

AFFILIATION COMMITTEE REPORT

MAY 17, 2011

BRIEF HISTORY

- St. Peter's joined the ELCA in 1988 after the LCA (Lutheran Church in America), the ALC (American Lutheran Church, and the AELC (Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches merged.
- Many Lutherans have been concerned with positions taken by the ELCA and have decided to leave the ELCA and/or the Lutheran denomination.
- St. Peter, in 2009, decided to stop supporting the ELCA financially and directed benevolences directly to organizations and missions.
 - Church council votes unanimously to bypass benevolences to SC State Synod and ELCA so that our giving was not spent on social issues that we were against and did not believe in.

BRIEF HISTORY

- Church council appointed an Affiliation Committee to study alternatives to the ELCA.
 - The Committee studied NALC (North American Lutheran Church, LCMC (Lutheran Church in Mission for Christ), and CORE Coalition For Renewal.
- Committee actively engaged in researching the ELCA policies, both pros and cons.
- Investigated other church affiliations, extensive internet research, attended affiliation meetings and hosted guest speakers.

WHY THE ELCA IS FAILING

- Though intentions were clearly good, the governing structure of the ELCA undercuts the Lutheran statement of faith.
 - the ELCA Churchwide Assembly was made the governing body of the denomination, with the presiding Bishop and the ELCA Church Council serving in an administrative capacity between Assemblies.

WHY THE ELCA IS FAILING

- the make-up of the Assemblies was to be sixty percent lay and forty percent ordained servants of the Lord, thus diminishing the influence of theologically trained leaders on the governance of the denomination.
- the Administrative structure encouraged growth and influence of special interest groups and lobbyist on making policy that did not reflect faithfulness to Scripture and tradition.

WHY THE ELCA IS FAILING

- Contrary to Lutheran Confessions and Scripture, we now hear that:
 - God is *not* referred to as “Father” or with the pronouns “he,” “his,” or “him”, instead terms like “Mother,” is used in some Lutheran churches.
 - We are created good, meaning that we need not repent of sin, nor even recognize it.
 - Our need to repent and to be forgiven is downplayed, to the degree that the salvation offered us by Jesus Christ is unnecessary for we need have no fear of judgment.

WHY THE ELCA IS FAILING

- Contrary to Lutheran Confessions and Scripture, we now hear that:
 - Multiculturalism is replacing evangelism.
 - Mission people are digging wells, but not preaching the Gospel.
 - Sexuality is a social construct, not a biological given.
 - Tolerance of behaviors that are actually destructive of self and others.

WHY THE ELCA IS FAILING

- Politics/Bureaucracy/Lobbyist
- Congregations are unrepresented/ignored
- Top-heavy hierarchy
 - Page 60 of the 2009-2010 budget shows the 2010 expense proposals, with a total budget of 95 million dollars.
 - 65.5 million (69%) is dedicated to support ministry and outreach programs. 29.8 million dollars (31%) covers administration and support services of the ELCA.

ISSUES/CONCERNS

- Authority of Scripture
- Bound Conscience
- Universal Salvation

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- Our constitution states:

The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

ELCA

“Because Biblical writers, editors and compilers were limited by their times and world views, even as we are, the Bible contains material wedded to those times and places. It also means that writers sometimes provide differing and even contradictory views of God’s word, ways and will....Listening to the living Jesus in the context of the church, we therefore have the task of deciding among these. Having done this listening, we sometimes conclude either that the writer’s culture or personal experience (e.g., subordination of women or keeping of slaves) seems to have prompted his missing what God was saying or doing, or that God now is saying or doing something new.”

**The ELCA has removed this page from their website.*

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- Authority of Scripture seen increasingly eroding since 1998. This is how it is happening:
 - Understandings of faith and practice that have endured across generations are willingly changed to accommodate to the view of the world of those secular authorities.
 - Some non-traditional teachings in seminaries (i.e., questioning the Virgin Birth, miracles performed by Jesus, Resurrection myth, Jesus didn't die on the Cross; rather a man).
 - Bound conscience becoming a new theology.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- Scriptural references that support our beliefs on the Authority of Scripture:
 - “For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” (Romans 13:1)
 - All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ ⁶Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:5-6)
 - For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, ²⁷and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- Martin Luther's original defending of the Authority of Scripture:

Martin Luther, under intense pressure to recant regarding "justification by faith" and other recently embraced truths from the Bible, responded to Meister Eck in this fashion:

Since then Your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

FROM OUR RESEARCH, THE ELCA'S VIEW ON THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE IS THAT:

- The ELCA sees Scripture as evolving in the context of societal changes and influences and accepts the evolution of Scripture.
- The ELCA seems to be headed in a more worldly direction, away from the authority of scripture where the Word of God is being manipulated to be culturally accommodating.
- We feel it is the responsibility of the ELCA to guide us to the truth in our understanding of Scripture, not encourage us to put our own wants and desires above God's law for us.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- St. Peter's view on Authority of Scripture
 - Scripture is *not* derived authority bestowed by humans; rather it is the *original* authority of God.
 - Scripture *does not* change with the times or culture; rather it is the *unalterable* authority of God.
 - Scripture is *not* one authority among many possible spiritual authorities; rather it is the *exclusive* spiritual authority of God.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- St. Peter's view on Authority of Scripture
 - Scripture is *not* an authority that can be successfully challenged or rightfully overthrown; rather, it is the *permanent* authority of God..
 - Scripture is *not* merely a suggestive authority; rather it is the *obligatory* authority of God..
 - Scripture is *not* a benign authority in its outcomes; rather it is the *consequential* authority of God.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

This book contains: the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved, and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

Here heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure. It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the Judgment, and is established forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its contents. -Author Unknown

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- Authority of Scripture is not a new issue
 - Martin Luther's stand for Scripture.
 - Some may say that Lutheranism in America is in some part a reaction to the tendency of the Church to be co-opted and the need to right itself when it has been.

