

*On September 16 – 19, 2009, about 60 Chinese pastors and lay-leaders of the ELCA gathered at Monterey Park, California, for a retreat organized by the Center for Chinese Ministry. During the retreat, they unanimously agreed and issued a public statement in response to the “resolution to call and ordain non-celibate homosexual pastors” passed at the ELCA Church-wide Assembly on August 21, 2009.*

*Here is the statement:*

We absolutely disagree with the above mentioned resolution to call and ordain homosexual pastors.

It may be true that sexual orientation comes with birth, and it may not be a choice; but we know that in this corrupted world many people are born with defects or problems. Something that comes with birth does not necessarily make it good or right. All of us are born with a sinful nature, and we naturally enjoy doing sinful deeds. Yet we do not think that it is right for us to be evil. That is exactly why we need Jesus Christ to save us and change us.

We understand that many gays and lesbians deeply suffer in their sexual struggle; we should care for them and help them, but we cannot endorse their homosexual behavior due to the following:

1. Biblically: We cannot find any passage in the Bible that clearly and directly supports homosexual behavior. In the Bible, all passages regarding homosexual behavior clearly state that this type of behavior is not permitted by God, and thus it should be prohibited.
2. Theologically: In terms of the creation, at the beginning when God created the first human couple on earth, His original plan for marriage is for one man and one woman. We do not believe that God has another design for family and marriage, and we should put our trust only in God's original design, not any other alternatives.
3. Sociologically: We know that parents are the most important models for children. In a “homosexual family” the roles of father and mother are confusing, thus the children will be confused and easy lost. This confusion will cause an enormous damage to the society in the coming generations. Marriage is not a private issue; it surely has a major influence on the society.
4. Ecclesiastically: As the majority of the Chinese do not accept homosexual behaviors, this resolution has posted a distorted image on the Chinese congregations of the ELCA, as it appears that we are agreeing with the resolution to accept and ordain homosexual pastors. This will create significant hindrances to our ministries in the Chinese communities.

As Lutheran congregations, the one thing we have learned from our Lutheran heritage is to take the Bible as our ultimate authority in faith and in ministry. Thus, we submit ourselves to the authority of the Bible, but not the Pope, nor the Presiding Bishop, nor the resolution of the Church-wide Assembly, nor the voices and urges from the world. Any important resolution passed by a church body has to be supported by clear and direct passages from the Bible; otherwise it is a serious mistake!

Unless anyone can prove from the Bible that we are wrong in our understanding with regards to homosexuality, we will firmly keep our stance. Martin Luther had demonstrated a great example at the Diet of Worms, and as the result the Lutheran Church was founded. As Lutheran Churches, we respect the Bible as the ultimate authority of our Christian faith.

*The original Chinese version of this statement will be posted on pertinent websites, published in the Herald Monthly (a Chinese Christian monthly), and distributed among the Lutheran churches in the United States, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore.*

*An English version of this statement is to be forwarded to Bishop Mark Hanson, the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Bishops of all ELCA synods, AAPI (Association of Asian & Pacific Islander), Multicultural Ministry Unit---ELCA, Lutheran "CORE" (Coalition for Reform), LWF, "THE LUTHERAN" (ELCA Magazine) and "Christianity Today".*