

A Memorial to Refrain from Considering All Motions Favoring Revisions Related to Clergy Sexual Conduct in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* and *Vision and Expectations* and ELCA Bylaws

1 WHEREAS the decision of the Discipline Hearing Committee in the case of Rev.
2 Bradley E. Schmeling has been appealed to the ELCA Committee on Appeals, and with
3 respect to all persons surrounding the Schmeling case and similar cases, and
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5 WHEREAS the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted to continue the study of human
6 sexuality and authorized the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and the study
7 called “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk About Human Sexuality,”
8 with recommendations to be brought before the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and
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10 WHEREAS the ELCA Conference of Bishops in a pastoral message dated March 6,
11 2007, affirmed the action of the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in order to allow the
12 study process to run its course, and
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14 WHEREAS proposals are being made to revise the existing *Definitions and Guidelines*
15 *for Discipline* and/or *Visions and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical*
16 *Lutheran Church in America* documents and/or the ELCA Bylaws concerning matters of
17 clergy sexual conduct, and
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19 WHEREAS any revisions to the above mentioned documents would circumvent the work
20 currently underway by the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and the study
21 called “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk About Human Sexuality” as
22 well as the ability of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to receive and act on the
23 report, therefore be it finally
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25 RESOLVED that the 2007 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2007
26 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to refrain from considering all motions calling for
27 revisions to the clergy sexual conduct provisions in the existing *Definitions and*
28 *Guidelines for Discipline* and/or *Visions and Expectations* documents and/or the ELCA
29 Bylaws until the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly receives the full report and
30 recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality and the study
31 called “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk About Human Sexuality.”

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Adopted by: Bloomington Conference Assembly, March 8, 2007

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The Reference and Counsel Committee forwards this resolution to the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly for consideration without recommendation.

Background Information

Message of the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America March 6, 2007

This pastoral message of the Conference of Bishops is offered as we prepare for upcoming Synod Assemblies and the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

We remind this church that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly resolved that the “members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions [of this church] be urged to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ” (CA05.05.17).

This church is engaged in a careful study of issues related to human sexuality with the intention of adopting a social statement at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. We urge the members of this church to engage fully and faithfully in the study process as part of our “living together faithfully” during this time.

We trust the Holy Spirit to guide us and have confidence in the constitutional process that orders our conversation as we engage together in moral deliberation at Synod Assemblies and the Churchwide Assembly.

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits itself to faithful leadership as, together, we seek the mind of Christ on these matters.