

CONVENTION WORKBOOK

Baptized

for this moment



Convention Workbook

Reports and Overtures

2013



65th Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
St. Louis, Missouri, July 20–25, 2013

Name of delegate _____

Home address _____

Convention address _____

**For reporting errors in registration listings, see last page of this *Convention Workbook*.
For ongoing convention information, check www.lcms.org/convention.**

Preface

The work of a convention of the Synod can be divided into three parts. The first and most important part will not be covered in this *Convention Workbook*. It is described in Synod Bylaw 3.1.1.1: “The national convention of the Synod shall afford an opportunity for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the communication of vital information.” This part comes later, in the form of worship services, Bible studies, and presentations that will deliver truly vital information regarding the work of the Church. Delegates to the 2013 Synod convention, “Baptized for This Moment,” will do well to arrive prepared to contemplate and celebrate their Baptisms.

The second part of the business of the convention is contained in the separate smaller booklet accompanying this *Convention Workbook*. This *Biographical Synopses & Statements of Nominees* booklet contains the information necessary to participate in the elections to take place. In this regard, the 2013 convention will be a first-of-a-kind in that the election of the President for the next triennium will already have taken place by the time the convention meets in July. Information regarding the other positions that will be filled by this convention and the candidates on the ballots for those positions is provided in this booklet. Delegates will do well to give it prayerful attention.

Conventions of the Synod are also business meetings, and it is this third part of the work of the 2013 convention that is contained in this *Convention Workbook*, as prescribed in Synod Bylaw 3.1.1: “The national convention of the Synod... is the principal legislative assembly, which amends the Constitution and Bylaws, considers and takes action on reports and overtures, and handles appropriate appeals. It establishes general positions and policies of the Synod, provides overall program direction and priorities, and evaluates all such positions, programs, policies, directions, and priorities in order to provide responsible service for and on behalf of its members.”

A brief review of how the business of a convention is processed may be helpful:

- The reports and overtures contained in this volume are the entire business to come before the 2013 convention, submitted by congregations, circuits, districts, officers, and agencies of the Synod.
- All reports and overtures have been assigned to one or more of seven “floor committees” for consideration for possible convention actions. The first numeral of the number attached to a report or overture indicates the floor committee that has been given this responsibility.
- The seven floor committees will meet May 17–20 in St. Louis to determine the actions they will propose to the convention.
- Between now and the floor committee meetings, any member of the Synod (congregation, ordained minister, or commissioned minister) or any lay delegate may express comments regarding the reports and overtures in this *Convention Workbook* (Bylaw 3.1.8 [c]) by sending a signed letter to the Secretary of the Synod (1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122). Letters must be sent at least nine weeks prior to the convention to allow time for forwarding to the appropriate floor committee for its consideration.

May God bless our coming together for our Synod’s convention in St. Louis, July 20–25, 2013. May it be a good and productive time for us as we come together as His people, doing the work of His Church, “Baptized for This Moment.”

Raymond L. Hartwig, *Editor*

[Note to delegates: Remember to bring the *Biographical Synopses* booklet, this *Convention Workbook*, and your copy of *Today’s Business* to the convention. They will be referred to repeatedly during convention sessions.]

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REGISTERED DELEGATES AND REPRESENTATIVES

A. Voting and Advisory Delegates

Atlantic District

Voting Ordained

Byer, Charles Ray; 102 TIMBER DR, CALVERTON, NY 11933-1186
Deebrah, Peter A; 4513 CARPENTER AVE, BRONX, NY 10470-1419
Ellingworth, Jon M; 14 PINE DR, PAWLING, NY 12564-1205
Griffin, Marvin A; 21921 102ND AVE, QUEENS VLG, NY 11429-1611
Lecakes, Derek G; 2089 PLUM ST, SCHENECTADY, NY 12309-5818
Minnix, Roy William; 205 WHITE PLAINS RD, TUCKAHOE, NY 10707-4422
Mueller, Mark Alan; 111 ELM AVE, DELMAR, NY 12054-9762
Noack, Brian B; 45 GREENE AVE, SAYVILLE, NY 11782-2722
Priest, Jonathan D; 197 MAUJER ST, BROOKLYN, NY 11206-1332
Rethinasamy, Johnson Elwin; 1110 150TH ST, WHITESTONE, NY 11357-1746
Yee, Travis J; 131 VILLAGE DR, FLORIDA, NY 10921-1825

Voting Lay

Cisse, Angela J; 908 E 232ND ST, BRONX, NY 10466-4610
Cusanelli, Thomas; 6 ESSEX PL, DEER PARK, NY 11729-3504
Holder Bowman, Sonia M; 634 SACKMAN ST, BROOKLYN, NY 11212-7122
Kleinke, Edward F; PO BOX 131, SLINGERLANDS, NY 12159-0131
Kletecka, William B; 29 CAMPUS LN, LK RONKONKOMA, NY 11779-1946
Matthews, Don P; 42D HUNTER BROOK LN, QUEENSBURY, NY 12804-5858
Moran, John J; 3992 44TH ST, LONG IS CITY, NY 11104-2108
Turner, Charles E; 17 SEARINGTOWN AVE, ALBERTSON, NY 11507-1506
Wilson, Robert; 4 SUTTIE AVE, MONROE, NY 10950-4012
Wright, Scott; 2101 ROCKLEDGE CT, WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY 12590

Advisory Ordained

Koepchen, Henry L; PO BOX 2326, SETAUKET, NY 11733-0735

Advisory Commissioned

Dummann, Matthew D M; 1805 SEMINOLE AVE, BRONX, NY 10461-1830
Griffin, Shirley A; 21002 HILLSIDE AVE, QUEENS VLG, NY 11427-1717

California/Nevada/Hawaii District

Voting Ordained

Abraham, Stanley R; 3005 MAR VISTA DR, APTOS, CA 95003-3652
Adams, Ricky L; 205 TENNESSEE VALLEY RD, MILL VALLEY, CA 94941-3601
Amen, Christopher Michael; 1840 IVY ST, CARSON CITY, NV 89703-2432
Bredeson, Jason J; 1500 27TH ST, SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-6307
Chan, Terrence C; 103 ALDENGLEN DR, S SAN FRAN, CA 94080-3284
Crown, Stewart D; 1295 MIDDLEFIELD RD, PALO ALTO, CA 94301-3347
Deuel, Daniel D; 4910 CLAREMONT AVE, STOCKTON, CA 95207-5708
Dubke, Dallas D; PO BOX 726, RED BLUFF, CA 96080-0726
Maschke, Jedidiah T; 279 CLOVERBROOK CIR, PITTSBURG, CA 94565-7353
Peperkorn, Todd A; 4021 AITKEN DAIRY RD, ROCKLIN, CA 95677-4025
Perry, Scott D; 5109 ADAIR WAY, SAN JOSE, CA 95124-5344
Schneider, Joshua V; 61 KOPI LN APT 3-204, WAILUKU, HI 96793-2051
Schroeder, Robert J; 2728 W MODOC CT, VISALIA, CA 93291-9311
Schulz, Maynard L; 560 PARK BLVD, UKIAH, CA 95482-3701
Szeto, Lenny; 858 WASHINGTON BLVD, FREMONT, CA 94539-5222

Whittaker, Mark C; 246 OAK PARK BLVD, ARROYO GRANDE, CA 93420-6724
Willweber, Lloyd H; 1017 PRINCETON ST, DELANO, CA 93215-2447

Voting Lay

Brannan, Thomas; 252 INDIAN SPRINGS CT, BATTLE MTN, NV 89820-2156
Engelken, Robert D; 100 PENZANCE AVE APT 133, CHICO, CA 95973-8262
Hack Broome, Carol A; 1342 CURTISS AVE, SAN JOSE, CA 95125-2321
Hanson, Gary V; 800 S MCCLELLAND ST, SANTA MARIA, CA 93454-6616
Hessler, Glenn; 956 ROUND HILL RD, REDWOOD CITY, CA 94061-1135
Johnston, Robert M; 232 COLUMBIA DR, VACAVILLE, CA 95687-5180
Mc Call, Alan D; 312 DEERPARK WAY, OAKLEY, CA 94561-3160
Mc Millan, Gilbert E; 5776 MAYWOOD DR, FORESTHILL, CA 95631-9680
Parker, Richard; 986 QUARRY ST, PETALUMA, CA 94954
Peck, Theodore A; 99 1440 AIEA HEIGHTS DR 3, AIEA, HI 96701
Richardson, Douglas M; 1766 E ESCALON AVE, FRESNO, CA 93710-5740
Sanders, Paul W; 1050 MACKEN AVE, CRESCENT CITY, CA 95531-3072
Seilnacht, Michael J; 5423 MIDDAY CMN, FREMONT, CA 94555-2955
Spleiss, Elise O; 7711 GREENBACK LN APT 64, CITRUS HTS, CA 95610-5807
St Pierre, Marvin F; 2700 LEHR PL, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93311-2118
Thompson, Rod G; 758 BRADLEY PL, MANTECA, CA 95337-6637
Wraxall, Linda; 5601 ALAMEDA AVE, RICHMOND, CA 94804-4878

Advisory Ordained

Herrmann, John V; 7773 GREENRIDGE WAY, FAIR OAKS, CA 95628-4810

Advisory Commissioned

Kuefner, Marla R; 2152 NATASHA CT, SANTA ROSA, CA 95403-7944
Laughlin, Donna Eileen; 466 10TH AVE APT A, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94118-2915
Mancini, Michael John; 446 JETER ST, REDWOOD CITY, CA 94062-2059

