



**RESOLUTION 2010:1 - RESOLUTION TO REMOVE SOCIAL STATEMENT “HUMAN SEXUALITY: GIFT AND TRUST”**

WHEREAS, The 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in accordance with ELCA bylaw 12.12.01, adopted a social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” by exactly a two-thirds vote; and

WHEREAS, The social statement has generated substantial disagreement and debate among faithful members of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, Congregations and members of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America believe that the social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” should be reconsidered and removed; and

WHEREAS, Members and congregations of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America submitted twelve resolutions related to this matter to the 2010 Assembly of the Nebraska Synod; and

WHEREAS, “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” expressly provides for reconsideration of a social statement by the Churchwide Assembly following its adoption and its removal or revision; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod Assembly direct the Nebraska Synod Council to request the Church Council to request the Churchwide Assembly to reconsider and remove the social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns.”\*

\* The “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” provides a process for reconsideration of a social statement. This process applies in lieu of the motion to rescind/amend something previously adopted as addressed in Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised (10<sup>th</sup> ed.), section 35. The relevant provision of the ELCA policy on p. 17 states as follows:

*Churchwide Assemblies may reconsider previously adopted social statements. Such reconsideration may involve either a revision or removal of the statement. This may be done in two ways:*

1. *A Churchwide Assembly, by a two-thirds vote, may call for the reconsideration of a social statement at the next assembly. Subsequent to such a vote, the social statement shall be referred to the Church in Society unit for re-study. The proposed change and the reasons for it shall be made available to this church with an official notice of such proposed action to be sent to the synods by the secretary of this church at least three months prior to the Churchwide Assembly at which it will be considered. A two-thirds vote of the assembly shall be required to revise or remove the social statement.*
2. *The Church Council by a two-thirds vote of its voting members may ask the Churchwide Assembly to reconsider a social statement. Such Church Council action must be taken no later than at the Church Council meeting in the autumn prior to the assembly. The proposed change and the reasons for it shall then be made available to this church with an official notice of such proposed action to be sent to the synods by the secretary of this church at least three months prior to the Churchwide Assembly. A two-thirds vote of the assembly shall be required to reconsider the statement and also to revise or remove it. Both actions may occur at the same assembly.*

**Action of the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee:**

*The Nebraska Synod received twelve different resolutions (see Informational Items A-L) prior to the pre-assembly deadline that addressed the 2009 Churchwide Assembly’s adoption of the Social Statement, “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” and the resolutions on ministry policy. All of the resolutions received prior to the deadline, were asking that the actions of the Churchwide Assembly be reversed in some way or another. Parliamentary procedure allows an issue to be addressed only once. After the first resolution is dealt with, the rest of the resolutions on this same issue could not be brought to the Assembly. In addition, a number of the resolutions had technical problems that would not have resulted in action at the Churchwide expression of the ELCA.*

*To permit the issue to be debated by the assembly the Resolutions Reference and Counsel Committee has prepared two substitute resolutions to be presented to the assembly in lieu of the 12 different resolutions that were originally submitted. Resolution 2010:1 addresses the Social Statement and resolution 2010:2 addresses the resolutions on ministry policy.*

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*The committee believes these resolutions capture the spirit and intent of the original 12 resolutions and are in a form that permit the assembly to debate them and if adopted would result in the intended message being sent to the Churchwide expression of the ELCA. The original 12 resolutions are included in the bulletin of reports as information items, but will not be taken up at this assembly individually.*

**OPINION & RATIONALE OF THE RESOLUTIONS,  
REFERENCE & COUNSEL COMMITTEE:**

*The Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee offers no opinion on whether Resolution 2010:1 should be adopted. This substitute resolution is offered merely so the 2010 Assembly of the Nebraska Synod can debate the issue. The constitution of the Nebraska Synod (S7.41.25) permits the Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee to offer substitute resolutions.*

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**Resolution 2010:2 – Memorial to Rescind  
Actions on Ministry Policies**

WHEREAS, The 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted resolutions on ministry policies that included a commitment to “finding ways for people in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church” [CA09.05.26] and also included a process of “structured flexibility” that would eliminate the prohibition on rostered service by individuals in such relationships while not imposing such service on any expression of this church [CA09.05.27]; and

