

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Rev. Mark Chavez info@lutherancore.org 717-898-0801
Rev. David Baer editor@lutherancore.org 605-641-2399

Lutheran CORE to defend traditional marriage and uphold biblical teaching on sexuality

Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Reform) will be gathering Lutherans from throughout the United States to defend traditional marriage and to defeat proposed changes in church teaching about sexuality. Lutheran CORE will be working to defeat proposals that would change the teaching and policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The proposals to be considered Aug. 17-23 by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis would affirm homosexual relationships and would allow pastors to be in same-sex relationships.

“The Churchwide Assembly has no authority to be voting on these matters,” said the Rev. Paull Spring of State College, Pa., chair of Lutheran CORE. “The constitution of the ELCA says that the Bible is the source and norm of the church’s faith and life. A church meeting does not have the authority to overturn what the Bible clearly teaches about marriage and about homosexual behavior.”

“The sexuality proposals show a tremendous arrogance. ELCA leaders think we can do whatever we want in our teaching about sexuality regardless of what the Bible teaches and what Christians around the world and throughout time have consistently taught,” said Spring, the retired bishop of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod. “A Christian church does not vote on matters that are integral to the faith of the Church. Christians don’t vote on the Trinity, the Incarnation, or the two natures of Christ, we just believe and confess them as the faith of the Christian Church that we have received from generations of Christians before us.”

“Lutheran CORE will be working together with faithful Lutherans from throughout the ELCA to defeat both the proposed social statement and the proposal for blessing and ordaining practicing gay and lesbian persons,” said Spring, “We have voting members and volunteers ready to bear witness to the truth as it has been revealed in Scripture and confessed by faithful Christians for nearly 2,000 years.”

“Consideration of these proposals threatens the ELCA’s relationship with our partner churches in the Lutheran World Federation. Church leaders from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe have already written letters stating that approval of the sexuality proposals would greatly damage the ELCA’s relationship with their churches,” said the Rev. Mark C. Chavez of Landisville, Pa., director of Lutheran CORE. “These proposals will also severely damage the ELCA’s relationship with Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and most Protestant Christians.”

“The ELCA has already been damaged significantly just by presenting the sexuality proposals to the Churchwide Assembly. And the damage will be compounded no matter what the

assembly decides,” Chavez said. “A Christian church has no business voting on whether the Bible is relevant to the faith and life of its members.”

The 4.6-million member ELCA is scheduled to vote on a proposed social statement on human sexuality that respected theologians and church leaders say would overturn biblical teaching as it has been understood by Christians for nearly 2,000 years. The ELCA’s Churchwide Assembly will also consider a proposal to allow its pastors to be in committed same-sex relationships.

In May, more than 60 theologians and church leaders wrote an Open Letter to the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly calling for the defeat of the proposals. “If the assembly adopts the proposed rules of procedure, a simple majority of one Churchwide Assembly will alter the moral teaching on sexuality we have shared with the vast majority of the church past and present,” the letter states. More than 3,000 people have added their names to the letter.

“In reality, this debate is not about sex. It is about the source of authority in the ELCA. The ELCA claims that the Bible is the source and norm of its faith and life. The sexuality proposals are based on a different source and norm. They reject the clear teaching of Scripture and seek consensus on a different basis,” said Ryan Schwarz of Washington, D.C., a member of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee. “The question is whether the ELCA practices what it says it believes.”

“No church has the authority to overturn the Word of God that protects sexual relations by placing them properly in the structure of marriage, and establishes marriage as being between male and female,” said the Rev. Erma Wolf of Brandon, S.D., vice chair of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee. “When any church finds itself accommodating its teachings to the ways of the culture, that church is in trouble.”

Lutheran CORE is a coalition of pastors, lay people, congregations and reforming groups that seeks to preserve the authority of the Bible in the ELCA. Lutheran CORE seeks to be a voice for the solid, faithful core that is the majority of ELCA members, pastors, and congregations. More information is available at www.lutherancore.org.

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