

Eaton's Elephant

ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (NE Ohio) frets over the deficit in her synod. She asks: Are laity redirecting their giving out of "principled or punitive" reasons? And further:

"What do we do? Compete with the mega-churches? Jettison the Lord's Prayer and the Creed to be more accessible? Preach a 'health and wealth' gospel that promises people their 'best life now'? Rescind every action of every churchwide assembly since 1988?"

ELCA leaders refuse to look at the elephant in the room: The problem is not "the people." The problem is that ELCA leaders have sold their Reformation heritage for a mess of pottage.

Eaton thinks not. She writes:

"On our own we are helpless and lost. We cannot effect our deliverance. We are, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "like prisoners who must wait for someone from the outside to unlock our cell." The death of Jesus has done that. That is our core belief. That is the faith. It is **Christ and Christ crucified** that is the unshakeable foundation of the church" (emphasis added).

Note she does not say: "Christ and **him** crucified," but: "Christ and Christ crucified" – avoiding the male pronoun "him." This, too, is part of the ELCA core: Re-imagining God according to the canons of radical feminism.

- The ELCA core is Christ + reimagining God.
- The ELCA core is Christ + the required Episcopal episcopate.
- The ELCA core is Christ + the gay agenda.
- The ELCA core is Christ + "peace and justice."
- The ELCA core is Christ + the Palestinian agenda.
- The ELCA core is Christ + race and gender quotas.

The ELCA core is crowded with agendas. You dare to challenge their agendas?! They are quick to claim Christ and accuse you of being a fundamentalist, a racist, a homophobe, and Islamophobic.

The one true gospel is a double-edged sword. It is God's "Yes" and "No." The cross is God's "No" to a hierarchical, sacramental priesthood. "No" to religionizing politics. "No" to behaviors that cause harm. "No" to imagining God outside of Christ and him crucified.

Paul writes: "For I decided to know **nothing** among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2; emphasis added). He took on the Galatians for their "Christ-plus" compromises. He took on Peter (Gal 2:11-14). He took on the Corinthians (1 Cor 5:1-11 and elsewhere).

ELCA laity who are redirecting their giving are following in Paul's and Luther's footsteps.

They are saying “No,” to the Christ-plus distortions that crowd the ELCA core.
They are saying “Here we stand. We can do no other.”

They are saying “Yes” —

- Yes to one priesthood of all believers
- Yes to the Two Kingdoms
- Yes to protecting the mom-dad family
- Yes to mission without outside agendas
- Yes to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit