

Lutheran Church Exec Committee says abortion is sometimes necessary

By RICHARD McFARLAND



MINNEAPOLIS -- The American Lutheran Church executive committee is recommending a statement that says abortion, though a 'tragic option,' is sometimes necessary.

The committee is also recommending that the 1,000 delegates attending the seven-day biennial ALC convention adopt a statement calling for church members to review their attitudes and be 'more sensitive' about homosexuality.

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Today at Minneapolis Auditorium, the convention, which opened Wednesday night with a worship service, was to take up election of officers. ALC president, the Rev. David W. Preus is running for re-election against four presidents of educational institutions.

The abortion statement, recommended by the executive committee, was drawn up by a Task Force on Abortion, which was instructed by the 1978 convention to write a position paper.

The paper 'affirms that human life from conception ... is always sacred' and 'deplores the alarming increase of induced abortions since the 1973 Supreme Court decision.'

The statement acknowledges, however, there may be times when an induced abortion may be a 'tragic option,' but rejects the practice of using abortion for 'personally convenient or selfish reasons.'

The statement urges that persons with problem pregnancies seek 'competent Christian guidance to help them explore the entire issue, including long-range effects and options other than abortion.'

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It will take a 60 percent majority vote for the convention to approve the statement.

A proposed statement, also recommended by the committee, on human sexuality says in part:

'While we see no scriptural rationale for revising the church's traditional teaching that homosexual erotic behavior violates God's intent, we nonetheless remain open to the possibility of new biblical and theological insights.

'Truth, mercy and justice should impel members of congregations of the ALC to review their attitudes ... regarding homosexuality. Christians need to be more sensitive to life as experienced by those who are homosexual.'

It concludes: 'We all need recognition and acceptance as human beings known to and loved by God.'

The ALC executive committee has also proposed the convention support the Equal Rights Amendment and called for 'unequivocal rejection of apartheid,' with the United States implementing economic sanctions against South Africa.

The convention's debate on abortion, human sexuality, apartheid and the ERA was scheduled to begin Saturday.

Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie is scheduled to address the delegates Monday.