

FORCED FELLOWSHIP

By Roelf L. Ruffner

In American religious circles the race is on to legitimize homosexuality in their ranks; much as it is in American secular society. Recently the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) **voted** at their biennial national convention to allow unrepentant, non-celibate homosexuals in their clergy. A few years ago the Episcopal Church of the United States did the same thing and now has a homosexual bishop.

By so doing they disregard clear condemnation of homosexuality by a **multitude of passages** in the Old and New Testaments. But when has the Scriptures ever been a source of authority for any denomination? For years they have clung to man-made religious tradition in the areas of church names, ecclesiastical office, abuse of the Lord's Supper, the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, church government, infant baptism, the ordination of women, etc. Yes, some denominations, such as the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, strongly condemned this action of the ELCA while clinging to many other religious delusions mentioned above.

Meanwhile the ELCA is advising its members who oppose the recent changes to be patient and accepting. Many of these folks have grown up in this denomination and feel comfortable there. They have family and friends there and do not wish to leave them. Instead of leaving, the ELCA advises them to talk, talk and talk. Isn't that what religious liberals (even in the churches of Christ) always advise? Some folks get so tired of talking that they finally submit and are effectively silenced. They reach the point of accepting their "gay brothers and sisters". **This forced fellowship is hated by Jesus Christ** (cf.Rev.2:12-23).

Friends, this is why the faithful Christian should abhor denominationalism. Like the

Babelites of old they erect a **human organization** so they might reach heaven – "*and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth*" (Gen.11:4). In their conventions, conclaves, synods and assemblies they seek to bypass the word of God by legislative means. Like their secular counterparts they slap backs, twist arms and conjure up ways to circumvent the will of God by majority vote. **Yes, the divine has been reduced to a popularity contest.** The will of man becomes the authority, not the will of God. (Is the false doctrine of Elder Re-evaluation/Reaffirmation practiced by some of our brethren any different?) And many claim this was all done with the help of the Holy Spirit!

Dear reader, God did not take a vote when He bequeathed the Old Covenant to ancient Israel through Moses. And Jesus Christ did not call a solemn assembly of sinners to ratify His New Covenant. It was ratified by **His own precious blood** (cf.Heb.9:22-28). The will of God is found in His word – the Bible. "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Tim.3:16,17). It is our responsibility and joy to rightly divide the Scriptures (cf. 2 Tim.2:15) and seek to do all things by Christ's authority (cf.Col.3:17).

To our religious neighbors we humbly request that they go back to the Bible. Please leave all human devices and human attempts to circumvent the word of God at the foot of the cross. Someday the word of God will judge us all. "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48).