

Dear Bishop (?) –

First say something about who from your family and/or your congregation attended the youth gathering

Then say something regarding the very positive things about the gathering that were reported by those who attended

However, there are some things about the gathering that gravely concerned and even deeply offended me.

I am a member of a congregation that has a very traditional view of the Bible and matters relating to human sexuality. Our pastors have always taught, and I have always believed, that God created us male and female and that sexual activity is to take place only between one man and one woman who are married. I see same-sex relationships and transgenderism becoming increasingly not only accepted but promoted within our society, and I know that the ELCA voted several years ago to allow people in same-sex relationships to become pastors. But I have always understood that the ELCA also said that it would honor and respect those of us who hold to a traditional view.

I had been counting on the ELCA to do what it had promised it would do. So I do not understand how and why the youth who attended the recent youth gathering were subjected to the kind of blatant brainwashing that they received from some of the keynote speakers. One of the speakers, who is an ELCA pastor and an incredibly gifted communicator, led all the youth in shouting out that they agree that the traditional view on human sexuality is a lie. Another speaker was an eleven-year-old child who promoted transgenderism. Transgenderism has never been approved by the ELCA, but here it was being promoted to our young people. This very remarkable child was more excited about having a rainbow-colored flag out in front of the church building than a cross.

I was amazed over how difficult it was to find information on the youth gathering's website about the keynote speakers. I was wondering what the organizers were trying to hide. When I finally was able to find information, I went on the internet to learn more about the speakers, especially those who were listed first, because I assumed that they are the ones whose presence and presentations were being most promoted. I was absolutely shocked to learn that two of the keynote speakers are signers of a document called "We Are Naked and Unashamed." This document rejects marriage by any definition as normative for sexual activity. I was absolutely astounded and deeply concerned to learn that many ELCA pastors and seminarians do not want to have to be married to be sexually active, and that the ELCA has done nothing to reject or counter that movement. What are the ELCA leaders afraid of? Why do they not take a stand against something that is so obviously contrary to the Bible?

It is bad enough when you find that you cannot trust a political candidate or a person with whom you are doing business. It is far worse when you find that you cannot trust your church. And yet that is the conclusion I have come to. I cannot trust the ELCA. I cannot trust it to keep its promises to honor and respect the traditional view on human sexuality and to honor and respect people who hold to that view. I cannot trust it with the spiritual care of my children (or grandchildren). I cannot trust the ELCA, so I cannot trust anything it says or does.

I know that typically ELCA leaders just ignore people like me who write letters like this. This is far too serious a situation for you to just ignore. The ELCA needs either to keep its promises to honor and respect those of us with a traditional view, or it needs to come clean and reveal that it no longer believes and it no longer feels bound by what it had said it believed and what it said it would do.

Please come clean and tell us. Telling the truth and keeping your promises is God's way. Telling lies and using deceit to gain enough votes in order to get a resolution passed and a social statement approved are the ways of darkness. If there is any organization that needs to tell the truth, keep its promises, and do things God's way it is the Church.