

Cover article from Hosanna! Shouts! newsletter, September '09  
"IT'S ABOUT DOCTRINE"

Hosanna! is currently affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). However, some recent decisions made at the ELCA national meeting bring this affiliation into question. I know this is a very serious statement to make, but at the core of my reaction (and this is shared by many others in the ELCA and other denominations around the world) is that the ELCA voted to change their definition of the Doctrine of Sin. Sin has always been defined by God, for He is the one who decides when we fall short of His glory.

In August, 1,000 ELCA Lutherans gathered in Minnesota and decided by one vote that we all have a right called "bound conscience" which means that humans, themselves, decide what is sin – and that what one person considers as sin has no bearing on what another person considers sin. The ELCA now says that if a person thinks what s/he is doing is okay and if s/he thinks that God believes that what they are doing is okay, then it is okay; or basically, anyone can do whatever they want. This new ELCA doctrine applies to all behavior.

I find this contrary to God's Word. God is the one who established His commandments and laws for our life because He loves us and wants to protect us. I believe that God put His laws in stone because He was so serious about us keeping them. Deuteronomy 7:9 says, *"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands."* A growing number believe the ELCA has strayed from the Bible, the Lutheran Confessions, and the theological bearings which have supported the Church for centuries.

It's about doctrine! This is why the Hosanna! Church Council at their August meeting assembled a Task Force to evaluate which Lutheran Church body we should affiliate with and this Task Force will give their report to the Council in October.

If anyone wants to learn more or has something to say about this, you are invited to "A Time of Sharing" at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup> in the Worship Space. There will be no decision reached at this gathering; it will just be an informal but structured time to share.

As always, I encourage your prayers and welcome your questions. And while we wait for a time to share, the Task Force to report, the Council to decide, and ultimately, if necessary, the congregation to vote, we are busy being the best church that God wants us to be. We will continue to love and care for all people, as we always have and always will. Matthew 25:40 *"Whatever you do for the least of these my brothers and sisters you do to me (Jesus)."*

The best is yet to come,

Pastor John