WHEREAS, In compliance with and in order to implement the actions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA Church Council has amended the policy on reinstatement to the roster and has considered amendments to “Visions and Expectations,” “Definition and Guidelines for Discipline,” the “Candidacy Manual,” and other documents; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seek the rescission of the actions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on ministry policies and of the actions adopted by the Church Council to implement them and desire the restoration of ministry policies that authorize sexual intimacy for rostered persons only in the context of heterosexual marriage; and

WHEREAS, Members and congregations of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America submitted twelve resolutions related to this matter to the 2010 Assembly of the Nebraska Synod; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2011 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as follows:

- (1) To rescind actions CA09.05.26 and CA09.05.27 of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly; and
- (2) To direct the appropriate churchwide units and offices to prepare, the Committee on Appeals to make, and the ELCA Church Council to approve and adopt, appropriate amendments to the policy documents, which were revised in response to those

prior actions, in order to re-establish the prohibition of rostered service by non-celibate homosexual persons and to restore the requirement for rostered persons that sexual intimacy take place only in the context of heterosexual marriage.

**Action of the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee:**

*The Nebraska Synod received twelve different resolutions (see Informational Items A-L) prior to the pre-assembly deadline that addressed the 2009 Churchwide Assembly’s adoption of the Social Statement, “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” and the resolutions on ministry policy. All of the resolutions received prior to the deadline, were asking that the actions of the Churchwide Assembly be reversed in some way or another. Parliamentary procedure allows an issue to be addressed only once. After the first resolution is dealt with, the rest of the resolutions on this same issue could not be brought to the Assembly. In addition, a number of the resolutions had technical problems that would not have resulted in action at the Churchwide expression of the ELCA.*

*To permit the issue to be debated by the assembly the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee has prepared two substitute resolutions to be presented to the assembly in lieu of the 12 different resolutions that were originally submitted. Resolution 2010:1 addresses the Social Statement and resolution 2010:2 addresses the resolutions on ministry policy. The committee believes these resolutions capture the spirit and intent of the original 12 resolutions and are in a form that permit the assembly to debate them and if adopted would result in the intended message being sent to the Churchwide expression of the ELCA. The original 12 resolutions are included in the bulletin of reports as information items, but will not be taken up at this assembly individually.*

**OPINION & RATIONALE OF THE RESOLUTIONS, REFERENCE & COUNSEL COMMITTEE:**

*The Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee offers no opinion on whether Resolution 2010:2 should be adopted. This substitute resolution is offered merely so the 2010 Assembly of the Nebraska Synod can debate the issue. The constitution of the Nebraska Synod (S7.41.25) permits the Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee to offer substitute resolutions.*

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "A"**

WHEREAS, The 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA has adopted the social statement, "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust"; and

WHEREAS, In Part IV (lines 620-628 in the Pre-Assembly Report) this statement reads: The historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions have recognized marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman, reflecting Mark 10:6-9: "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh, so they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one put asunder" (Jesus here recalls Genesis 1:27; 2:23-24); and

WHEREAS, In Part IV (lines 740-744, as amended, of the Pre-Assembly Report) it reads: Recognizing that this conclusion differs from the historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions, some people, though not all, in this church and within the larger Christian community, conclude that marriage is also the appropriate term to use in describing similar benefits, protection, and support for same-gender couples entering into lifelong monogamous relationships; and

WHEREAS, The statement then goes on to treat these two positions and the variants within them as of equal validity, on the basis of the "conscience-bound beliefs" of those who hold them (Part IV, lines 809-868 of the Pre-Assembly Report); and

WHEREAS, On this same basis of the "conscience-bound lack of consensus in this church: (lines 452-453 of the Report and Recommendations in Ministry Policies in Part V of the Pre-Assembly Report) the resolutions on ministry policies (SA09.05.23-24-26&27) were adopted; and

WHEREAS, Neither the Social Statement nor the Recommendation on Ministry Policies present an argument based on Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and with the aid of sound reason either to reject what is admitted to be the position of the historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions based on Scripture or to accept a position which is admitted to be contrary to the

historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The Confession of Faith of the ELCA (Chapter 2 of the ELCA Constitution) commits the ELCA to accept the canonical Scriptures as the authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith and life, and to accept the confessional writing of the Lutheran Church as a true witness of the Gospel and valid interpretations of the faith of the Church; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the St. John's Lutheran Church of Ohio, Nebraska, repudiate the decisions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly in adopting the social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" and the 4 Resolutions on Ministry Policies (CA09.05.23-24-26&27) as violations of the Confession of Faith, Chapter 2 of the ELCA Constitution; and