BOUND CONSCIENCE

- Bound conscience
 - Term coined by the ELCA's task force on human sexuality.
 - Humans determine what sin is, not God.
 - Takes Scripture and Luther out of context in its defense
 - Pastoral care efforts are scrutinized and diminished
 - Affects Doctrine of Sin, Forgiveness and Salvation

BOUND CONSCIENCE

- Changes the Doctrine of Sin
 - At St. Peter we believe and we confess, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”
- Changes the Doctrine of Forgiveness
 - If we deny our sin, we have no need of repentance of that sin and nothing to be forgiven for.
- Changes the Doctrine of Salvation
 - If we have nothing to be forgiven for, Christ died for nothing.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION

ELCA

“Salvation is what God has in store for you and me and the whole world in spite of death, solely on account of the living, risen Christ.” “Hope for salvation for all people whenever or wherever they might have lived and no matter how religious or irreligious they may have proved themselves. It is clearly God’s assessment that all people shall be saved and come to the knowledge of truth, as stated in 1st Timothy 2:4..”

**The ELCA has removed this page from their website.*

UNIVERSAL SALVATION

- The ELCA acknowledges the exclusivity of Christ as the redeemer and that salvation is found through no other; then they move on to argue the position that if Jesus is the Lord and Savior of all humanity and salvation comes through Jesus Christ, then all will be saved by our Lord Jesus Christ no matter “whenever or wherever they lived or how religious or irreligious they are”.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION

- We are taught that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ.
- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (*John 3:16*)
- He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned. (*Mark 16:16*)
- And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (*Acts 2:21*)

UNIVERSAL SALVATION

- That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised from the dead, thou shall be saved. (*Romans 10:9*)
- “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” (*Hebrews 5:9*)
- For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, (2 Timothy 4:3)

IF WE STAY ELCA

- Future pastors may teach and preach in line with the teachings of the ELCA.
- Find ourselves at odds with newcomers and our own youth who are exposed to a different beliefs.
- ELCA will focus on social justice instead of evangelism.
- Unable to purchase Sunday School materials written from an orthodox Christian standpoint.

IF WE LEAVE THE ELCA

- Continue the fundamental and traditional teachings of Christianity and Lutheranism.
- No bureaucratic burdens.
- No future property issues.
- Congregations ratify changes in church doctrine, not governing body.

IF WE LEAVE THE ELCA

- Energy spent guarding the faith can be spent spreading the faith.
- Increase funding to organizations and missions by eliminating huge administrative costs (cutting out the middle man).

PROCESS FOR LEAVING ELCA

- Resolution to terminate relationship with ELCA conducted at special congregational meeting.
 - Must be approved by 2/3 of voting members.
- Bishop will consult with church within 90 days.
- Second vote is conducted to approve resolution to leave the ELCA and join the NALC.
- If vote passes, resolution is sent to Synod for approval before terminating relationship.

NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

- The NALC is committed to being:
 - Christ-centered
 - Mission-driven
 - Traditionally-grounded
 - Congregationally-focused

NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

- It is a church body committed to the authority of the Bible as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- The NALC is a renewed Lutheran community moving forward in faith and mission, focused on living out Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples.
- *Please see brochure from NALC

RESOURCES

ALL DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON
WWW.STPETERCHAPIN.COM (RESOURCES/ELCA)

The Authority Of Scripture - Richard L. Mayhue, Senior Vice President and Dean, Professor of Theology and Pastoral Ministries; TMSJ 15/2 (Fall 2004) 227-236;

Anaylsis of Lutheran Church Bodies in the United Sates: Information to Support an Affiliation Recommendation. Prepared by the Affiliation Team for St. Timothy's Lutheran Church Council. September 14, 2010.

Be Strong In The Lord - PowerPoint Presentation, Hosanna! Lutheran Church, St. Charles, IL. November 15, 2009; (choose links)

Hosanna! Lutheran Church Task Force - Report to Council; October 22, 2009.

Brief History of Scriptural Authority Crisis in the ELCA; The Rev. Mark Chavez, Director, Lutheran CORE;

A Comparison of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the North American Lutheran Church Denominations. ELCA/NALC Study Group Holy Trinity's Congregational Council, Gastonia, NC; October 18, 2010.



RESOURCES

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WWW.STPETERCHAPIN.COM (RESOURCES/ELCA)

Executive Summary of the Work of the Affiliation Committee 2010, St. Jacobs, Glenville, PA.
November, 2010.

Presentation of the Affiliation Committee, St. Jacob's, Glenville, PA. January 30, 2011.

What Exactly Is Bound Conscience; Don Kriefall, Richfield, WI. Wednesday, February 3, 2010;
Common Sense for a Senseless World

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Comparative Religious Class - Immanuel Lutheran College. Professor David Lau. (what ELCA is accepting and teaching that goes against our beliefs....salvation, resurrection, creation, virgin birth, Jesus's words were not actually spoken by Jesus...basically heresies and for us...non-Christian beliefs)

What Is the ELCA Problem About? Rev. Gary Blobaum, Part of a 7 week course called "Sense and Sensuality".