

ELCA again 'disappoints' Missouri Synod Lutherans: Recommendations on gay and lesbian clergy

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The president of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod expressed “great disappointment and deep sadness” over recommendations before the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to ordain partnered gay and lesbian ministers.

Gerald B. Kieschnick, president of the LCMS, said in a statement February 22 that if the larger Lutheran denomination adopts such changes at its Churchwide Assembly in August, the step would be a radical departure from biblical tradition, which he said condemns same-gender sexual behavior as “intrinsically sinful.”

Kieschnick said that Missouri Synod Lutherans should pray that “God will penetrate” the hearts of ELCA members—in keeping with a 2001 LCMS convention resolution declaring that such prayer is appropriate even though “we cannot consider [the ELCA] to be an orthodox Lutheran church body.”

In spite of theological differences, the two denominations have been able to cooperate in social services and relief efforts in the past.

Echoing Kieschnick, Matthew C. Harrison, executive director for LCMS World Relief and Human Care, also said his church is disappointed in the ELCA task force recommendations. “But we are not surprised,” he added.

Noting the “great deal of interaction and partnership” between the LCMS and ELCA, Harrison said the task of maintaining that relationship is “becoming even more complex.”