RESOLVED, That the St. John's Lutheran Church of Ohio, Nebraska, memorialize the Nebraska ELCA Synod and the ELCA Church Council to repudiate these actions as violations of the Confession of Faith, Chapter 2 of the ELCA Constitution, refuse to implement these actions, and begin the process to overturn these decisions at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

Submitted by

St. John's Lutheran Church  
Ohio, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "B"**

WHEREAS, The 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA resolved to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous and same-gender relationships; and

WHEREAS, The 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA resolved to find a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as professional leaders in the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, The 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA resolved to provide congregations and synods with structured flexibility so that they may choose whether or not to approve or call people in publicly accountable, life-long monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve of ELCA rosters; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Churchwide Assembly rescind the above resolutions and return to the social statement found in Vision and Expectations.

Submitted by

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Blue Hill, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "C"**

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has experienced a tumult concerning the 2009 resolution allowing committed same sex couples to be in the ordained ministry; and

WHEREAS, The Biblical understanding of the issue remains clouded; and

WHEREAS, For the sake of the unity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod of the ELCA memorialize the ELCA at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to return to Visions and Expectations of the 1990 standard concerning the sexual orientation of members of the ordained ministry.

Submitted by

Pastor Harold Laursen  
Kearney, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "D"**

WHEREAS, That God said we are all sinners, and He sent his son to die for us that we may be saved;

WHEREAS, That God said follow me and sin no more;

WHEREAS, That God said we first need to repent of our sin;

WHEREAS, That God said do not believe in false teaching and prophets;

WHEREAS, That God said follow me and I will make you fishers of people;

WHEREAS, That God said may thy will be done; therefore be it

RESOVED, That God's will and word must be followed and believed; and

RESOLVED, That people with same gender relationships not be able to serve as rostered leaders of this church.

Submitted by:

Steve & Patti Ocker  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Glenvil, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "E"**

WHEREAS, ELCA called upon its members to commit themselves to respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree regarding decisions on the call and rostering of individuals in publicly accountable, life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships, in this church and with churches ecumenically and globally; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, Members, congregations, candidacy committees, and synods of the ELCA acknowledge the gifts and skills for ministry, but believe that this church must maintain an expectation of celibacy for any gay or lesbian person, whether or not that person is in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, and thus believe that this church cannot call or roster people in such relationships.

Submitted by:

Dale Valentine  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Glenvil, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "F"**

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PREAMBLE: Whereas, the Eleventh ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August 2009 adopted the Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust the 10th Social Statement;

WHEREAS, This social statement contains language that will allow people in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders in the ELCA congregations; and

WHEREAS, It appears that the ELCA has desired to comply with the trends of society and of being politically correct; and

WHEREAS, The resolution as caused anger, controversy, loss of members, loss of whole congregations and a financial loss for the ELCA and the Nebraska Synod, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Churchwide and Synod Councils review these effects of the assembly's actions knowing that the people in the congregations and members of the ELCA know about the interpretations of Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 about being judgmental, but also know about scripture references in Romans 1:26-32, 1 Timothy 1:8-11 and old testament references in Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13 that indicates that homosexuality is sinful; and

RESOLVED, That church leaders beware of the warnings in Acts 20:25-33 that "some in your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice disciples to follow them" and in the book of 2 John; and

RESOLVED, That the church councils of the ELCA and the Nebraska Synod take action to make the necessary changes to the Social Statement by the next assembly.

Submitted by:

Donna Valentine  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Glenvil, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "G"**

WHEREAS, That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) 2009 Churchwide Assembly adopted the Social Statement -- "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust;" and

WHEREAS, The 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted in the Ministry Policy: "Resolved, that in the implementation of any resolutions on ministry policies, the ELCA commit itself to bear one another's burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all;" and

WHEREAS, The 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted in the Ministry Policy: "This resolution called upon members to respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree;... and urged that this church continue to trust congregations, bishops, synods and others responsible for determining who should be called into public ministry;" and

WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution calls us to: (4.02.f) "Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives;" and

WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution calls us to: (5.03.j) "Assure faithfulness to this church's confessional position and purpose and provide for resolution of disputes;" and

WHEREAS, The Social Statement and related Ministry Policy changes have brought forth an increase in membership losses, congregational and pastoral divisions, synodical financial losses, and an increase in congregational departures; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod recognize that these changes have wounded the Church, bringing division, pain, and losses; and

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod work to memorialize the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to rescind the Social Statement: "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust;" and

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod, in recognition of the divisiveness of these ministry changes and financial and membership losses, work to memorialize the 2011 Churchwide

Assembly to rescind the social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," rescind the 2009 ministry policy changes; and rescind the implementing resolution; and uphold and commend the entire church to continued study of Holy Scripture in regard to sexual norms and boundaries for sexual behavior as we seek to be united around and faithful to God.