Central Illinois District

Voting Ordained

Adle, Scott T; PO BOX 264, SECOR, IL 61771-0264
Braaten, Jason M; 706 E NORTHLINE RD, TUSCOLA, IL 61953-1106
Burdick, Michael H; 1191 STACY LN, MACOMB, IL 61455
Callahan, Phillip Jake; 205 N LINCOLN ST, THOMASBORO, IL 61878-9739
Debowey, Darrell L; 2750 E SANGAMON AVE, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62702-1419
Dietrich, Joel Andrew Christensen; 600 W LEANDER ST, CLINTON, IL 61727-2101
Gillet, Stephen Paul; 13234 N 2300TH ST, WHEELER, IL 62479-3007
Hull, Christopher J; 1818 TAFT DR, NORMAL, IL 61761-2250
Laux, John A; 71 TOWN AND COUNTRY DR, DECATUR, IL 62526-1615
Lesemann, Brian Albert; 13961 E CR 1100N, BATH, IL 62617-7167
Love, Donald G; 120 E HICKORY ST, WATSEKA, IL 60970-1339
Mews, Kurt F; 200 COLE ST, EAST PEORIA, IL 61611-2521
Meyer, Joseph Marsh; 12602 N CEDAR BLUFF DR, DUNLAP, IL 61525-9345
Rensner, Jason Edward; 908 N CARDINAL ST, EFFINGHAM, IL 62401-3213
Rogers, Clarence O; 1127 WHITE BIRCH DR, CHATHAM, IL 62629-5026
Wright, Gary A; 17618 HUBBARD RD, EAST MOLINE, IL 61244-9782
Wright, James F; 203 E DIVISION ST, ALTAMONT, IL 62411-1220

Voting Lay

Breitenfeld, Michael S; 3111 MYRA RIDGE, URBANA, IL 61802
Cross, Cathy; 32320 LEGION RD, MINIER, IL 61759
Ehmen, Larry D; 735 MCKEE DR, QUINCY, IL 62305-4701
Garbe, Gilbert A; 20497 E 300TH AVE, DIETERICH, IL 62424-3109
Jordon, Raymond M; 112 E LINCOLN, PETERSBURG, IL 62675
Niemann, Jerry L; 1116 PARK DR, PAXTON, IL 60957-1821
Olander, Nancy C; PO BOX 199, NEW HOLLAND, IL 62671
Peterson, Robert L; 709 N MAIN ST, ROANOKE, IL 61561-9656
Rauh, Robert D; 17424 ROUTE 84 N, EAST MOLINE, IL 61244
Raymond, Gerald A; 2117 W WOODLAND LN, JACKSONVILLE, IL 62650-9455
Roley, Robert D; RR 1 BOX 355, WINDSOR, IL 61957-8915
Schneider, Albert J; 4916 W LINDA CT, PEORIA, IL 61607-1548
Snedeker, Ted; PO BOX 177, MARSHALL, IL 62441
Spaeth, Eric P; 6805 W LA MARSH, MAPLETON, IL 61547
Switzer, Charles D; 7002 STAR ROUTE RD, OAKLEY, IL 62501-7054
Wachtel, Larry L; 505 RIDGEVIEW DR, SHERMAN, IL 62684
Williams, Bob; RR 1 BOX 96, SHOBONIER, IL 62885-9713

Advisory Ordained

Riemer, Frederick M; 8 ROSEMARY LN, JACKSONVILLE, IL 62650-6762

Advisory Commissioned

Krohse, Ronald Dennis; 729 E GIBSON ST, NEW BERLIN, IL 62670-4511
Milas, Martha Jane; 1109 FOOTHILL DR, CHAMPAIGN, IL 61821-5620

Eastern District

Voting Ordained

Agne, Paul Christian; 150 UNIONVALE RD, BUFFALO, NY 14225-2221
Andrae, Eric R; 535 N NEVILLE ST, PITTSBURGH, PA 15213-2812
Bjornstad, Kristian G; 60 E PARKER ST, SCRANTON, PA 18509-1014
Bright, Ronald M; 400 BARCLAY AVE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15221-4036
Crume, Christopher D; 120 WOODLAND DR, WAYNESVILLE, NC 28786
Donley, Bruce Charles; 6377 WOLCOTTVILLE RD, AKRON, NY 14001-9002
Engler, Thomas E; 33 COLONIAL DR, HAVERTOWN, PA 19083-3204
Fehskens, Edward H; 1230 BOWEN RD, ELMA, NY 14059-8906
Loos, Donald A; 1137 BACKUS RD, DERBY, NY 14047-9598
Mokry, Richard; 2620 GENESEE ST, UTICA, NY 13502-6003
Muller, Donald M; PO BOX 690, CANANDAIGUA, NY 14424-0690
Podaszwa, Michael Alan; 60 ROCHESTER RD, FREEDOM, PA 15042-9364
Sorenson, Matthew D; 345 RUDLEN RD, LEWISTON, NY 14092-1259
Zuber, Clayton George; 252 TAYLOR RD, HONEOYE FALLS, NY 14472-9771

Voting Lay

Bell, Susan K; 814 DOVER COURT PL, DOWNINGTOWN, PA 19335-4142
Brese, James; 145 LORELEE DR, TONAWANDA, NY 14150-4326
Carlson, Claire A; 5282 OAKRIDGE DR, HAMBURG, NY 14075-4050
Christensen, Mark; 30 THE CMN, LOCKPORT, NY 14094-4002
Dreier, Bradley T; 3108 WOODLAND CT, BUSHKILL, PA 18324-6965
Frieling, Keith A; 312 RED SPRUCE LN, ROCHESTER, NY 14616-5005
Gerlach, Kay; 138 FIDDLERS HOLLOW, PENFIELD, NY 14526
Grunder, Maureen R; 577 SPRING LAKE RD, PORT BYRON, NY 13140-4331

Hietsch, Ronald G; 356 HOLLY LN, NEW CASTLE, PA 16105-1570
 Langhans, Vera L; 127 N CENTRAL AVE, SPRINGVILLE, NY 14141-1136
 Miller, Terry D; 101 CARLISLE DR, PITTSBURGH, PA 15223-1012
 Moore, George A; 287 KNOX RUN RD, MORRISDALE, PA 16858-9649
 Walker, Sandra L; 812 TACOMA AVE, BUFFALO, NY 14216-2128

Advisory Ordained

Ginter, Ronald A; 270 LATTA RD UNIT 15, ROCHESTER, NY 14612-4873

Advisory Commissioned

Meyer, Karl F; 1815 LAKE RD, HAMLIN, NY 14464-9575

English District**Voting Ordained**

Arnold, Todd Wayne; C/O WEST PORTAL LUTH CHURCH 200 SLOAT BLVD, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94132-1621
 Bacon, Paul E; 5039 MULFORD ST, SKOKIE, IL 60077-2863
 De Santo, Steven A; 507 N MANZANITA DR, PAYSON, AZ 85541-4040
 Eder, Ben C; 239 FAYETTE AVE, BUFFALO, NY 14223-2709
 Hoag, Douglas E; 508 N CEDAR RD, NEW LENOX, IL 60451-1408
 Just, Christian F; 1567 MEADOWLAWN DR, MACEDONIA, OH 44056-1439
 Lane, Jason Daniel; 1235 BLUE HERON CT, SAINT JOHNS, FL 32259-2918
 Mathers, J Derek; 3200 BAYVIEW AVE, TORONTO, ON M2M 3R7 CANADA
 Pacey, Ian Stewart; 3710 W KOSHARE LN, TUCSON, AZ 85742-9208
 Rankin, Kenneth C; 2221 STONY RIDGE DR, WAUKESHA, WI 53189-7719
 Rutter, David A; 22134 COLONY ST, ST CLR SHORES, MI 48080-2025
 Schiemann, Arthur W; 2291 MELDRUM RD, WINDSOR, ON N8W 4E5 CANADA
 Scott, Bradford E; 581 WEBBER DR, TEMPERANCE, MI 48182-8805
 Stoerger, Michael W; 1317 LYON ST, HANNIBAL, MO 63401-4117
 Trouten, Chad David; 2435 ENGLE RD, FORT WAYNE, IN 46809-1408
 Weldon, Robert F; 1203 W RIVER RD N APT A4, ELYRIA, OH 44035-2890
 Yohannes, Zerhaimanot Zerit; 858 RAMBLEWOOD DR, EAST LANSING, MI 48823-1335
 Zimmerman, Luke T; 6386 GALLEON DR, MECHANICSBURG, PA 17050-2949

Voting Lay

Askew, Doug R; 15282 ARGYLL RD, GEORGETOWN, ON L7G 5P3 CANADA
 Davis, Theodore; 9974 SCRIPPS RANCH BLVD # 207, SAN DIEGO, CA 92131-1825
 Denby, Donald J; 70 LAGARE ST, PALM COAST, FL 32137-1476
 Duffy, Jane E; 510 EDGEWOOD AVE, WESTMONT, NJ 08108-2227
 Fink, Eric C; 212 HIGHPOINT AVE, AKRON, OH 44312-1349
 Fleck, Edward C; 59315 AMHERST AVE, NEW HAVEN, MI 48048-1954
 Jacob, Ralph E; 3801 HOME AVE, BERWYN, IL 60402-3932
 Lagemann, Paul W; 407 ARCADIA CT, FORT WAYNE, IN 46807-2003
 Leu, Terry; 4440 NETTLETON RD, MEDINA, OH 44256-9628
 Plantikow, Robert J; 65 MILLARD CT, EVANSVILLE, WI 53536-1078
 Rundgren, Marna K; 726 S VILLA AVE, VILLA PARK, IL 60181-3011
 Scholl, Randy D; 42 211 VERONICA DR, KITCHENER, ON N2A 2R8 CANADA
 Silvey, Dian L; 444 ABBOT RD, EAST LANSING, MI 48823-3321
 Southwick, Rod; 8232 E NORTHLAND DR, SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85251-1743
 Stanis, Paul J; 1312 WISCONSIN AVE # 1, PITTSBURGH, PA 15216-2532
 Trendle, Ralph B; 19418 GLENMORE, REDFORD, MI 48240-1323
 Wellik, Andrew M; 11610 N QUICKSILVER TRL, ORO VALLEY, AZ 85737-9222

