

A COMPARISON OF TEACHINGS

Scripture vs. the ELCA

<u>Doctrine</u> <i>(Teaching)</i>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>ELCA</u>
<i>On Scripture</i>	<p>Proverbs 30:5 - Every word of God is pure;</p> <p>Psalms 119:160 - The entirety of Your word is truth,</p> <p>John 17:17 Jesus - "Your word is truth."</p> <p>2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God</p>	<p>When the ELCA was formed (1988), its organizers very carefully and deliberately left out any reference to the Bible as the "inerrant" (without error) Word of God. None of its seminary teachers or leaders proclaim that the Bible is truth in <u>everything</u> that it says.</p> <p>An ELCA textbook indicates what is being taught in ELCA schools: "Today it is impossible to assume the historicity of the things recorded. What the biblical authors report is not accepted as a literal transcript of the factual events. Therefore, critical scholars inquire behind the text and attempt to reconstruct the real history that took place." (<i>Christian Dogmatics</i>, pg 76.; Braaten, Jensen, Forde; 1984)</p>
<i>On Creation:</i>	<p>Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.</p> <p>Genesis 1:5 ...So the evening and the morning were the first day. (And repeated each day)</p> <p>Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.</p> <p>Hebrews 3:4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.</p>	<p>Most ELCA teachers consider the story of creation in Genesis to be a myth. That is, it is a nice story to try to explain how we got here, but, of course, it did not really happen. The ELCA tolerates and even promotes the concept of theistic evolution; that is, that God created things by means of evolution.</p>
<i>The Virgin Birth</i>	<p>Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.</p> <p>Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."</p> <p>Luke 1:31 <i>The angel to Mary:</i> "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS."</p> <p>Luke 1:34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know (have not had sexual relations) a man?"</p> <p>Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."</p>	<p>Once again we find that the ELCA tolerates the view that Jesus was not born of a virgin, but that later Christians ascribed His birth to a virgin in order to honor His name. The "real" facts in the story are that Joseph may have been His father, or perhaps a Roman soldier was His father. The ELCA textbook says about the virgin birth: "It is important not to get bogged down in biology, but to read it as a symbol witnessing the truth of the kerygma [<i>teachings of the gospel</i>]." (Ibid, pg 546)</p>

<p><i>Atonement (payment to take sins away)</i></p>	<p>1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,</p> <p>John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!</p> <p>Romans 4:25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.</p>	<p>Many ELCA theologians teach that Jesus died for us as a man might die for his friends. They do not want to think that God would be so “unjust” as to punish Jesus for our sins. One ELCA theologian taught in an ELCA textbook: “Jesus came and died because God is merciful, not to make God merciful. We killed him because he forgave sins, not to make forgiveness possible.”</p>
<p><i>The Deity of Christ (Jesus is true God)</i></p>	<p>John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us</p> <p>Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."</p> <p>Matthew 26:63-64 And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."</p> <p>Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;</p>	<p>Many in the ELCA are willing to concede that the doctrine of Jesus’ deity is not taught in the Bible but that it was a doctrine developed by the early Christians in order to honor Jesus. On this point the ELCA textbook says: “The notion of the preexistent Son of God becoming a human being in the womb of the virgin and then returning to his heavenly home is bound up with the mythological picture of the world that clashes with our modern scientific world view.” And again the textbook says: “The preexistence of Christ is an integral part of the <i>myth</i> of the incarnation.” (Emphasis mine - njp) (Ibid; pg 527)</p>

