the Lutheran World Federation is at stake.

Does the majority of the council not know that its single-minded focus on homosexuality may well undermine more than 50

(Continues on page three)

An open letter on synodical option

A debate continues in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America about whether to change church teaching and policy to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in same-sex sexual relationships. The 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted “to direct the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and to make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church.”

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, the Word of God and the Church, we call on the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, the ELCA Church Council and the ELCA Conference of Bishops to affirm and to maintain the clear standard that the ELCA and its predecessor churches have held for the sexual behavior of pastors—that intimate sexual relations are to be reserved for the marriage of one man and one woman. This is the standard that has characterized Christian teaching on marriage from apostolic times and is maintained today by the overwhelming majority of Christians worldwide.

Some have suggested allowing synods or congregations to set their own standards for pastors. Such an approach—usually called synodical option—would effectively dissolve the ELCA. The chaos described in the book of Judges could then describe the ELCA—“all the people did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 17:6). A similar recommendation, which would have allowed synod bishops to grant exceptions to ELCA behavior standards to permit pastors to be in committed same-sex relationships, was defeated by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. The ELCA must

reject such an approach.

Synodical option is not a real compromise at all. Its adoption would force synods and congregations to agree that there are multiple biblical teachings on these matters. Synodical option would represent a real change in the teaching of our church. Even those synods and congregations that might not agree with this change would be forced by synodical option implicitly to accept the notion that Scripture is not clear on this subject.

If the ELCA is to continue as one church, it must have one office of ministry, one roster of pastors and one set of expectations for pastors and other rostered leaders throughout the ELCA. Without a common roster of pastors and common expectations for pastors and other rostered leaders, it would be very difficult for pastors to move from one synod to another. Such an approach would effectively divide the ELCA into 65 separate church bodies—each with its own standards for clergy and its own clergy roster.

The interdependent relationship between the churchwide, synod and congregational expressions of the ELCA requires one standard for clergy throughout the ELCA. “Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” correctly states, “Pastoral identity carries with it expectations and accountabilities that are determined by the whole church and not simply by a given congregation, synod, institution, or agency served by the ordained minister.”

Vision and Expectations also states: “the ordained minister is to be an example of holy living, so that the ordained minister’s life does not become an impediment to the hearing of the gospel or a scandal to the community of faith. . . . Ordained ministers, whether married or single, are expected to uphold an understanding of marriage

in their public ministry as well as in private life that is biblically informed and consistent with the teachings of this church.” We affirm this commitment of the ELCA.

We understand the desire of some ELCA members for a compromise on same-sex sexual relationships given the debates raging in some ELCA synods. However, given the Bible’s clear affirmation of marriage as between a man and a woman and its clear rejection of homosexual behavior, it is not possible for the ELCA to allow its pastors to be in same-sex sexual relationships without rejecting biblical teaching on sexuality and thus rejecting Scripture as “the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” (ELCA Confession of Faith - ELCA Constitution 2.03).

The question of the authority of the Bible in the Church is not something on which a compromise can be reached. The ELCA either remains committed to Scripture as “the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” or the ELCA will have chosen to deny its Confession of Faith and chosen to function with a different source and norm for its faith and life.

It is also important to note that a significant majority of ELCA members (57 percent) opposed the ordination of those in same-sex sexual relationships and the blessing of same-sex relationships, according to responses to the 2004 “Journey Together Faithfully” study on homosexuality. Only 22 percent favored the blessing of homosexual relationships or the rostering of people in those relationships, according to the study’s responses. While popular opinion is not a reason to make decisions in a confessional church committed to Scripture as “the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life,” the faithful confession of such a significant majority of ELCA members should not be ignored or rejected.

The words of Jesus are an important reminder for those who suggest that we celebrate the divisions in the ELCA regarding

homosexual behavior: “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand” (Matthew 12:25). We have seen the truth of Jesus’ words in the divisions taking place in The Episcopal Church and in other church bodies that have adopted, in effect, a synodical option. The teaching of Scripture and of the Christian church throughout the ages is clear on these matters. The only question is whether the ELCA will acknowledge this reality.

We offer this letter because of our commitment to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We will continue to pray for the ELCA and for all those entrusted with leadership in the Church. ♦

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A network for any and all confessional Lutherans

by Jaynan Clark Eglund, WordAlone Network president

As the WordAlone Board of Directors met in Burien, Wash., in Oct. they were confronted over and over again with the question on so many folks' minds these days, "Where are we going?"

Not only while the board was in session was this question confronting each member through a number of the different agenda items but also at the evening forum hosted by Glendale Lutheran Church, Burien. People who gathered to meet with members of the board wondered where WordAlone was going to lead them. They wanted to know where WordAlone's commitments were and what the plans were for the future.

As I listened and participated in the board meeting, forum, led adult study and, even as I preached, I kept being reminded of a quote by H. Richard Niebuhr, "The great Christian revolutions come not by the discovery of something that was not known before. They happen when somebody takes radically something that was always there."