Submitted by:

Parish Planning Council  
Bethel Lutheran Church  
Holdrege, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "H"**

WHEREAS, We as members of the St. Paul church of Glenvil and ELCA Synod are concerned about the adoption of the policy allowing homosexuals the right to preach in our pulpits. We think it was adopted in haste and without thorough knowledge of Bible teachings and feelings of church members. We would ask to please review the adoption procedure and the concern of members when going forward, and ask that it be readdressed. In our faith we believe the bible is the inspired Word of God, therefore with verses like Romans 1:26 and Lev. 8:22, I do not understand how we as a people have the right to vote on allowing homosexuals to be ordained into church ministry, to be our teachers and leaders. We should not allow the ordination into ministry homosexuals who practice that lifestyle. We can love and accept the person but not the lifestyle therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this vote be overturned because it has been stated in scripture that love rejoiceth not in iniquity. St. Paul rebukes the Corinthian Christians for boasting of their sin. Entrusting and ordaining homosexuals to serve in the clergy is the highest and most insulting form of boasting of sin that can be performed. This boasting infects and disgraces everyone in the communion of the Lutheran Church, ELCA therefore be it

RESOLVED, That if the vote to roster homosexual clergy in the ELCA is not overturned the Nebraska Synod withdraw from the ELCA and join with another Lutheran body that is true to scripture.

Submitted by

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Glenvil, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "I"**

WHEREAS, The delegates approval in a motion at the 2009 ELCA Convention allowing homosexual men and women to serve as clergy in the church violates the Biblical teaching and has caused great offense throughout the church, be it

RESOLVED, That this vote be overturned because allowing homosexuals to serve as pastors violates clear statements in the Word of God (which cannot be ignored by explaining them away) such as Romans 1, especially verses 26-27: "God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another"; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this vote be overturned because it violates St. Paul's instructions to overseers in the church (i.e., pastors) in which he writes in verse 2: "Now the overseer must be above reproach"; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this vote be overturned because we cannot expect God to bless our church and our mission if we ignore this express commands and base our theology on the spirit of the times.

Submitted by

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Glenvil, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "J"**

WHEREAS, That gay and lesbian behavior is an abomination of God's law;

WHEREAS, That being "politically correct" is an empty gesture;

WHEREAS, That the ELCA's decision to allow noncelibate gay or lesbian ministers to call, if they choose, a minister in a committed, same sex relationship is a violation of the Confession of Faith, Chapter 2 of the ELCA constitution; and

WHEREAS, The recent synod decision concerning noncelibate gay or lesbian ministers has resulted in the loss of membership and thus revenue for the synod as a whole; and

WHEREAS, The Nebraska Synod, Resolution 11, voted against said behavior; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod position against said behavior be validated again; and

RESOLVED, that the ELCA as a whole, repudiate this position.

Submitted by:

Gerald Bond  
Zion Lutheran Church  
Lincoln, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "K"**

Resolved, That the Nebraska Synod of the ELCA resolves that it is opposed to the rostering of persons and the blessing of unions of persons who engage in homosexual acts. Therefore, it is resolved that the Nebraska Synod urges the ELCA to reconsider its action and repeal all resolutions approving or condoning homosexual practices including rostering and blessing unions of those persons engaging in such practices.

Submitted by:

Salem Lutheran Church  
Fremont, Nebraska

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM "L"**

WHEREAS, The Christian religion is under siege in the world generally and in the United States in particular with vehement opposition to many traditional understandings of good and evil; and

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has become embroiled in a contentious disagreement concerning human sexuality, specifically the role of same-gendered persons in positions of pastoral leadership within the Church body; and

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Constitution clearly states "This church accepts canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source of its proclamation, faith, and life"; and

WHEREAS, Neither the Old nor the New Testament gives approval to same-gender sexual intimacy, but instead deems it forbidden, unnatural, and sinful in passages from Leviticus, Judges, Romans, I Corinthians, I Timothy; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America petition the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reaffirm obedience to the letter and spirit of its constitutional statement of belief in the teachings of God's word as the standard for Christian living; and be it further

RESOLVED, With due respect and love toward those involved in the practice of all sins, the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America request the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to recognize that biblical teaching and standards regarding the practice of same-gender sexual intimacy as sin.

