

**Position statement of the African National Ministries of the ELCA on
the Church-wide Assembly's 08/21/09 vote to allow gays and lesbians be
Ordained and called as clergy of the ELCA,**

**Presented to Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson
Thursday, September 3, 2009**

The church-wide assembly, the chief legislative arm of the ELCA, meeting at the Minneapolis Convention Center August 17-23, 2009, voted to allow gays and lesbians to become clergy and fully rostered leaders in our denomination. After a very prayerful and careful review of the decision within the context of the Holy Scriptures, we - the leaders and members of the ELCA's African National Ministries nationwide - want to make it sufficiently known that we are opposed to the decision for the following reasons:

1. We faithfully believe that the decision conscientiously and deliberately sets aside what we believe to be the teachings of the Holy Bible, which is supposed to be the guiding principle of all Christians. In both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible is not short of words in its condemnation of homosexuality. It teaches us that homosexuality is sinful and, therefore, unacceptable. Specifically, we believe that Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:26, and I Corinthians 6:9 remind us that homosexuality is an abomination in the sight of God. As Christians, we should never accept parts of the Bible and ignore others. We should not want to follow the path of the disobedient who intentionally insist on abandoning scriptural guidance and choose living life contrary to the revelation which is God given. Homosexuality is one of those disobedient acts.
2. We believe that homosexuals, like all other sinners, are in need of God's saving grace for salvation. We also agree that all people are valuable and should be loved because they are created by God, and their sins were paid for by Jesus Christ at Calvary. This is why we love (agape) homosexuals as human beings. However, we disagree with the assembly's decision, and we must make it unequivocally clear that supporting this wrong decision will make us unfaithful, and our

agreement with it will be an intentional betrayal of the scripture's authority and the commandments of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

3. We believe that the decision of the church wide assembly is unacceptable devaluation of and sharp departure from our God-given life principles, culture, and tradition which are compatible with the teachings of the Holy Bible. We will continue in our Christian faith passed down to us by generations of Christians.

Based on these basic beliefs, we have reached the following decisions:

1. We will not – in good conscience - recognize, accept and dignify the direction the church wide assembly took in the name of the ELCA, and/or we cannot in our bound conscience sit under the spiritual guidance of gay or lesbian pastor or rostered leader in any of our congregations or other ELCA sanctioned events.
2. We stand in solidarity with people of the same bound conscience in the ELCA, and will continue to closely consult and collaborate with them on this issue.
3. We will continue to participate in and support faithful ELCA ministries, but cannot in good conscience support ministries and events that reject the authority of God's holy word.
4. We call on other members of the ELCA, including pastors and congregations, who plan to leave the ELCA due to this decision to reconsider their plans. They should remain faithful to their bound conscience with us, and work faithfully to advance God's mission and reverse this policy, using God's Holy ordinances.
5. We will continue to engage in our God given ministry and seek the counsel and guidance of the Holy Sprit for wisdom and integrity as we fully focus on Christ's mission of saving souls.
6. Finally, we call on our national and international partners-in-mission to join us in this difficult time through their unceasing prayers and spiritual support.