

From: Charlton, David [email address deleted]
Sent: Monday, September 3, 2018 10:50 PM
To: bishop@elca.org
Subject: Seminaries for Traditional Candidates

September 3, 2018

Dear Bishop Eaton,

I am writing to ask whether the ELCA has any plan to assure that traditional Lutherans who would like to be ordained in the ELCA have the opportunity to receive a seminary education. In similar manner, are there plans to assure that traditional ELCA congregations will be able to find pastors who are willing to preach and teach in accordance the congregation's theological commitments. In 2009, we were urged to live together despite our disagreements. We were told that there would be room for people holding any of the four valid positions outlined in HSGT. The question today is whether there is indeed room for people holding traditional views on human sexuality.

This has become a concern for me and my congregation in the wake of the conflict at United Lutheran Seminary. That the president of ULS once considered homosexuality to be sinful was deemed harmful to LGBTQ persons and put the RIC status of that seminary in jeopardy. Reconciling Works seems to assume that RIC status means that traditional views on sexuality have been eliminated from an institution. If a person who rejected her past beliefs about homosexuality was deemed intolerable, what about people who still hold that belief? Is there room on the ULS faculty or in the ULS student body for people who hold positions 1 or 2 as described in the 2009 social statement on human sexuality? Currently, all ELCA seminaries but Luther are RIC. If, as is expected, Luther becomes a RIC seminary, will ELCA Lutherans who believe that homosexuality is sinful or who oppose same-sex marriage have an place in any of our seminaries?

If our seminaries are effectively closed to Lutherans having traditional views about human sexuality, where will such people be able to receive theological training? Where will traditional congregations find pastors that meet their needs?

I would like to be assured that traditional students are welcome at ELCA seminaries and are not subject harassment or undue pressure to change their views. I would like to be assured that theologians who hold traditional views are not excluded from consideration for teaching positions at our seminaries.

I look forward to your response and hope that my concerns are unfounded.

Yours in Christ,

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