White, Stephen E; 11441 RINEYVILLE RD, VINE GROVE, KY 40175-9688

Advisory Commissioned

Beyer, Gary A; 335 VALVERDE DR, S SAN FRAN, CA 94080-5624

Florida-Georgia District**Voting Ordained**

Brones, Dana Allen; 2759 CANYON FALLS DR, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32224-4842
 DeWitt, Edward James; 2525 S OAK AVE, SANFORD, FL 32773-5155
 Eichinger, Eric Todd; 2727 S GROVE ST, EUSTIS, FL 32726-7302
 Estes, Eric M; 7526 NORTHFIELD DR, COLUMBUS, GA 31909-2733
 Fields, Andrew T; 808 MARSTEVAN DR NE, ATLANTA, GA 30306-3286
 Hageman, Michael Scott; 4116 MEANDER PL UNIT 104, ROCKLEDGE, FL 32955-5261
 Hopkins, John Richard; 499 STONEBRIDGE CIR, SAVANNAH, GA 31419-7807
 Johnson, Gene Earl; 5145 NW WISK FERN CIR, PORT ST LUCIE, FL 34986-4385
 Koch, Alan Roger; 1012 PONCE DE LEON AVE, CLEWISTON, FL 33440-5102
 Kress, James T; 14118 APPLETON BLVD, PT CHARLOTTE, FL 33981-4801
 Lingsch, Keith A; 800 BANYAN BLVD, NAPLES, FL 34102-5112
 Loughran, Kevin R; 4301 16TH ST N, ST PETERSBURG, FL 33703-4425
 Meseke, Paul R; 475 NORTH AVE W, BROOKSVILLE, FL 34601-1031
 Patterson, Christopher John; 8791 SW 124TH ST, MIAMI, FL 33176-5215
 Poulos, George Evangelos; 5801 PEPPERTREE CIR E, DAVIE, FL 33314-6924
 Putnam, Vincent W; 3558 SILVER LACE LN APT 30, BOYNTON BEACH, FL 33436-3969
 Shouse, Tod Allen; 6075 CHARLOMA DR, LAKE LAND, FL 33812-5802
 Struckmeyer, Alan D; 9700 W NEWBERRY RD, GAINESVILLE, FL 32606-5545
 Wesche, David P; 1316 BRADLEY RD, BLAIRSVILLE, GA 30512-2149
 Winters, Jay Allen; 925 W JEFFERSON ST, TALLAHASSEE, FL 32304-8019
 Yoakum, Kevin Lee; 11421 BIG BEND RD, RIVERVIEW, FL 33579-7171

Voting Lay

Anderson, Charles H; 409 HAMPTON GRN, PEACHTREE CTY, GA 30269-2712
 Bickhart, Phil S; 3111 W SAN PEDRO ST, TAMPA, FL 33629
 Bowles, Maggie B; 11784 QUAIL VILLAGE WAY, NAPLES, FL 34119
 Boyd, Richard A; 1528 COPPERFIELD CIR, TALLAHASSEE, FL 32312
 Brooks, Le Thaniel; 11405 SARASOTA LN, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32218-3488
 Diebel, Ernest D; 1315 KAYFORD ST NW, PALM BAY, FL 32907-8060
 Dupps, John V; 10609 GOLDEN TER, NEW PRT RCHY, FL 34655-2261
 Eichinger, David H; 13241 LAKESHORE GROVE DR, WINTER GARDEN, FL 34787
 Gebhardt, Jack W; 402 SE PINWOOD TRL, PORT ST LUCIE, FL 34952-3520
 Griffin, Patrick; 5234 POND VIEW CT, ZEPHYRHILLS, FL 33541
 Gruntman, David L; 2889 TISHMAN AVE, NORTH PORT, FL 34286-3937
 List, John; 971 SW PEPPERIDGE TER, BOCA RATON, FL 33486-5542
 Martin, Ken; 131 BEAR LAKE DR, WARNER ROBINS, GA 31088-6620
 Martin, Paul P; 1415 MAIN ST LOT 154, DUNEDIN, FL 34698
 Matthews, Jevon; 18953 CYPRESS VIEW DR, FORT MYERS, FL 33967-4824
 Mc Kendrick, Ryan P; 8750 ROSWELL RD, SANDY SPRINGS, GA 30350
 Schaefer, Jay M; 610 CAMBRAIDGE CT, LONGWOOD, FL 32750
 Schaefer, Lois E; 668 FARMINGTON AVE, THE VILLAGES, FL 32162-4370

Sesko, Robert F; 104 ESTERO ST NE, LAKE PLACID, FL 33852-3515
 Smith, Margaret E; 206 OAK RIDGE DR, CLEVELAND, GA 30528
 Stokes, Alana M; 580 INDIAN TRACE, WESTON, FL 33326
 Vinardell, Ruben; 107000 SW 56TH ST, MIAMI, FL 33165

Advisory Ordained

Biel, Ronald D; 1652 GOLDEN RIDGE DR, THE VILLAGES, FL 32162
 Weerts, Milan G; 1778 PRESIDIO DR, CLERMONT, FL 34711-6531

Advisory Commissioned

Anderson, Linda Lorraine; 409 HAMPTON GRN, PEACHTREE CTY, GA 30269-2712
 Geidel, David O; 2149 KINGS PALACE DR, RIVERVIEW, FL 33578-2131
 Nelson-McKenzie, Kristen Marie; 12697 TROPIC DR N, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32225-6228
 Popp, Jessica Donn; 3323 ABBEYFIELD DR E, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32277-0974
 Tillman, Cynthia Yvonne; 3057 DRIFTWOOD WAY UNIT 4007, NAPLES, FL 34109-8986

Indiana District**Voting Ordained**

Boshoven, Richard L; 7950 MARSHALL ST, MERRILLVILLE, IN 46410-5219
 Cook, Joshua Hawkins; 16150 S 300 W, COLUMBUS, IN 47201-9357
 Currao, Andrew J; 1508 NEW FORD RD, SEYMOUR, IN 47274-2263
 Eckels, Chad M; 100 E MICHIGAN ST, EVANSVILLE, IN 47711-5428
 Fichtner, Lesley Joe; PO BOX 36, HUNTERTOWN, IN 46748-0036
 Fischer, Charles L; 2140 SPRING BRANCH RD NE, NEW SALISBURY, IN 47161-9627
 Fraiser, John M; 12416 BROTHERS AVE, LOUISVILLE, KY 40243-2500
 French, David Ray; 800 CINCINNATI ST, LAFAYETTE, IN 47901-1073
 Gillespie, Christopher Robert; 8303 SHEFFIELD AVE, DYER, IN 46311-2752
 Herfurth, John A; 8540 E 16TH ST, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46219-2503
 Kohl, Matthew P; 1533 E MACGREGOR DR, NEW HAVEN, IN 46774-2243
 Latzke, Steven Donald; 1402 HUFFMAN DR, SOUTH BEND, IN 46614-6057
 Mackey, Daniel Paul; 610 N RESERVE ST, MUNCIE, IN 47303-3830
 Maki, David W; 2905 BRIARDALE DR, FORT WAYNE, IN 46825-3187
 Mierow, Seth A; 2525 E 11TH ST, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46201-1301
 Moehring, Martin K; 10877 N 100 E, DECATUR, IN 46733-8405
 Moog, Mark A; 501 N ELM ST, HENDERSON, KY 42420-2933
 Ostafinski, Joseph A; 308 WASHINGTON ST, VALPARAISO, IN 46383-4734
 Patterson, Jeffrey D; C/O ST PETERS LUTHERAN CHURCH 403 W BRIDGE ST, BROWNSTOWN, IN 47220-1303
 Plug, Jeffery D; 323 HILLCREST DR, MADISON, IN 47250-2921
 Rittner, Philip R; 101 E NORTH ST, COLUMBIA CITY, IN 46725-1401
 Sievers, Philip Duane; 2859 DURSILLAS DR, PLAINFIELD, IN 46168-7805
 Wright, Kyle James; 6 W INDIANA AVE, HAMLET, IN 46532-9530

Voting Lay

Beardsley, Charles; 9107 MAPLES RD, FORT WAYNE, IN 46816
 Bienz, Nathan G; PO BOX 122, HOAGLAND, IN 46745
 Clow, Gerald B; 1822 E 950 S, COLUMBUS, IN 47201-9218
 Esala, David E; 668 DAVIS CIR, CROWN POINT, IN 46307
 Furr, Franklin; 1165 E OAK DR S, WINAMAC, IN 46996-8789
 Glawatz, William G; 1937 N BANCROFT ST, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46218-4711
 Harweger, Ty A; 1012 WILDWOOD CT, SEYMOUR, IN 47274-1888
 Hawk, David K; 2814 BAYWOOD TRL, FORT WAYNE, IN 46845-1970

