

# Is ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Losing Touch with Reality?

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## Deluded?

I was absolutely astounded when I read ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's response to the recent action taken by the United Methodist Church to affirm the historic Christian view of marriage and human sexuality. Speaking of the very different vote that the ELCA took nearly ten years ago, she said, *"Yet, though a controversial decision at the time, our 2009 action has brought strength and blessings for our life and mission beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago."* [emphasis added] How in the world could she make a statement like that when she wrote the following in the February 2019 issue of "Living Lutheran"?

**ELCA membership decreases by 70,000 a year.**

"Our congregations are growing older and smaller.

At least 40 percent of our congregations have an average weekly worship attendance of 50 or less.

ELCA membership decreases by 70,000 people a year, or roughly the loss of a synod per year.

Clergy retirements outnumber new candidates for ministry.

Financial pressures and building maintenance create stress.

There is a dearth of people in their 20s and 30s in our pews."

## Bad News > Imagined Good

Having recently said all of that, how could she now say that because of the 2009 decisions the ELCA is experiencing "strength and blessings for our life and mission beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago"?

## Revelations

Instead the ELCA is revealing what it really believes and the direction in which it is determined to go by its doing nothing to address the "We Are Naked and Unashamed" movement and nothing to counter the growing influence and message of its most famous public spokesperson, the author of the book, *Shameless: A Sexual Reformation*. Also, while the Presiding Bishop is quick to respond to so many other issues, she refuses to respond to recent state legislation regarding abortion. How could she expect God to give "strength and blessings" to a church body that is refusing to deal with such blatant rejection of His Word?

## Rejected

Bishop Eaton also says in the same communication, "We have not fully grown into the commitment we have made." I am certain she means something far different, but I would say *not* that the ELCA still needs to fully grow into its commitments, but instead that the ELCA has *rejected* the commitments that it made. Even though the 2009 Churchwide Assembly said that the traditional view of human sexuality would also be honored, [one of the keynote speakers at last summer's youth gathering led 31,000 young people in renouncing the traditional view of human sexuality as a lie](#) and ELCA leaders groveled in front of ELCA seminary students who were able to force the [firing of an ELCA seminary president](#) because twenty years ago she held and advocated for traditional views.

**How could she expect God to give "strength and blessings" to a church body that is refusing to deal with such blatant rejection of His Word?**

## Surprise

How could one look at all of this and say that the 2009 decisions have brought "strength and blessings . . . beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago"? The only surprise, if any, should be how blatantly the ELCA is revealing its own dishonesty and hypocrisy by:

- placing perimeters on what it approved in 2009
- first promoting the whole issue of "bound conscience," but then not honoring those perimeters
- breaking its promise to honor the "bound conscience" of and give a place of equal honor and respect to those who hold to traditional views.



## Oncoming Collapse

If anything is "beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago," it is not the "strength and blessings" that the ELCA has been experiencing, but the speed with which any restraint against an "anything goes" view of human sexuality is collapsing.

On another note, we need to pray for and support our brothers and sisters in the United Methodist Church, including those from the southern hemisphere, who held firm to the clear teaching of the Scriptures in their recent vote.