

THREE MOTIONS ARISING FROM THE ELCIC STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY (2011)

In April 2011, the ELCIC's National Church Council approved, and recommended for adoption to the 2011 ELCIC National Convention, three motions prepared by the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee based on their review of the Proposed ELCIC Social Statement on Human Sexuality.

In July, 2011, the three motions were passed by the ELCIC National Convention.

1. Motion on the Unity of the Church

MOVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in convention adopt the following affirmation as representing the position of this church and communicate this action to congregations, partner churches in Canada, sister churches in the Lutheran World Federation and other Lutheran church associations in Canada.

An Affirmation Concerning the Unity of the Church

As a confessional Lutheran Church which bases its life and teaching on the Scriptures, the Ecumenical Creeds and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada affirms with the confessors at Augsburg in 1530 that "it is enough for the unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments" (AC VII).

We affirm that the church ought not be divided because of disagreement over moral issues, no matter how distressing such disagreement might be. We believe that any attempt to divide the church because of disagreements over morals, polity or liturgy is an unacceptable confusion of Law and Gospel, which will lead inevitably to a distortion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We encourage ELCIC members, congregations and synods and churches who share our commitment to the scriptures, creeds and confessions and who disagree with one another over issues of morals, polity (including standards for ordination or consecration) and/or liturgy to remain in dialogue and unity with one another and maintain unity in the gospel and the sacraments as St Paul recommends in 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. We encourage all Lutherans to work for and nurture the unity of the confessional witness to the Gospel which is essential to the Lutheran tradition. We ask those persons, congregations, synods and/or churches who are in disagreement to refrain from actions that will divide the body of Christ.

2. Motion on Presiding at or Blessing Marriages

MOVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in convention adopt the following policy statement:

It is the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada that rostered ministers may, according to the dictates of their consciences as informed by the Gospel, the Scriptures, the Ecumenical Creeds and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, preside at or bless legal marriages according to the laws of the province within which they serve. All rostered ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada are encouraged to exercise due diligence in preparing couples for marriage. All rostered ministers serving congregations are encouraged at all times to conduct their ministry in consultation with the lay leaders in the congregation and with sensitivity to the culture within which the congregation serves.

3. Motion on Standards for Ordination and Consecration

MOVED that convention actions NC-1993-16 and NC-1989-96 be rescinded and that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in convention adopt the following policy:

It is the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada that sexual orientation is not in itself a factor which disqualifies a candidate for rostered ministry or a rostered minister seeking a call. Candidates and rostered ministers are in all cases expected to adhere to the qualifications and standards as set out in the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and of the synod within which they serve. Synods and congregations are expected to evaluate candidates for ordination or consecration and rostered ministers for call in accordance with a conscience informed by the Gospel, the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.