



Lutheran CORE - Coalition for Reform

"Working Together for Positive Reform in the ELCA"

visit our website at: www.lutherancore.org

Lutheran CORE Newsletter 1.1

August 5, 2007

Lutheran CORE has been actively preparing for the Churchwide Assembly in Chicago August 6-11. Information regarding the assembly both encourages and discourages us, but we believe that Christ is still Lord of His Church and in the end he will answer the prayers of his faithful people among our congregations, pastors, and bishops. We also realize that many people disagree with us in good faith, and we pray for God's loving wisdom to guide all of us.

Our first and most important request is prayer. Whether or not you are in Chicago, please pray for Bishop Hanson and Secretary Almen, all the voting members, the Lutheran CORE steering committee members, and many dedicated CORE members and friends who have paid their own way to be in Chicago working on your behalf, and also for those sisters and brothers in Christ who are working for agendas we believe are wrong.

Sexuality Memorials

A key strategy of Goodsoil and Lutherans Concerned, the groups working to change policies regarding homosexuality, is to use this assembly to begin a process of rescinding the rules that prohibit active homosexuals from serving as pastors and that discourage blessings of same-sex relationships. While no more synods are asking for this change than addressed the 2005 assembly, many faithful Lutherans assumed the issue was settled at Orlando and were not prepared to reconsider the issue this year. We believe it is dishonest and deceptive to raise the issue again before the report of the Task Force on Sexuality in 2009, and we support the recommendation of the Memorials Committee to refer all sexuality proposals to the task force.

Lutheran CORE believes using such tactics to initiate a change of policy this year will fragment the ELCA. We see this happening among our Full Communion partners the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the United Church of Christ, as many faithful members have become weary of the constant attacks on what they have believed on the basis of the Bible.

Ultimately, we do not believe we have the right as Christians to vote on whether or not we will accept the clear teachings of Holy Scripture. Especially when an overwhelming majority of Christians through the ages and across the world have understood the texts of the Bible regarding same-sex relationships in their plain sense, we have to say, "our conscience is captive to the Word of God; unless we are convinced by clear Scripture and evident reason therefrom, we cannot and will not recant."

Retired Bishops Speak

Pastor Paull Spring, chair of Lutheran CORE and retired bishop of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, wrote an open letter to Bishop Hanson on behalf of CORE, in which he objected "strenuously" to a public announcement by Bishop Margaret Payne, of the New England Synod, that she would preside at a service of Holy Communion apart from the assembly agenda at which defrocked pastor Bradley Schmeling would be the preacher. Schmeling was removed as a pastor after he announced publicly that he is in a relationship with another man.

We object to using the Means of Grace, God's Holy Word and the Sacrament of the Altar, as tools to further political ends on behalf of Goodsoil and their allies. In his letter, Spring asks whether Bp. Payne

should not resign as an act of integrity if she as bishop cannot support the official policies of the church and whether her action is a matter of discipline.

Bishop Emeritus George Mocko, retired bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod, wrote an open letter expressing his concerns about the way we seem to be asked to read the Bible in the ELCA, in order to overturn the Scriptural admonitions against homosexuality. "We are preparing to sell our birthright as the foremost biblical theologians of the west for the pottage of this culture's approval," Mocko writes.

You can read both letters in full at the website shared by Lutheran CORE and Lutheran Churches of the Common Confession, www.commonconfession.net/COREnewset.htm . Both were posted in July.

Gathering in September: Where do we go from here?

Regardless of what happens in Chicago, Lutheran CORE intends to stay and remain a voice for those ELCA members who wish to remain faithful to the Word of God and our Lutheran Confessions. Of course, it is possible that at some point after 2009 many will need to re-evaluate whether they can be faithful to Christ and still remain within this denomination; we are working and praying that such agonizing decisions will not be necessary.

We will gather on Friday, September 28, from 10 to 4 in Lindenhurst, Illinois (near Chicago), to hear reflections and reports from James Nestingen, Robert Benne, and Paul Spring. Please join us. A flyer can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.commonconfession.net/PDFs/COREgathering.pdf> or by emailing prstevshipman@gmail.com.

Pass It On

We urge you to copy and distribute this newsletter electronically and on paper to people who share our concerns with the undermining of Scriptural authority in the ELCA, the replacement of the revealed Name of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in many worship and educational resources, and the devaluing of God's plan for human community centered around the faithful marriage of a man and a woman. We also seek to elect faithful leaders across the ELCA who will uphold "the faith once delivered to the saints."

As always, we solicit your prayers and welcome your financial contributions. We are grateful that for now the WordAlone Network, a member of our Coalition for Reform, provides administrative support to Lutheran CORE. Donations in any amount (deductible as permitted by law) may be sent to Lutheran CORE, c/o WordAlone Network, 2299 Palmer Drive, Suite 220, New Brighton, MN 55112. Please make checks payable to WordAlone Network, and write "Lutheran CORE" on the memo line.

And if you have not seen or signed on to our Scripture statement (to which Bishop Emeritus Mocko refers in his letter), it is on the same website, at www.commonconfession.net/COREscriptset.htm . Please add your signature to the many who already support us.

A lot of helpful links and articles are included both on the www.commonconfession.net website and on www.wordalone.org and we urge you to become informed on viewpoints you may not learn from official ELCA sources.

If you have questions, please check our website or contact us.

And if you're at the Churchwide Assembly in Chicago, look us up at the Hyatt Grand Suite B. We'll try to have it staffed by somebody much of the time.

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