Hawkins, Mike; 1025 FRAN LIN PKWY, MUNSTER, IN 46321-3504
 Hendershot, Charles D; PO BOX 441, MEDORA, IN 47260
 Henrichs, Martin; 2422 Allison Cir, Valparaiso, IN 46383-3973
 Hibner, Paul D; 3210 E BANTA RD, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46227-7604
 Kahre, James W; 11341 DARMSTADT RD, EVANSVILLE, IN 47725-9524
 Koenneman, Kenneth E; 1509 N BERTHAUD RD, NEW HAVEN, IN 46774-9661
 Kubly, Scott; 7518 CHOATE CT, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46254-9674
 Leininger, Kevin J; 4831 ORCHARD GREEN PL, FORT WAYNE, IN 46804-6590
 McKinney, Karen L; 8610 CHEFFIELD DR, LOUISVILLE, KY 40222-5649
 North, Paul G; 103 NANSUE DR, TIPTON, IN 46072-9598
 Rahe, John A; 204 HILLVIEW DR, AURORA, IN 47001-1624
 Rahe, Melvin R; 7001 SUMMER HILL DR, GEORGETOWN, IN 47122-8648
 Roush, Charles; 9434 S 550 E, CARBON, IN 47837
 Smith, David S; 119 NILES AVE, MISHAWAKA, IN 46544-2505
 Stephens, Kelly M; 4333 BELL RD UNIT 1302, NEWBURGH, IN 47630-8152

Advisory Ordained

Mueller, David C; 5528 GATE TREE LN, FORT WAYNE, IN 46835-3870
 Sims, Timothy E; 945 KOEHLINGER DR, NEW HAVEN, IN 46774

Advisory Commissioned

Carlson, Matthew Gene; 10055 E 186TH ST, NOBLESVILLE, IN 46060-1659
 Denholm, George; 4554 HACKBERRY DR, COLUMBUS, IN 47201-9501
 Frick, Matthew T; 115 S EWING ST, BROWNSTOWN, IN 47220-1716
 Hencye, Lawrence K; 3409 MERRIMACK PL, FORT WAYNE, IN 46815-8412
 Koennemann, Darin D; 7314 COUNTRY HILL DR, FORT WAYNE, IN 46835-9408
 Rensner, Stephen E; 4221 SOUTHPORT TRACE DR, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46237-2891
 Schilf, Kenneth M; 5005 BLUM DR, FORT WAYNE, IN 46835-3421
 Schumacher, Cynthia Ann; 1109 DAKOTA DR, FORT WAYNE, IN 46845-2323
 Schwantz, Richard G; 1931 S TYLAND BLVD, NEW HAVEN, IN 46774-1551
 Weber, John Mark; 1034 E 1100 N, DECATUR, IN 46733-8407
 Weber, Sarah Louise; 1034 E 1100 N, DECATUR, IN 46733-8407

Iowa East District**Voting Ordained**

Anderson, David C; 3421 HILLDALE RD, DAVENPORT, IA 52806-5132
 Hansen, David L; 526 ROSEDALE DR, CENTER POINT, IA 52213-9374
 Koch, Ronnie L; PO BOX 336, FREDERICKSBURG, IA 50630-0336
 Krause, Donald R; 211 E ADAMS ST, DELAWARE, IA 52036
 Lingard, David C; PO BOX 414, VAN HORNE, IA 52346-0414
 Maddick, Michael L; 1244A 190TH ST, STATE CENTER, IA 50247-9609
 Mc Dermott, Ryan M; 6349 170TH ST, ELMA, IA 50628-8355
 Mons, William Maximillian; 1814 GRASLON DR, IOWA CITY, IA 52246-4605
 Pool, Daniel P; 416 MAIN AVE, CLINTON, IA 52732-1938
 Rueger, Matthew W; PO BOX 545, HUBBARD, IA 50122-0545
 Scudder, Michael R; 906 E MAPLELEAF DR, MT PLEASANT, IA 52641-1405
 Small, Terry S; 1988 W AVE, HOMESTEAD, IA 52236-8515
 Steege, David L; 741 CENTRAL AVE, EVANSDALE, IA 50707-1613

Voting Lay

Bolhagen, Steve; 1703 Hidden Valley Dr, Iowa Falls, IA 50126
 Egger, Carl T; 1304 HOUSER ST, MUSCATINE, IA 52761-2233
 Hawxby, Don; 407 NORTH ST, MELCHER DAL, IA 50062-7767
 Hoelz, Richard A; 3519 HEATHERIDGE DR NE, CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52402-7624
 Kenitzer, Matt R; 5562 SUMMERLAND DR, WATERLOO, IA 50701

Lohse, Richard; 4016 RICHLAND DR NW, CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52405-5208
 Moeller, David; 2217 Thornwood Ave, Davenport, IA 52804
 Oehlerich, Richard D; 302 4TH AVE, KEYSTONE, IA 52249-9509
 Pretz, Eldon C; PO BOX 8628, CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52404
 Schaff, Rudy H; 8374 V AVE, WESTGATE, IA 50681-8612
 Thompson, Mark E; 345 W 7TH ST, GARNER, IA 50438-1502
 Wesener, David K; 59022 IRISH RIDGE RD, PR DU CHIEN, WI 53821
 Zinda, Daniel B; 1115 6TH AVE, DEWITT, IA 52742

Advisory Ordained

Mueller, Gilbert E; 2515 E PLEASANT ST, DAVENPORT, IA 52803-2359

Advisory Commissioned

Venteicher, Benjamin Dale; 3800 YELLOW PINE CT NE, CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52402-1758

Iowa West District**Voting Ordained**

Durand, Edward E; 1316 25TH AVE N, FORT DODGE, IA 50501-7229
 Firby, Jerald E; 311 E 6TH ST, LOGAN, IA 51546-1344
 Harman, Michael D; PO BOX 393, NEWELL, IA 50568-0393
 Johnson, Paul E; 6665 FREDERICK AVE, MAY CITY, IA 51354
 Keuning, Jeffrey Michael; 313 MARSHALL ST, DEXTER, IA 50070-1037
 Maronde, Christopher Allan; 108 LIME ST, KIRON, IA 51448-7600
 Martens, Dennis Lee; PO BOX 570, REMSEN, IA 51050-0570
 Peterson, Donald E; PO BOX 260, LAKE VIEW, IA 51450-0260
 Peterson, Jason P; PO BOX 195, BURT, IA 50522-0195
 Riggert, Jonathan R; C/O TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 230 N ROOSEVELT AVE, CHEROKEE, IA 51012-1971
 Salcido, Richard A; 1101 PARK LN, IDA GROVE, IA 51445-1719
 Schonkaes, John Reginald; 309 4TH ST NW, ALTOONA, IA 50009-3400
 Shorey, Ralph Chester; 3101 HAMILTON BLVD, SIOUX CITY, IA 51104-2409
 Standfest, Michael R; 295 SPRUCE LN, BOONE, IA 50036-7365
 Stogdill, James Alan; 6270 MERLE HAY RD, JOHNSTON, IA 50131-1225
 Watt, Jonathan Charles; 800 N SUMNER AVE, CRESTON, IA 50801-1349
 Weiss, William Martin; PO BOX 100, LIDDERDALE, IA 51452-0100
 Zellmer, Robert Johann Thad; 3670 350TH ST, FARNHAMVILLE, IA 50538-7538

Voting Lay

Draeger, Megan L; 704 4TH ST NE, CLARION, IA 50525-1215
 Foy, Charles H; PO BOX 532, ODEBOLT, IA 51458-0532
 Gunderson, Bruce; 205 Sumner Ave, Humboldt, IA 50548
 Harder, Ronald A; 593 GREENFIELD PKWY, DES MOINES, IA 50320-6823
 Hayworth, Glen R; PO BOX 181, KINGSLEY, IA 51028-0181
 Hight, Leroy W; 1220 HIGHWAY 59, SCHLESWIG, IA 51461-7534
 Johnson, Loren D; 2025 190TH ST, CLARINDA, IA 51632-4508
 Martens, Merle; 2000 ASHWORTH RD, WDM, IA 50265-3311
 McCall, Carolyn D; 2100 TORREY PINES RD, AMES, IA 50010-8945
 Newman, Timothy G; 306 GUTHRIE ST, ADAIR, IA 50002-7729
 Olson, Steve C; 809 E CEDAR ST, MARCUS, IA 51035-7155
 Ostebee, Joyce; 1553 155TH LN, AUDUBON, IA 50025-7571
 Reppert, Roger; 70401 476TH AVE, JACKSON, MN 56143-8513
 Schroeder, Gary J; 339 MADISON ST, MANNING, IA 51455-1221
 Stephas, Leo; 4105 340TH AVE, RUTHVEN, IA 51358
 Wilcke, Robert H; 58970 879 RD, PONCA, NE 68770-7066
 Winterhof, Vernon E; 6194 Y AVE, AURELIA, IA 51005
 Witte, Ruth M; 1013 S NEWTON ST, SIOUX CITY, IA 51106-1337