Within the Christian faith, Lutheranism is a very radical theology because of its utter dependence on salvation through Jesus Christ alone—nothing and nobody added. The dependence of the Lutheran voice on the clarion call of the Augsburg Confession, Art. IV, that states nothing new but restates what Jesus preached and Paul taught—we are justified, made right with God through His grace and the faith He gives us as a gift and not by our own doing.

This is what not only distinguishes Lutherans from other Christians but also what beckons us once more in this time of turbulence and turmoil to step up to the plate and pronounce this clarion call for Christ Jesus alone in many and various ways. We are called to be the "radical Lutherans" and to repeat loudly that which always has been there.

With that in mind the board heard reports during its meeting of many more additions to the growing number of educational resources available through WordAlone's educational effort, Sola Publishing. Education director Steve King has been busy producing new studies for children, women's groups and adults in addition to a new brochure ministry and eye-catching thematic posters.

All materials are produced to teach the confessional Lutheran faith to those inside and outside of the ELCA. The goal is to get the Word-based materials out to as many churches and individuals at as low a cost as possible. The mission of Sola is not primarily to create revenue but to teach the faith.

Reports of working together more closely with the Solid Ground Lutherans reform group in Canada were heard. The Institute of Lutheran Theology is working with Lutherans in Canada in the Canadian Association of Lutheran Churches.

Plans for our presence and witness at the churchwide assembly in Minneapolis August 2009 as an active member of Lutheran CORE were brought to the board by Mark Chavez, vice president of WordAlone and director of Lutheran CORE, together with Scott Grorud, member of the WordAlone board and the Lutheran CORE steering committee.

Discussion included reviewing the relationship between WordAlone and Lutheran CORE. The importance of WordAlone's continuing as an active member of Lutheran CORE is a priority because it is the Network's primary focus for reform and political activity within the ELCA. It was clarified that while WordAlone is part of the coalition—one member group out of ten within Lutheran CORE—the WordAlone network extends inside the ELCA and

(Continues on page nine)

(network...' Continues from page eight)

beyond through its own ministries, through new Lutheran ministries that started from WordAlone and to other independent Lutheran agencies with whom we relate and whom we support.

Preparations for the churchwide assembly and beyond are in progress including an official response to the proposed human sexuality social statement for the 2009 assembly and contingency plans for different scenarios that might result from votes taken there and changes made in ELCA policies and practices.

The board was updated on the status of implementation of the ELCA'S 2001 ordination bylaw amendment and learned the ELCA records show that there have been 40 non-episcopal ordinations granted in 21 synods to date including some eastern synods. The pastors receiving exceptions were graduates of all but two of the eight ELCA seminaries. WordAlone continues to try to support seminary students in various ways including making the Seminary Debt Relief Fund available to them.

The topic and speakers for the then upcoming Fall Theological Conference, "A Different Gospel—Christianity at Risk," were discussed. Plans were made for the annual spring convention with a theme of evangelism as the primary work and mission of the church. Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minn., will host the convention on April 26-27.

The Institute of Lutheran Theology is working with me to launch a series for WordAlone chapters, in which I would tell the WordAlone story, and explain the new working paradigm of being the church and doing the mission of the church. The series will also introduce people to the various ministries that have been birthed by the WordAlone Network.

The audit committee reported that the annual audit of WordAlone produced a good report showing WordAlone met or exceeded the standards for non-profits during the fiscal year of 2007. It was recommended again that WordAlone build up and maintain a

six-month operating cash reserve, which we have never achieved. The need for stepped-up efforts for fundraising in these difficult economic times was noted.

Some proposals for organizational/structural change were proffered by an ad hoc committee tasked previously with reviewing the overall internal functions of WordAlone. One change that was made renames Mark Chavez's position from director to vice president. This aligns his position better with the president's and helps make a distinction in his continuing work as the director for Lutheran CORE.

Hopefully, by reading this summary of the board meeting, you can see that the question of leaving the ELCA or staying in the ELCA is not the driving question of the WordAlone Network. WordAlone will continue its calling of working both inside and outside the institution. WordAlone's calling is to network with and bring together any and all confessional Lutherans and other Protestants who still believe in the Word of God, its authority over all matters of life and faith and who know Jesus Christ is the one Lord and Savior of us all. Considering the "letters" of such a network you end up with NAEL (network for any/all confessional Lutherans). Called to be "salt" of the earth.

So whether individuals or churches need to stay in the ELCA or decide to leave the ELCA or even if they are a part of another denomination, WordAlone is committed to being there to provide resources and a Network in which to be faithful and to witness. Perhaps the good Lord will use us to draw together the diaspora of Lutherans so that in these troubling times we can confess the Living Word of God, teach the faith, make disciples and be the church God called us to be. This is our purpose no matter what denomination or institution you find yourself a part of.

This way of relating and doing and being the church, no matter what affiliation you are or what letters you have on your sign, is not the discovery of something that was not known before . . . it just takes radically that which has always been there. ♦

Reform groups form new North American Anglican church

by Betsy Carlson, editor

[Editor's note: This version of the article is a condensed one. To read it all, go to www.wordalone.org.]