Submitted by:

St. John Lutheran Church  
Daykin, Nebraska

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Gilead, Nebraska

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**RESOLUTION 2010:3 – Change in  
Congregational Legal Status**

PREAMBLE: The Nebraska ELCA Synod and member parishes/congregations shall change their corporate 501(c) 3 status to that of a “trust” or other means that removes any jurisdiction from the creating corporations “THE STATE OF NEBRASKA” and/or “THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.”

WHEREAS, God created man and woman, not any government; and

WHEREAS, faith communities (Christian churches) are created by people to worship God our creator, not worship our government; and

WHEREAS, A corporate 501(c)3 status for our churches does place our means of expressing biblical values under the jurisdiction of “THE STATE OF NEBRASKA” and “THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA”. These corporations do not accept God as our creator, but themselves; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the change of status of the Nebraska ELCA and member parishes to that of one where expression of Christian faith in worship and community is unfettered. This shall occur on or before January 1, 2011; and

RESOLVED, That the ELCA and member parishes shall retain all 1st amendment rights of expression under the protection of our U.S. constitution on any subject; and

RESOLVED, That the ELCA Synod and member parishes shall replace their corporate charter and bylaws created under the guidelines of a 501(c)3 corporate status with a charter that no longer needs/or requests permission from corporate government to exist and perform.

Submitted by

Marvin Hughes  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Glenvil

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**OPINION & RATIONALE OF THE  
RESOLUTIONS, REFERENCE & COUNSEL  
COMMITTEE:**

*It is the opinion of the Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee that Resolution 2010:3 be ruled out of order because it conflicts with the constitution of this church as well as state and federal laws.*

*Congregations already have First Amendment rights and any organization that functions is subject to civil law. Incorporation and tax-exemption actually protect the church and its members from many of the detrimental effects of civil law.*

*The purpose of being a 501(c)3 corporation is to exempt an organization from taxes and the corporate structure is designed to avoid individual liability. If the corporate structure changes, then the organization will be subject to taxation and will lose protection for individual members.*

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**RESOLUTION 2010:4 - Advocacy**

WHEREAS, That the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America adopted "The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" as a social teaching statement in 1991 "to affirm and commit this church's participation in society in its work to defend human dignity, to stand with poor and powerless people, to advocate justice, to work for peace, and to care for the earth in the processes and structures of contemporary society;"<sup>1</sup> and

WHEREAS, "The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" acknowledges that Christians can exercise their calling "by being wise and active citizens...[and] carry out their citizenship...through participation in voluntary associations and movements, both religious and secular;"<sup>1</sup> and

WHEREAS, Many individual church members carry out this practice according to their own beliefs and interests, and

WHEREAS, As we continue to be both citizens of our local, state, and national levels and the body of Christ, we recognize that the social issues that face our church members are as different and varied as the cities, states, and regions in which we live and the individual people who live there; and

WHEREAS, Because we are diverse beings there will be passionate disagreements regarding social issues that face each of us; and

WHEREAS, As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America are as stated in our Vision: "Sent by God's grace for the sake of the world, we will proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people following the example of our Lord Jesus, and strive for justice and peace in all the world,"<sup>1</sup> now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod be encouraged to strengthen its communication to Nebraska Synod members regarding social justice on domestic and foreign policy issues facing the nation, and empower each member of the Synod to individually advocate for their personal beliefs as related to these issues; and

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod memorialize the ELCA in Assembly to strengthen its communication to ELCA members regarding social justice on domestic and foreign policy

issues facing the nation, and empower each member of the ELCA to individually advocate for their personal beliefs as related to these issues; and

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod memorialize the ELCA in Assembly to redirect monies currently being used for Advocacy through the ELCA Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA) to enhancing communication with ELCA members regarding social justice issues.