Advisory Ordained

Buelow, Albert H; 5509 ASPEN DR, WDM, IA 50266-6346

Advisory Commissioned

Storm, Cindy Lou; 2205 S PATTERSON ST, SIOUX CITY, IA 51106-2924

Kansas District**Voting Ordained**

Augustine, John Philipp; 300 N INDIANA AVE, SYLVAN GROVE, KS 67481-8835
 Bingenheimer, Michael R; 3114 N RIDGE PORT CT, WICHITA, KS 67205-2502
 Boyle, Geoffrey Robert; 637 S ERIE ST, WICHITA, KS 67211-2904
 Brown, Luther C; 114 2ND ST, WESTPHALIA, KS 66093-7108
 Cook, Theodore E; 783 S 196TH ST, PITTSBURG, KS 66762-7211
 Drebes, Bryan Edward; 9101 LAMAR AVE, SHAWNEE MSN, KS 66207-2452
 Geske, Jeffrey D; 2116 REDHAWK LN, SALINA, KS 67401-7167
 Gruener, David F; PO BOX 343, LINN, KS 66953-0343
 Lange, Peter K; 221 SW GREENWOOD AVE, TOPEKA, KS 66606-1227
 Llewellyn, Timothy J; 214 E 7TH ST, OAKLEY, KS 67748-1809
 Mease, Van Edward; 311 N 7TH ST, LEAVENWORTH, KS 66048-1932
 Panzer, Justin A; 406 NE 11TH ST, ABILENE, KS 67410-1810
 Schmidt, Michael John; 1800 LITTLE KITTEN AVE, MANHATTAN, KS 66503-7511
 Sukstorf, Perry Todd; 920 S ALTA LN, OLATHE, KS 66061-4105
 Van Velzer, Michael J; 222 OSAGE ST, NORTONVILLE, KS 66060-4023
 Wehling, Andrew Alan; 1321 S GRANT AVE, LIBERAL, KS 67901-4702

Voting Lay

Bachelor, Michael S; 1305 DAKOTA ST, SABETHA, KS 66534-2039
 Bauck, James K; PO BOX 5, VASSAR, KS 66543-0005
 Bauerle, Mark W; 3566 SW MISSION AVE, TOPEKA, KS 66614-3636
 Brune, Milton E; RR 1 BOX 23, HOOKER, OK 73945-9720
 Carpenter, Mike P; 617 ALLISON ST, NEWTON, KS 67114-4311
 Cross, Monte; 308 N MAIN ST, BUHLER, KS 67522-2206
 Cynova, Gale D; 1126 S SPRING VALLEY RD, JUNCTION CITY, KS 66441-8423
 Hackerott, Ruth; 801 KANSAS AVE, PHILLIPSBURG, KS 67661-2534
 Hanson, Don F; 819 E 3RD ST, ELLSWORTH, KS 67439-4224
 Lehman, Mark A; 154 N 180TH ST, GIRARD, KS 66743-9406
 Mattal, Fred; 511 GROVE ST, PRATT, KS 67124-3028
 Meinzen, Stephen E; 8927 W 132ND PL, OVERLAND PARK, KS 66213
 Schotte, Richard; 470 ELK RD, BREMEN, KS 66412-8647
 Thomas, Jana S; 18610 W 64TH ST, SHAWNEE, KS 66218
 Vogel, Arthur F; 4153 RAINBOW BLVD, KANSAS CITY, KS 66103-3110
 Wadleigh, Brent; 1528 N 4TH ST, ARKANSAS CITY, KS 67005
 Walker, Ira; 2380 270TH ST, LINCOLNVILLE, KS 66858

Advisory Ordained

Krause, Thomas P; 11556 CARTER ST, OVERLAND PARK, KS 66210-2924

Advisory Commissioned

Pera, Jeremy J; 616 FRANKLIN ST, CLAY CENTER, KS 67432-1556

Michigan District**Voting Ordained**

Allwardt, William H; 3903 SEQUIN DR, BAY CITY, MI 48706-2045
 Baerwolf, Robert D; 8307 ENID DR, EVART, MI 49631-8779
 Beck, Gary L; 5415 N BELSAY RD, FLINT, MI 48506-1251
 Bickel, Craig L; 2 MICHIGAN ST NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503-2500
 Boehnke, Christopher M; 13679 MEADOWBROOK LN, GRAND HAVEN, MI 49417-9436
 Brunworth, Todd J; 718 N OHIO AVE, GAYLORD, MI 49735-9393
 Collin, Richard W; 3774 N US HIGHWAY 131, MANTON, MI 49663-9402
 Dodge, David A; 405 South St, UNION CITY, MI 49094
 Doellinger, Paul M; 61140 LENAWE RD, CASSOPOLIS, MI 49031-9428
 Eilers, Gregory J; PO BOX 71, PORT HOPE, MI 48468-0071

Ferry, Charles D; 1108 MEADOWVIEW DR, WATERFORD, MI 48327-2962
 Frenz, Steven Norman; 18669 HOWARD CITY EDMORE RD, HOWARD CITY, MI 49329-9147
 Gaertner, Evan Paul; 9743 BETTY DR, BRIGHTON, MI 48116-8544
 Geml, Michael A; 7150 MAPLEDALE RD, JACKSON, MI 49201-9743
 Herrod, J Robert; 1625 WASHINGTON ST, ALGONAC, MI 48001-1355
 Hill, James M; 21 KENDRICK ST, MOUNT CLEMENS, MI 48043-1609
 Hutter, Erwin M; 24904 HAYES ST, TAYLOR, MI 48180-2105
 Kassen, John E; 721 GOLF VILLA DR, OXFORD, MI 48371-3696
 Kilponen, Roger R; 1377 N STATE ST APT 20, SAINT IGNACE, MI 49781-1030
 Lambart, Kurt E; 28484 BALMORAL ST, GARDEN CITY, MI 48135-2158
 Matro, Lawrence K; 1456 S MONTMORENCY LN, SUTTONS BAY, MI 49682-9673
 Matyas, Dennis Wesley; 712 Orchard Dr, Albion, MI 49224
 Monson, Paul C; 135 MCKINLEY DR, TROY, MI 48098-2966
 Morrison, Rodney Leroy; 9131 W AIRPORT RD, SAINT HELEN, MI 48656-9724
 Muhle, Dean Ray; 6951 SHELLNBARGER RD, HALE, MI 48739-9082
 Newton, Steven Michael; 43937 SOUTHAMPTON DR, CANTON, MI 48187-2843
 Olson, Timothy W; 4081 BELL HWY, EATON RAPIDS, MI 48827-7004
 Oswald, Mark Arthur; 1351 HARDING ST, CONKLIN, MI 49403-8715
 Reed, David H; 307 RUTH ST, AUBURN, MI 48611-9463
 Rufner, David J; 8305 STONINGTON DR, JENISON, MI 49428-8671
 Schmidt, David P; 28428 NIEMAN RD, NEW BOSTON, MI 48164-9640
 Schulz, Charles R; 6007 S MIAMI ST, YPSILANTI, MI 48197-9729
 Schwartz, John W; 34089 OLD FORGE CT, STERLING HTS, MI 48312-5649
 Spence, Kenneth M; 352 SURREY HTS, WESTLAND, MI 48186-3761
 Stolarczyk, Steven; 110 HEMINGWAY, AUBURN, MI 48611
 Thiel, Steven E; 3196 WOODLAND DR, GRAYLING, MI 49738-7030
 Thompson, Bert Anthony; 20879 FLEETWOOD DR, CLINTON TWP, MI 48035-1606
 Williamson, Kenneth L; PO BOX 521, CARSON CITY, MI 48811-0521

Voting Lay
 Armstrong, Jack F; 276 E PINEVIEW DR, SAGINAW, MI 48609-9420
 Avendt, Roger H; 11341 M 65, LACHINE, MI 49753
 Bascom, Robert; 4376 LAKE HARBOR RD, NORTON SHORES, MI 49441
 Baylis, Aaron J; 1332 S FINN RD, MUNGER, MI 48747-9301
 Beck, Ronald G; 22824 LISCOMB AVE, EASTPOINTE, MI 48021-1773
 Beier, Beverly J; 681 QUINCY GRANGE RD, QUINCY, MI 49082-9481
 Bendick, Kenneth R; 11799 BAYER RD, ROSCOMMON, MI 48653-8396
 Burch, Bradley O; 20320 WHITE OAK CT, LAKE ANN, MI 49650
 Diefenbach, John C; 3781 E 8 RD, MANTON, MI 49663-9506
 Dierking, Keith; 2948 HALL ST SE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49506-3112
 Dowding, Robert; 311 N SMITH RD, EATON RAPIDS, MI 48827-9333
 Ducharme, Williard C; 12959 LA SALLE LN, HUNTINGTON WOODS, MI 48070
 Fitzpatrick, James M; 341 LAKESHORE POINTE DR, HOWELL, MI 48843-6772
 Fuchs, Hans D; 13654 BEECH DALY RD, TAYLOR, MI 48180-4431
 Gehoski, William J; 4955 W BIS RD, MIDLAND, MI 48642-9258
 Geyer, Philip; 2512 DAYTON DR, ANN ARBOR, MI 48108-1234
 Jiran, Susan K; 4949 Crandall Rd, Battle Creek, MI 49017
 Keinath, Gerald; 1729 Deckerville Rd, Deckerville, MI 48427
 Kern, Richard A; 545 S RISKY RD, BAY PORT, MI 48720-9712
 Koke, John D; 7108 Cleon Dr, Swartz Creek, MI 48473
 Koppel, Alexander J; 3679 BRENTWOOD ST, NORTON SHORES, MI 49441-4605