<p><i>The Resurrection</i></p>	<p>Luke 24:5-6 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 "He is not here, but is risen!</p> <p>Luke 24:38-39 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!</p> <p>1 Corinthians 15:3-6 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.</p>	<p>Some ELCA teachers present Jesus' resurrection as a spiritual resurrection. Whether the tomb was empty or not is no concern to them. They would maintain that we can believe in Jesus' resurrection even if His body remains in its tomb. One graduate from an ELCA seminary claims that when he graduated from seminary, he did not believe in Jesus' physical resurrection, nor did most of his classmates, nor did any of his teachers. The Bible, however teaches us that if we deny Jesus' resurrection from the dead, we are not Christians at all.</p>
<p><i>The Way to Heaven</i></p>	<p>Mark 16:16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."</p> <p>John 3:16, 18 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ...He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."</p>	<p>The ELCA tolerates the increasingly popular view that sincere followers of non-Christian religions may also get to heaven. In fact, universalism is very popular today: namely, the view that eventually all will go to heaven, and that there is no eternal hell. <i>[not as much WHO you believe in as much as THAT you devoutly believe in something]</i></p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Fellowship</i></p>	<p>Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.</p> <p>1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.</p> <p>2 Corinthians 6:15-17 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."</p>	<p>The ELCA has declared itself to be in fellowship with many non-Lutheran church bodies.</p> <p>At it's 1997 convention the ELCA adopted a formula of agreement and thus in full fellowship with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Presbyterian Church (USA) • The Reformed Church in America • The United Church of Christ <p>In August of 1999 the ELCA approved full communion with the Episcopalian Church. The agreement makes provision to be ordained by a bishop in the "historic episcopate." At this same convention fellowship was declared with the Moravian Church in America.</p> <p>In August of 2006 the ELCA approved an interm agreement with the United Methodist Church allowing them to commune at each other's tables (celebrate Lord's Supper together).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Morality</i></p>	<p>Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."</p> <p>Matthew 5:18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."</p> <p>1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.</p>	<p>Within the ELCA the view that extramarital and premarital sexual relations are not always sinful, and that homosexuality is an alternate lifestyle. Many ELCA leaders are even willing to accept the idea of homosexual pastors, that is, pastors who openly promote homosexuality and practice it in their lives. An ELCA study document says: "No (Bible) passage specifically addresses the question facing the church today: the morality of a just, loving, committed relationship between persons of the same sex." [See 1 Cor 6:9-10]</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Abortion</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THOU SHALT NOT KILL</p>	<p>One ELCA statement (adopted by a 2/3 majority at an ELCA convention) declares: "This church recognizes that there can be sound reasons for ending a pregnancy through induced abortion." Among such reasons they list treats to the physical life of the mother, cases of rape or incest, and the likelihood of fetal abnormalities.</p> <p>"An abortion <i>is morally responsible</i> [!!! <i>emphasis mine - njp</i>] in those cases in which continuation of a pregnancy presents a clear threat to the physical life of the woman."</p> <p>http://www.elca.org/SocialStatements/abortion/</p>

<p><i>The Roman Catholic Church and Justification by faith</i></p> <p><u>Important terms:</u> “Justification” = “to declare not guilty”</p> <p>“Grace” = “undeserved love”</p>	<p>Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.</p> <p>Romans 3:24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,</p> <p>Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.</p> <p>Romans 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.</p> <p>Galatians 2:16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.</p> <p>Titus 3:7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.</p> <p>Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast</p>	<p>On October 31, 1999 representatives of the ELCA were on hand in Augsburg, Germany to sign a document together with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. The document declares that Lutherans and Catholics are basically agreed on the doctrine of justification by faith. This agreement is made possible by the fact that certain words such as “grace” and “justification” are not clearly defined. The Roman Catholic representatives said that there is nothing in the document that differs from the decisions of the Council of Trent (produced by Catholics at the time of the Lutheran reformation). Since the Council of Trent plainly cursed the teaching of justification by faith alone, without the deeds of the law, it is clear that this agreement does not at all resolve any doctrinal differences. Nevertheless, the leaders of the ELCA hail the agreement as a historic resolution of the conflict between Lutherans and the Roman Catholic Church. What it really indicates is that the ELCA and its sister congregations in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) are no longer confessional Lutheran church bodies.</p>
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It does not take someone with a master of divinity degree to recognize that the teachings and practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) are un-Scriptural. Because the ELCA clearly teaches doctrines contrary to the pure, simple Word of God neither Prince of Peace nor the CLC are in fellowship with the ELCA. We eagerly desire such a fellowship - but we will not leave the Word of God behind to join them. We call upon them to “come out from among them and be separate” (2 Cor. 6:17) and join us in worshipping Christ our Savior and the Triune God “in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24)

May God ever help us to “speak the truth (‘Thy word is truth’ - Jn17:17) in love.” Eph 4:15

Pastor Nathan J. Pfeiffer
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Textbook sited in paper is an ELCA dogmatics textbook:

“Christian Dogmatics”

**Carl E. Braaten, Robert W. Jenson, Gerhard O. Forde
Fortress Press, 1984**