

## 2010 NORTHWEST WASHINGTON SYNOD ASSEMBLY

### C – The Conservative Option

Source: The Rev. Ronald F. Marshall, First Lutheran Church of West Seattle

WHEREAS the decision at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis MN, August 2009, to allow for same-sex blessings and non-celibate gay clergy to serve the congregations of the ELCA was based on the respect for bound conscience; and

WHEREAS the respect for bound conscience recognizes the diverse perspectives of the members of this church; and

WHEREAS there is no readily available template for congregations in the ELCA to use in putting together the conservative option for their congregations;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA make the following model resolution available on the synod's webpage for any congregation interested in adopting the conservative option for their congregation:

#### Continuing Resolution of Homosexual Behavior

**Be it resolved** that [name of congregation] affirm and adopt as a continuing resolution regarding its parish policy the following three statements that have now, in effect, been rejected by the ELCA, but which have played an important part in our past (and which were passed at the [date] council meeting of [name of congregation] for consideration at [date of congregational meeting]):

[a] Homosexual Behavior is One of Many Sins: The church regards the practice of homosexual erotic behavior as contrary to God's intent for his children. It rejects the contention that homosexual behavior is simply another form of sexual behavior equally valid with the dominant male/female pattern. We have reviewed the challenges to the traditional interpretations of those scripture passages that appear to [prohibit] homosexual behavior. We are not convinced by the evidence presented. Among passages cited as requiring interpretations different from the traditional interpretation are Genesis 18:16 – 19:29; Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:10.

[b] No Homosexual Weddings: We... recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry

[c] **Homosexual Pastors Must Be Celibate:** The expectations of this church regarding the sexual conduct of its ordained ministers are grounded in the understanding that human sexuality is a gift from God and that ordained ministers are to live in such a way as to honor this gift. Ordained ministers are expected to reject sexual promiscuity, the manipulation of others for purposes of sexual gratification, and all attempts of sexual seduction and sexual harassment, including taking physical or emotional advantage of others. Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life. Married ordained ministers are expected to live in fidelity to their spouses, giving expression to sexual intimacy within a marriage relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful. Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual relationship

**Be it further resolved** that homosexuals will continue to be welcomed at [name of congregation] and offered the full resources of pastoral care within the guidelines set forth in this Continuing Resolution and be included in the life of the parish.

**Implications of Resolution (if adopted):**

1. What is the financial impact of this resolution on the synod budget?

None

2. What are the personnel implications within our synod (or Churchwide)? Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?

None

3. How does this resolution enhance and forward the mission of the church and our synod?

This resolution would provide direction and guidance to congregations wanting to pursue the conservative option.