Mahlburg, Martha J; 730 2ND ST, TAWAS CITY, MI 48764
 Maljak, Michael K; 77940 Mc Fadden, Armada, MI 48005
 Mathena, Marvin; 1825 S GROVE ST, YPSILANTI, MI 48198-6647
 Matzke, Mark E; 3314 LINCOLN AVE, SAINT JOSEPH, MI 49085-3703
 Meyer, Richard D; 75 N EAST MULLETT LAKE RD, INDIAN RIVER, MI 47949-9164
 Niendorf, Mark; 3542 WEDGEWOOD DR, LAPEER, MI 48446-2989
 Nutzmann, John W; 11878 PARKLANE ST, MOUNT MORRIS, MI 48458-1430
 Pedersen, C Richard; 224 BLACK SQUIRREL DR, HOUGHTON LAKE, MI 48629-9209
 Pillsbury, Paul E; 7175 N NOFFKE DR, CALEDONIA, MI 49136-8805
 Prange, Delbert H; 439 S HIGBEE ST, REED CITY, MI 49677-1109
 Remus, Willis W; 7757 CODDINGTON CT, CLARKSTON, MI 48348-4758
 Riske, James M; 2280 CLEARWOOD CT, SHELBY TWP, MI 48316-1014
 Ruiz, Kathryn J; 12580 AIRPORT RD, DEWITT, MI 48820-9280
 Schmidt, Roy A; 5660 FIRETHORNE DR, BAY CITY, MI 48706-5635
 Slaten, Mark F; 2425 APPLEWOOD DR, LAPEER, MI 48446-9013
 Solano, John M; 2533 SPRINGWELL ST, DETROIT, MI 48209
 Spenle, Lori; 5795 OLMSTEAD RD, MUIR, MI 48860-9739
 Wellhousen, Howard E; 443 FERN CT, MONROE, MI 48162-2601
 Werman, David E; 39659 SUZAN CT, PLYMOUTH, MI 48170
 Whitbeck, Vernon; 9140 HANNAN RD, WAYNE, MI 48184-1556
 Wyman, Ronald W; 9180 W FERNDALE DR, MANITOU BEACH, MI 49253-9558

Advisory Ordained

Grimm, Gerald E; 21628 MARY ROSE DR, MACOMB, MI 48044-6061
 Hamilton, George O; 9557 TRILLIUM LAKE DR, ZEELAND, MI 49464-8395
 Kleimola, Dale M; 911 WOODBINE ST, JACKSON, MI 49203-2668

Advisory Commissioned

Brandt, John M; 3665 W WINFIELD DR, SAGINAW, MI 48603-2079
 Brandt, Susan R; 3665 W WINFIELD DR, SAGINAW, MI 48603-2079
 Braun, Bruce N; 2061 W WILLIAMS CIR, WESTLAND, MI 48186
 Farrand, Thomas J; 1463 OAK TER, SAINT JOSEPH, MI 49085-9722
 Gallert, Frederick D; 1861 RADCLIFF AVE SE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49506-5138
 Pickelmann, Henry M; 4762 BIRNBAUM DR, BAY CITY, MI 48706-9496
 Pickelmann, Jonathon H; 5059 WEISS ST, SAGINAW, MI 48603-3752
 Schaefer, Robert D; 53282 LUANN DR, SHELBY TWP, MI 48316-2604
 Weston, Amy J; 1715 PARAMOUNT ST, NOVI, MI 48377-2088

Mid-South District**Voting Ordained**

Conger, Kevin Robert; 1204 HILL ST, JACKSONVILLE, AR 72076-3021
 Detrie, Jace Cole; 710 FORREST AVE, ATHENS, TN 37303-2721
 Hauser, Daniel L; 315 S HUGHES ST, LITTLE ROCK, AR 72205-5128
 Kobs, Darrell C; 1016 LANCELOT DR, RUSSELLVILLE, AR 72801-5750
 Krause, Mark E; 1800 W EMMA AVE, SPRINGDALE, AR 72762-3905
 McMinn, Theodore David; 3950 VERBLE SHERRELL RD, COOKEVILLE, TN 38506-7675
 Peters, Larry A; 2041 MADISON ST, CLARKSVILLE, TN 37043-5058
 Portier, Robert M; 2070 JAMES RD, SEVIERVILLE, TN 37876-2908
 Reuter, Lane Brooks; 6325 RALEIGH LAGRANGE RD, MEMPHIS, TN 38134-6907
 Riley, Dwight D; 106 NEEL ST, EL DORADO, AR 71730-5340

Shaw, Kenneth B; 1117 PINNACLE WAY, CASTALIN SPGS, TN 37031-4780
 Shewmaker, Russell L; 511 W THOMAS AVE, JONESBORO, AR 72401-4923

Voting Lay

Bishop, Allen; 260 DARIEN LN, MOUNTAIN VIEW, AR 72560-7682
 Brummett, Keith D; 111 PRAIRIE LN, BENTONVILLE, AR 72712-9340
 Collver, Albert B; 6816 MOUNTAIN SHADOW DR, KNOXVILLE, TN 37918-6318
 Cox, David H; 2801 JEFFERSON ST APT 20, PADUCAH, KY 42001-4185
 Green, Marvin M; 18218 HIGHWAY 71 S, GREENWOOD, AR 72936-8000
 Jacks, Beverly J; 2413 LAURELTON CREEK LN, CHATTANOOGA, TN 37421-1873
 Knoernschild, David E; 6 ALICANTE LN, HOT SPRINGS, AR 71909-4217
 Mersiovsky, Edgar; 19 NORTHLAKE CIR, CONWAY, AR 72032-7800
 Morrison, Douglas R; 1156 W NATCHEZ PT APT 71, MEMPHIS, TN 38103-0955
 Mountjoy, James S; 7432 ROLLING RIVER PKWY, NASHVILLE, TN 37221-3340
 Richter, Don; 9103 SHADY DR, PINE BLUFF, AR 71603-9560
 Simko, Janet; 101 WALDEN RIDGE DR, CROSSVILLE, TN 38558-6610

Advisory Ordained

Henning, Timothy J; 707 W 18TH TER, RUSSELLVILLE, AR 72801-7019

Advisory Commissioned

Geyer, Thomas W; 8359 PRESTINE LOOP APT 201, CORDOVA, TN 38018-4297

Minnesota North District**Voting Ordained**

Angland, Dennis W; 771 HIDDEN OAKS DR NW, ALEXANDRIA, MN 56308-8246
 Anthony, James W; 516 4TH ST SE, DEER RIVER, MN 56636-8622
 Eaves, Thomas E; 211 3RD ST NE, BARNESVILLE, MN 56514-3401
 Franck, Robert C; 3622 CRESCENT VIEW AVE, DULUTH, MN 55804-1708
 Heinecke, Timothy N; 15919 DISCOVERY CIR, PARK RAPIDS, MN 56470-2053
 Kister, Thaine Lee; 3197 141ST AVE, BELLINGHAM, MN 56212-2057
 Koepf, Joel Gregory; 5595 130TH AVE, WOOD LAKE, MN 56297-1497
 Kutter, Frederick M; 26245 COUNTY ROAD 9, RICHMOND, MN 56368-8026
 Noble, Carl L; C/O ST PAULS LUTHERAN CHURCH 500 6TH AVE SW, PERHAM, MN 56573-1115
 Porter, Marty L; 300 MAPLE ST, SAUK CENTRE, MN 56378-1223
 Rickbeil, Blake Allen; PO BOX 296, BERTHA, MN 56437-0296
 Robson, Kevin D; 6055 COSMOS RD, BAXTER, MN 56425-9778
 Vrudny, Matthew J; PO BOX 60, FINLAYSON, MN 55735-0060
 Walburg, James S; PO BOX 156, ZIMMERMAN, MN 55398-0156
 Warmier, Paul A; PO BOX 318, BROWNS VALLEY, MN 56219-0318
 Wendzel, Linden B; 31 3RD ST NW, BAGLEY, MN 56621-8738
 Wilke, Donald L; 408 HIGH DR, SARTELL, MN 56377-1268
 Winterstein, Timothy James; PO BOX 35, FISHER, MN 56723-0035

Voting Lay

Clark, Ruth A; 15370 160TH ST, WADENA, MN 56482-8923
 Gangelhoff, Delbert C; 16265 29TH AVE NW, CASS LAKE, MN 56633
 Gerold, Dennis; 13088 RIVER ISLAND RD, PINE CITY, MN 55063-5351
 Graham, Thomas S; 25430 167 1/2 ST NW, BIG LAKE, MN 55309-8558
 Heidorn, Ralph R; 4504540 354TH AVE, MONTEVIDEO, MN 56265
 Jensen, Jeff J; PO BOX 135, ODESSA, MN 56276-0135

Kading, Marvin L; 15145 127TH ST SE, SAINT HILAIRE, MN 56754-9775
 Kessler, Lee H; 842 LONGVIEW DR, DETROIT LAKES, MN 56501-8021
 La Voie, Randy; 36477 203RD AVE, CLARISSA, MN 56440-1003
 Meemken, Tim R; 26 SKYVIEW DR, SAUK RAPIDS, MN 56379-1318
 Meyer, Delano R; 61203 150TH ST, CHOKIO, MN 56221-3078
 Mueller, David; 4371 OLD HIGHWAY 33, CLOQUET, MN 55720-9296
 Prause, Eugene J; 1136 SUNSET DR, FERGUS FALLS, MN 56537-1739
 Prochnow, Norman D; 2005 RIDGEWOOD DR NW, ALEXANDRIA, MN 56308-4946
 Severson, Cal; 10654 TOWN LINE RD, HIBBING, MN 55746-8101
 Teigen, David H; 5153 RED RAMBLER DR, PINE RIVER, MN 56474-3567
 Wilson, Weldon O; 5143 40TH ST S, SAINT CLOUD, MN 56301-8820