Submitted by:

Parish Planning Council  
Bethel Lutheran Church  
Holdrege, Nebraska

**OPINION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, REFERENCE & COUNSEL COMMITTEE:**

*The Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee offers no opinion on Resolution 2010:4.*

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<sup>1</sup>From elca.org website

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**RESOLUTION 2010:5 – ELCA Health Benefits Plan Coverage**

WHEREAS, The ELCA Health Benefits Plan pays, without question, for all abortion procedures performed during the first five months of pregnancy for which reimbursement has been requested, even *though* the canonical Scriptures (which the ELCA accepts as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life) affirm that human life begins at conception and develops in the womb (Genesis 21:2, Job 10:8-12, Job 31:15, Psalm 139:13-16, Isaiah 44:24, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:30-31, 41-42) and that murder, especially of innocent life, is prohibited (Exodus 20:13, Proverbs 6:16-17); and the Christian tradition has always spoken clearly and strongly against abortion as a sin against God and humanity; and modern science has confirmed that human life begins at conception, and modern ultrasound technology has revealed in great detail the physical development of the child in the womb; and the ELCA Social Statement on abortion acknowledges that "induced abortion" is "the act of intentionally terminating a developing life in the womb" and expresses "concern for both the life of the woman and the developing life in her womb"; and

WHEREAS, 98.9 percent of abortions take place during the first five months of pregnancy and therefore the ELCA Health Benefits plan offers to pay for almost all abortions for which reimbursement is requested through the plan; and

WHEREAS, Relative to many other health insurance policies, the ELCA Health Benefits Plan's coverage of abortion is an example of a very permissive health insurance policy; and

WHEREAS, The ELCA Health Benefits Plan is "self-insured" and therefore the ELCA has the maximum freedom to design and administer the plan as it chooses; and

WHEREAS, The ELCA Health Benefits Plan is funded primarily by offering dollars and therefore church members' offering dollars may have been used and may be used to pay for abortions; and

WHEREAS, Polls have shown that a majority of Americans are opposed to their tax dollars being used to pay for abortion; and

WHEREAS, It follows logically that a majority of Americans, including ELCA Lutherans, are also opposed to their church offering dollars being used to pay for abortions (or would be if they knew); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod will declare it unjust for the ELCA to pay for abortions except when an abortion has been an unavoidable by-product of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of the mother; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod will memorialize the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to declare that the ELCA Health Benefits plan will no longer pay for abortions except when an abortion has been an unavoidable by-product of medical procedures necessary to prevent the death of the mother.

Submitted by:

John Vincent  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Stamford, Nebraska

***Opinion & Rationale of the Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee:***

*The Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee recommends that Resolution 2010:5 be ruled out of order. The ELCA adopted a social statement on abortion at the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, pursuant to the Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns. Later, the 1999 Churchwide Assembly voted to continue moral deliberation on abortion, but declined to amend the social statement.*

*The document on Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns provides that actions on social issues, such as abortion, are to be consistent with the teachings and policy of social statements of this church. The document also specifies a procedure for reconsideration or amendment of a social statement.*

*This resolution appears to attempt to commit the Nebraska synod to positions and practices that are inconsistent with the ELCA social statement on abortion. The ELCA Board of Pensions health plan covers abortion, consistent with the ELCA social statement on abortion.*

*The social statement on abortion describes underlying basic faith convictions, provides thoughtful guidance in making decisions regarding unintended pregnancies, and discusses morally responsible decision-making in*

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*ending pregnancy. In doing so, it also recognizes the importance of pastoral and other professional counseling and prayerful discernment. It explicitly recognizes that what is a morally responsible decision in one circumstance may not be in another.*

*Resolution 2010:5 is inconsistent with the social statement on two important points. It seeks to "declare unjust" payment for abortions, except to prevent the death of the mother. The social statement looks at abortion from many perspectives besides "justice" and presents a much more complex and nuanced set of parameters for determining when termination of a pregnancy may be morally defensible - for example where there is a clear threat to the physical life of the woman, in cases of rape or incest, where a woman is so dominated and oppressed that she has no choice regarding sexual intercourse and little access to contraceptives, or where there is extreme fetal abnormality that will result in severe suffering and very early death of the infant. Further, by prescribing a blanket rule, the resolution eliminates or minimizes the role of pastoral and professional counseling in decision-making.*

*Individual members of this church are free to disagree with a social statement and to urge its reconsideration, amendment, or rescission. The proper approach would be to request the churchwide organization, by means of a resolution or memorial, to reconsider or amend the social statement, in accordance with the Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns, rather than asking the Nebraska Synod to take positions inconsistent with the existing social statement on abortion.*

