

A Reaction to the ELCA Proposed Statement on Sexuality

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

The Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Studies on Sexuality released a proposed social statement on human sexuality on February 19, 2009. One must remember that, as of now, it is only a proposed statement and not an adopted position by the church body.

After reading the document, I must say that I was deeply saddened in not finding a strong stance on the biblical teaching that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. It is quite obvious that ELCA is a divided church on this topic.

What God’s people need most in this world of uncertainty is certainty: This is what the Lord says! They need to hear the unabashed law that they are sinners—including those immoral sexual actions of all distortions—and they need to hear the soul-soothing Good News that every single sin is removed by the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s only-begotten Son.

They also need to hear that the Word of God is certain, that truth is indeed knowable—as Jesus says (John 8:31-32). There is no doubt about the teachings of Scripture, where it clearly states that the institution of marriage is the union of one man and one woman.

What should be our response toward our brothers and sisters in ELCA? Prayer, first of all. Pray that the Lord Jesus and His Spirit will guide them in the truth and clarity of Holy Scripture. Many, many members will be broken, torn, and confused by the proposed statement. Secondly, offer yourself by listening in a compassionate way. A James-like approach of “quick to hear, slow to speak” might be just the balm needed (James 1:19).

Finally, and above all, do not gloat over this controversy. The LCMS has its own weaknesses. We ought to humble ourselves before the Lord, as He teaches, and extend petitions before His throne for His help on behalf of fellow Lutherans in ELCA.

A broken church might be the best Missouri can offer her fellow pilgrims, claiming no self-righteousness but only the righteousness of Christ. A broken church confesses with the Publican (Luke 18:13), “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

O heavenly Father, Lord of heaven and earth:
with You we rejoice in the testimony to the saving gospel by our brothers and sisters in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and we celebrate our common confession of the centrality of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. This summer, our sisters and brothers of the ELCA gather for their national convention to face the ongoing challenge of the

Your Church - from the cacophony of voices, some worldly, some fleshly, and some demonic - to discern and to follow the Voice of their Good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus. We join their prayers for gracious, yet discerning listening, for safe travel, for good consciences, for unity, for faithfulness and the courage to confess the truth, and for Christian charity. Abba Father, by the Spirit's ministry among us prompt us to pray for Your Church, and in particular for our fellow confessors of evangelical doctrine in these coming months; through Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, who lives and reigns with You and the Comforter, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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