Advisory Ordained

Bendix, Leland D; 19104 LINCOLN ST NW, ELK RIVER, MN 55330-2316

Advisory Commissioned

Cooper, Craig Laurance; 1602 PARK VIEW LN NE, SAUK RAPIDS, MN 56379-5802

Minnesota South District

Voting Ordained

Bode, Grant T; 700 S BROADWAY ST, NEW ULM, MN 56073-3405
 Briel, Steven C; 9141 COUNTY ROAD 101, CORCORAN, MN 55340-9694
 Fiege, Scott T; PO BOX 209, LAKE CITY, MN 55041-0209
 Klaus, Kurt R P; 4843 124TH LN NE, BLAINE, MN 55449-7302
 Krentz, Paul D; 844 SOUTHVIEW ST SE, WATERTOWN, MN 55388-9308
 Krusemark, Jesse Ehme; 8550 N D ST, WINONA, MN 55987-9247
 Markworth, James A; 18236 EMBERS AVE, FARMINGTON, MN 55024-9258
 Maurer, Rudolph H; PO BOX 36, GOOD THUNDER, MN 56037-0036
 Nafzger, Peter H; 6004 GOODVIEW TRL N, HUGO, MN 55038-7471
 Nirva, Michael John; PO BOX 680, HOWARD LAKE, MN 55349-0680
 Olson, Jeremiah F; 1035 15TH AVE N, SOUTH ST PAUL, MN 55075-1202
 Olson, Jon Christopher; 733 6TH AVE SW, PIPESTONE, MN 56164-1026
 Parrish, Brent L; 20200 FAIRLAWN AVE, PRIOR LAKE, MN 55372-8846
 Reed, Russell Allan; PO BOX 147, BROWNTON, MN 55312-0147
 Rinne, Rex A; 4721 ADAIR CT, CRYSTAL, MN 55429-3562
 Schuetz, John A; 400 MORRISON AVE, JACKSON, MN 56143-1262
 Trapp, Thomas Harvey; 1698 HUBBARD AVE, SAINT PAUL, MN 55104-1130
 Trueblood, Robert Cairl; 1623 170TH ST, FAIRMONT, MN 56031-1305
 Weiss, Stephen Thomas; 38854 800TH ST, LAKEFIELD, MN 56150
 Zieroth, Gary W; 1966 WATERFORD LN, CHASKA, MN 55318-2855

Voting Lay

Boese, Jeffrey L; 8745 JOHANSEN AVE S, COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016-4988
 Breitbarth, Neal D; 2579 STELLA CT, FAIRMONT, MN 56031-3316
 Chaney, Victor R; 15744 DRAKE ST NW, ANDOVER, MN 55304-4578
 Etchison, John E; 8140 W 109TH STREET CIR, BLOOMINGTON, MN 55438-2295
 Everett, Leslie A; 301 7TH AVE SE, PIPESTONE, MN 56164-2039
 Finger, Richard L; 215 A 1st St, Lewiston, MN 55952
 Frederick, Jim E; 837 LINDEN ST N, NORTHFIELD, MN 55057-1354
 Grimm, Hiram E; 12985 COUNTY ROAD 41, COLOGNE, MN 55322-9603

Hagen, Michael G; 14916 1ST AVE S, BURNSVILLE, MN 55306-6452
 Hagermann, Benjamin; 9169 10TH ST SE, BUFFALO, MN 55313
 Heuton, Lynn M; 1236 MARHSALL AVE, SAINT PAUL, MN 55104
 Ihrke, Jessica; 2983 MONROE DR NW, ROCHESTER, MN 55901
 Kroehler, Phyllis L; 44205 220TH ST, ARLINGTON, MN 55307-9437
 Lee, Edward H; 148 140TH ST, SHERBURN, MN 56171-1122
 Lenz, Paul C; 909 9TH AVE N, SAINT JAMES, MN 56081-1514
 Mews, Bruce; 92301 930TH ST, WINDOM, MN 56101
 Olson, Barry; 816 N CRAIG ST, JANESVILLE, MN 56048-9559
 Ortloff, Dale O; 695 SOUTHVIEW DR SW, HUTCHINSON, MN 55350-2748
 Ostlie, Robert J; 3644 CLINTON AVE, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55409-1348
 Preus, Christian A; 17330 COUNTY ROAD 24, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55447-1210
 Rasmussen, Stan; 1404 27TH ST SW, AUSTIN, MN 55912-5417
 Reinitz, Joel; 2610 HALSTEAD LN, MOUND, MN 55364-9401
 Sorenson, Sara A; 24686 OLD CHURCH RD, RED WING, MN 55066
 Venske, Joshua C; 188 SCOTT LN, WACONIA, MN 55387-9615

Advisory Ordained

Bailey, Robert G; 435 E 3RD ST, ALBERT LEA, MN 56007-3015
 Rokke, Ralph M; 5837 PLEASANT AVE, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55419-2306

Advisory Commissioned

Burkart, Jeffrey E; 433 IRENE CT, ROSEVILLE, MN 55113-3520
 Harwell, Matthew Clark; 1817 IVES AVE N, GLENCOE, MN 55336-1422
 Henry, Lynn; 4206 Harriet Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55409
 Illian, Jacqueline L; 372 124TH LN NW, COON RAPIDS, MN 55448-2626
 Loontjer, Gary L; 2101 BLAKE AVE, LESTER PR, MN 55354-2002
 Pfeiffer, Cletus Ralph; 5615 23RD AVE NW, ROCHESTER, MN 55901-2123

Missouri District

Voting Ordained

Boisclair, David R; 4121 BEGG BLVD, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63121-3103
 Buchmueller, Barrett Ryan; 215 N MAIN ST, FREISTATT, MO 65654-2501
 Clow, Keith M; PO BOX 42, AUXVASSE, MO 65231-0042
 Gaunt, Douglas A; 609 NORWICH DR, SAINT CHARLES, MO 63301-0439
 Gier, James D; 1500 TRACY AVE, EXCELSIOR SPG, MO 64024-8209
 Golden, Kevin Scott; 9241 CLAYTON RD, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63124-1509
 Gutz, Glen E; 201 E 4TH ST, SALISBURY, MO 65281-1340
 Kettner, David L; 1106 BAY CT, SALEM, MO 65560-2808
 King, James T; 916 MICHIGAN ST, FARMINGTON, MO 63640-1432
 Lemcke, Brian S; 1413 1/2 NEBRASKA ST, MOUND CITY, MO 64470
 Lukefahr, David Phillip; 712 S OSTEOPATHY AVE, KIRKSVILLE, MO 63501-1574
 Marks, Matthew T; 4552 HIGHWAY B, PERRYVILLE, MO 63775-8724
 Marler, William R; 3642 W GREENWOOD ST, SPRINGFIELD, MO 65807-5539
 Martin, Mark D; 1549 TRENTON LN, CPE GIRARDEAU, MO 63701-2558
 Miille, Timothy Charles; PO BOX 85, BLACKBURN, MO 65321-0085
 Niles, John Patrick; 608 NW 8TH ST, CONCORDIA, MO 64020-9784
 Patschke, Scott Anthony; 3914 S RIVER BLVD, INDEPENDENCE, MO 64055-4342
 Peterson, Ryan Ray; 16548 HUNTERS CROSSING DR, WILDWOOD, MO 63040-1733
 Poppe, Leonard B; 21037 ROTERMUND AVE, LINCOLN, MO 65338-2731
 Powell, Samuel Michael; 2016 SAINT LOUIS RD, JEFFERSON CTY, MO 65101-4364

Priem, Matthew David; 300 N HIGH DR, RAYMORE, MO 64083-9129
 Rall, Ronald Dean; 6949 PERNOD AVE, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63139-2117
 Roeglin, Matthew David; 1841 CHARLESTON ESTATES DR, FLORISSANT, MO 63031-1059
 Schulte, Gary R; 4407 LIBERTY MEADOWS RD, DE SOTO, MO 63020-3261
 Simmons, William T; 8333 WEBER TRAIL DR, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63123-4645
 Thieme, Brian K; 520 N CRATER LAKE DR, COLUMBIA, MO 65201-6871
 Wollenburg, Alan J; 104 LINDA DR, SIKESTON, MO 63801-4610
 Zastrow, William F; 9100 HIGHWAY YY, LESLIE, MO 63056-1101