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**RESOLUTION 2010:6 - Abortion**

WHEREAS, The ELCA accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life; and

WHEREAS, The canonical Scriptures affirm that God is the Creator of all life (Genesis 1:27-28); that human life begins at conception and develops in the womb (Genesis 21:2, Job 10:8-12, Job 31:15, Psalm 139:13-16, Isaiah 44:24, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:3-31, 41-42); and that murder, especially of innocent life, is prohibited (Exodus 20:13, Proverbs 6:16-17); and

WHEREAS, The Christian tradition has always spoken clearly and strongly against abortion as a sin against God and humanity; and

WHEREAS, Modern science has confirmed that each moment of human conception is the beginning of a new and unique human life, and modern ultrasound technology has revealed in great detail the physical development of the child in the womb; and

WHEREAS, The United States continues, since 1973, to sanction abortion as a legally acceptable response to an unexpected or difficult pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, There is ever-increasing evidence that even legal abortion causes great physical, psychological, and spiritual harm to women; and

WHEREAS, The ELCA declares itself to be a church that is diverse and inclusive, welcoming and hospitable to the stranger, and protective of the vulnerable, defenseless, and marginalized, all terms that apply to the unborn child; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod of the ELCA will publicly confess and declare its belief that all human beings are made in the image of God, that each human life begins at the moment of conception, and that all human life, from conception through natural death, is sacred and to be honored and protected; and

RESOLVED, That pastors will be urged to speak to their congregations about this Resolution and to make available to them written materials on life related issues, including information from community services for pregnant women and their

families and for women who already suffer the consequences of abortion; and

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod will instruct pastors to counsel women with unplanned or problematic pregnancies, and those who are concerned for them, to turn to options other than abortion, including referring them to individuals and organizations in the congregation and the community that will provide the practical support needed to resist the temptation to terminate the lives of their children; and

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod will encourage pastors and congregations to support and become involved with pro-life advocacy ministries, such as Lutherans for Life and Priests for Life; and ministries to women who have had abortions and are seeking reconciliation and healing, such as Word of Hope and Rachel's Vineyard; and

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod will invite pro-life individuals, especially post-abortive women, to speak at the Synod events and congregations will be encouraged to invite such individuals to speak at local church events; and

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod will urge pastors and congregations to strive through prayer and proclamation to effect the changes in local and national laws that are necessary to provide full protection for all unborn and born children and their mothers.

Submitted by:

John Vincent  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Stamford, Nebraska

***Opinion & Rationale of the Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee:***

*It is the opinion of the Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee that Resolution 2010:6 be ruled out of order. The ELCA adopted a social statement on abortion at the 1991 Churchwide Assembly, pursuant to the Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns. Later, the 1999 Churchwide Assembly voted to continue moral deliberation on abortion, but declined to amend the social statement.*

*The document on Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns provides that actions on social issues,*

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*such as abortion, are to be consistent with the teachings and policy of social statements of this church. The document also specifies a procedure for reconsideration or amendment of a social statement.*

*This resolution appears to attempt to commit the Nebraska Synod to positions and practices that are inconsistent with the ELCA social statement on abortion. The social statement on abortion describes underlying basic faith convictions, provides thoughtful guidance in making decisions regarding unintended pregnancies, and discusses morally responsible decision-making in ending pregnancy. In doing so, it also recognizes the importance of pastoral and other professional counseling and prayerful discernment. It explicitly recognizes that what is a morally responsible decision in one circumstance may not be in another.*

*Resolution 2010:6 is inconsistent with the social statement on abortion in a number of areas. It seeks to definitively state that each human life begins at the moment of conception, whereas the social statement does not take that position. The resolution also seeks to diminish the discretion of pastoral and professional counselors and to diminish the call for engaging in and fostering meaningful community dialogue. With respect to the first and third "resolved" clauses, amendment of the social statement is implicitly called for, and this requires action in accordance with the Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns.*

*Individual members of this church are free to disagree with a social statement and to urge its reconsideration, amendment, or rescission. The proper approach would be to request the churchwide organization, by means of a resolution or memorial, to reconsider or amend the social statement, in accordance with the Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns, rather than asking the Nebraska Synod to take positions inconsistent with the existing social statement on abortion.*