Several groups of North American Anglican and Episcopal reformers have announced the creation of a new church, which they hope will be accepted as a province in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

This new Anglican Church of North America could replace or become an alternative province to The Episcopal Church.

Anglican leaders from the United States and Canada unveiled a provisional constitution for a new North America church at a news conference and worship service Dec. 3 at a Wheaton, Ill., church, according to a news release from a North American coalition known as the Common Cause Partnership.

The Anglican Church in North America is scheduled to hold a churchwide assembly in the summer of 2009 in Bedford, Texas.

The leadership of the Common Cause Partnership began forming the new church in response to a request from the primates, or church leaders, of the Global Anglican Future Conference, which met in Jerusalem last summer, according to the Common Cause news release.

The preamble to the new church's provisional constitution says they are "grieved by the current state of brokenness within the Anglican Communion prompted by those who have embraced erroneous teaching and who have rejected a repeated call to repentance," according to the news release.

Leaders of Anglican provinces in Africa and South America, founders of GAFCON, have demanded for several years that The Episcopal Church repent of approving the ordination of V. Gene Robinson, a practicing homosexual, as a bishop in 2003.

The issue has brought theological disagreements about the authority of Scripture to the surface in the U.S. church and the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Responding to the formation of the new church, the GAFCON Primates Council issued the following statement after a Dec. 8 meeting in London:

"We welcome the news of the North American Anglican Province in formation. We fully support this development with our prayer and blessing, since it demonstrates the determination of these faithful Christians to remain authentic Anglicans.

"North American Anglicans have been tragically divided since 2003 when activities condemned by the clear teaching of Scripture and the vast majority of the Anglican Communion were publicly endorsed. This has left many Anglicans without a proper spiritual home."

Leaders of both the Anglican Communion and The Episcopal Church initially issued statements about the formation of a new church through spokespersons.

The office of Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury and head of the Anglican Communion, issued a statement Dec. 4 that acceptance of a new province could require a lengthy process.

"There are clear guidelines set out in the Anglican Consultative Council Reports . . . detailing the steps necessary for the amendments of existing provincial constitutions and the creation of new provinces," Williams' spokesperson said. "Once begun, any of these processes will take years to complete. In relation to the recent announcement from the meeting of the Common Cause Partnership in Chicago, the process has not yet begun," according to The Episcopal Church news service.

The Rev. Charles Robertson, canon to The Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, said in an email prior to release of the Common Cause documents, "And we reiterate what has been true of Anglicanism for centuries: that there is room within The Episcopal Church for

('Reform groups...' Continues from page ten)

people with different views, and we regret that some have felt the need to depart from the diversity of our common life in Christ." However, Jefferts Schori, in response to questions after her Dec. 17 appearance at the National Press Club in Washington, D. C., did comment on the proposed new North American church.

According to www.virtueonline.org, Jefferts Schori said, in response to a question about the conflict among Anglicans, one of the reasons for the tradition of not having two bodies in the same place is that for hundreds of years the Anglican Communion has said that bishops are responsible for certain areas of geography, and that the people in that area, together with the bishop, are evidence of the church.

Regarding a question on why The Episcopal Church filed lawsuits rather than negotiate property issues with departing parishes in

light of the biblical injunction to avoid litigation among Christians, Virtue Online reported her response as:

"Well, we tried for a very long time to negotiate and came to a place where there was no willingness for negotiation. So at that point, you ask the courts to enforce the law of the land.

"I actually think we're past the worst of it. We've had positive results in a number of cases. The ones, the large ones hanging fire at the moment are the ones in California (and a decision from the Supreme Court is expected within a couple of weeks) and the one in Virginia.

"And that will undoubtedly be appealed to the Supreme Court in Virginia."

Interestingly, just two days after Jefferts Schori made those comments, a Virginia judge ruled that 11 parishes had won the legal right to split from The Episcopal Church and keep their property. ♦

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.

Living Word Lutheran Church Grapevine, Texas

Position: Director of Youth Ministries
Contact: send resumés or direct any inquiries to Pastor David Eibel at eibel@lwlc.com or Deborah Tierney at debrahtierney@charter.net.

St. John Lutheran Church Williston, Ohio

Position: Pastor
Contact: Send resumé to St. John Lutheran Church, 21140 Toledo St., P.O. Box 235, Williston, Ohio 43468 or contact the call committee chairman, Philip Estes at 419-836-9609.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church Brigham City, Utah

Position: Pastor
Contact: Karen Harvey, Call Committee Chair, at karenharvey@besstek.net, 435-734-9985 or 112 Ashe Circle, Brigham City, UT 84302.

United Lutheran Church Waterville, Washington

Position: Pastor
Contact: Amy Cole, call-committee representative at ACOLE@NWI.net, 509-745-8784 or PO Box 724, Waterville, WA 98858.

Zion Lutheran Church Kerrville, Texas

Position: Senior Pastor
Contact: Call committee chair, David Weden, at dweden@gmail.com or 830-377-2909.