Voting Lay

Alexander, Steven P; 13012 EASTWOOD DR, DE SOTO, MO 63020-2930
 Becker, Michael A; 1323 WEBSTER PATH DR, WEBSTER GRVS, MO 63119-3942
 Brandt, Aaron; 980 NE 10, KNOB NOSTER, MO 65336-2010
 Burgdorf, Erik D; 2497 ANNAPOLIS WAY, SAINT CHARLES, MO 63303-2907
 Craig-Meyer, Jeff; 2013 CONGRESS ST, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63118-1603
 Dieckman, Dallas J; 312 W NORTH ST, WARRENSBURG, MO 64093-1332
 Drewes, David A; 7270 S WINCHESTER DR, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63121-2621
 Hecht, Robert W; 2106 HIGHWAY C, ALTENBURG, MO 63732-6155
 Hinchman, Ronald E; 981 HIGHWAY Z, SAINT ROBERT, MO 65584
 Howell, Vicki; 67 ALBRECHT LN, SCOTT CITY, MO 63780-2764
 Koch, Mark; 2670 HIGHWAY E, NEW HAVEN, MO 63068-2234
 Kurth, Robert P; 110 W 5TH ST, ALMA, MO 64001-9740
 Lininger, David I; 42 ROUNDTREE RD PO BOX 312, URBANA, MO 65767
 Mahsman, Phillip D; 13526 PIKE 103, NEW LONDON, MO 63459-2106
 Marquardt, John A; 1016 SE 4TH TER, LEES SUMMIT, MO 64063-3222
 Mc Donnell, Peter W; 3615 FOREST DALE DR, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63125-4213
 Pappert, Don S; 402 S MILL ST, SMITHVILLE, MO 64089-9337
 Proctor, Stanley I; 50 HIGH VALLEY DR, CHESTERFIELD, MO 63017-2716
 Saugstad, Dennis L; PO BOX 68, WESTON, MO 64098-0068
 Schenks, Timothy C; 2216 TROUSDALE ST, POPLAR BLUFF, MO 63901-2560
 Scheu, Robert L; 5228 SUMMER CIR, IMPERIAL, MO 63052-2176
 Schnitker, Herb; 12597 AUDRAIN RD, MIDDLETOWN, MO 63359
 Swanson, Kurt; 22707 E 41ST TER S, BLUE SPRINGS, MO 64015-7901
 Thomas, David C; 155 MAPLE GROVE WAY, COLUMBIA, MO 65203-3141
 Watts, Ron L; 2381 CHARLEMAGNE DR, MARYLAND HTS, MO 63043-1549
 Weber, James; 3420 COUNTRY CLUB DR, JEFFERSON CTY, MO 65109-1031
 Wiegel, Jim; 15120 LIV 240, CHILLICOTHE, MO 64601-2797
 Williams, Lisa C; 928 W 34TH ST, KANSAS CITY, MO 64111-3612

Advisory Ordained

Dissen, David V; 211 HILLVIEW ST, CPE GIRARDEAU, MO 63703-6327
 Greene, Frank N; 8708 N HARRISON ST, KANSAS CITY, MO 64155-2694
 Gundermann, Vernon D; 705 ECKRICH PL, WEBSTER GROVES, MO 63119
 Hoyer, Martin O; 19083 HOBBS RD, BARNETT, MO 65011-3618

Advisory Commissioned

Bobzin, John C; 32513 COUNTY LINE RD, CONCORDIA, MO 64020-6353
 Cohrs, Richard Paul; 3750 MAJESTIC CT, SAINT CHARLES, MO 63303-1911
 Engelbrecht, John M; 1110 MEADOWS PL, JEFFERSON CTY, MO 65101-3782

Flenner, Lorraine Faye; 20239 GRAHAM LN, HIGGINSVILLE, MO 64037-8317
 Frank, John R; 17 KEYSTONE CT, FENTON, MO 63026-4883
 Kleiboecker, Carole A; 14579 LAWRENCE 1060, STOTTS CITY, MO 65756-9172
 Rice, Denise L; 835 LA BONNE PKWY, MANCHESTER, MO 63021-7056

Montana District

Voting Ordained

Lehmann, Charles Ray; 504 E ELM ST, THREE FORKS, MT 59752-8924
 Peterson, Kevin M; 5 MILLER LN, SALMON, ID 83467-5163
 Schlund, Steven R; 2922 1ST AVE N, GREAT FALLS, MT 59401-3404
 Sias, John W; PO BOX 641, COLSTRIP, MT 59323-0641
 Tabbert, Christopher J; PO BOX 332, EUREKA, MT 59917-0332
 Wendt, Ryan David; 2342 S 45TH ST W, BILLINGS, MT 59106-3864

Voting Lay

Arves, Roy; 1301 VALLEY VIEW DR, GREAT FALLS, MT 59404
 Delgado, Frank D; 35489 DUBLIN GULCH RD, ST IGNATIUS, MT 59865-9213
 Hein, Gregg A; 2916 BELVEDERE DR, BILLINGS, MT 59102-3717
 Persinger, Brad; 94 HEATHER LN, GLASGOW, MT 59230-2002
 Streufert, David J; 716 W SAGER LN, DEER LODGE, MT 59722-9727
 Sweatman, Roland W; 255 Swampcreek Loop Rd, Trout Creek, MT 59874

Advisory Ordained

Thompson, Richard L; 5028 CHEYENNE TRL, BILLINGS, MT 59106-9617

Advisory Commissioned

Topp, David; 353 3RD AVENUE WEST N, KALISPELL, MT 59901-3918

Nebraska District

Voting Ordained

Bertrand, William R; 86628 580 AVE, CONCORD, NE 68728-2825
 Bruick, Scott Dennis; 1101 N 5TH ST, SEWARD, NE 68434-1238
 Carretto, James P; PO BOX 797, WISNER, NE 68791-0797
 Clark, Thomas J; 505 GRANT ST, SAINT PAUL, NE 68873-1926
 Dickmader, Jon M; PO BOX 144, BRULE, NE 69127-0144
 Fouts, Bart J; 1364 ROAD 5600, HEBRON, NE 68370-1052
 Gruber, James L; 834 N 3RD ST, HAMPTON, NE 68843-9245
 Hanson, Dean A; PO BOX 211, PLEASANTON, NE 68866-0211
 Hauptmeier, Tyler D; 316 S 10TH ST, WYMORE, NE 68466-2116
 Hayes, Joshua Jeffrey; 11440 W PANAMA RD, CRETE, NE 68333-3309
 Hedstrom, Dale Robert; 420 GLOBE ST, OXFORD, NE 68967-9580
 Lowe, Joshua Thomas; 309 N PINE ST, BLUE HILL, NE 68930-5503
 Mattfield, William A; 632 ROAD 8, SCHUYLER, NE 68661-7203
 Meraz, Jonathan R; PO BOX 159, PLAINVIEW, NE 68769-0159
 Moorhead, William G; 1110 S 90TH ST, OMAHA, NE 68124-1202
 Mortenson, Matthew C; 940 CENTRAL AVE, HUMBOLDT, NE 68376-6112
 Oetting, Larry Wayne; 6920 NW 3RD ST, LINCOLN, NE 68521-6619
 Ryding, John A; 1120 LAWNSDALE AVE, O' NEILL, NE 68763
 Tuma, Brian Douglas; PO BOX 17, CORDOVA, NE 68330-0017
 Weber, Mark W; PO BOX 8, CEDAR BLUFFS, NE 68015-0008
 Wellman, Keith B; 33851 ROAD 726, WAUNETA, NE 69045-5000
 Werling, Gary W; PO BOX 39, GREYNA, NE 68028-0039
 Winter, Frank E; 2114 CLEARFIELD DR, NORFOLK, NE 68701-2309
 Ziegler, Karl P; 4405 ANCHOR MILL DR, BELLEVUE, NE 68123-1169

Voting Lay

Albrecht, Carol; 807 N COMMERCIAL AVE, SUPERIOR, NE 68978

Banks, Donald R; PO BOX 364, IMPERIAL, NE 69033-0364
 Barta, Bryan L; 411 N MADISON ST, BRAINARD, NE 68626-3505
 Conrad, Steve; 1416 Q RD, BEEMER, NE 68716-4048
 Fischer, Craig E; 705 W GOLD COAST RD, PAPPILLION, NE 68046
 Hennings, Verle D; PO BOX 85, FUNK, NE 68940-0085
 Hilgenkamp, Ronald; 23325 COUNTY ROAD 26, ARLINGTON, NE 68002-5044
 Hoffschneider, Mike M; 4737 PIONEERS RD, BEAVER XING, NE 68313-9469
 Loseke, Clifford; 4519 63RD ST, COLUMBUS, NE 68601-8030
 Nelson, James L; 430 E HICKORY RD, BEATRICE, NE 68310-6891
 Nielsen, Daniel L; 54527 880 RD, BLOOMFIELD, NE 68718-2044
 Orth, Dwayne; 700 ROAD WEST 80, BRULE, NE 69127-3710
 Phillips, Matthew C; 1441 W CADEMON CIR, LINCOLN, NE 68523-7209
 Plond, Dave; 1519 W DIVISION ST, GRAND ISLAND, NE 68801-5743
 Prauner, Brad; 54646 832ND RD, MADISON, NE 68748
 Schardt, Steven; 71637 625TH AVE, TABLE ROCK, NE 68447-3140
 Schmieding, Glen; 7532 Upton Grey Ln, Lincoln, NE 68516
 Simpson, Coleen; 85847 577 AVE, WAYNE, NE 68787
 Swanda, Jack L; 7369 N 82ND AVE, OMAHA, NE 68122
 Trusty, Steven M; 1375 ROLLING HILLS LOOP, COUNCIL BLFS, IA 51503-8552
 Wietjes, Craig A; 16760 RIVERDALE RD, RIVERDALE, NE 68870
 Witt, David; 1014 N WILLIAMS AVE, HASTINGS, NE 68901-3818

Advisory Ordained

Gudgel, Richard L; 24 EASTRIDGE DR N, YORK, NE 68467-3923

Advisory Commissioned

House, James L; 13235 W 70TH ST, JUNIATA, NE 68955-2139
 Koopman, David L; 1266 E SEWARD ST, SEWARD, NE 68434-8134
 Mc Carthy, Eunice J; 4067 W CAPITAL AVE, GRAND ISLAND, NE 68803-1117
 Sonntag, Annette M; 39209 205TH AVE, COLUMBUS, NE 68601-9687

New England District

Voting Ordained

Boerger, Timothy M; 780 GRASSY HILL RD, ORANGE, CT 06477-1653
 Eddy, Daniel C; 21 ROBBINS AVE, ABINGTON, MA 02351-2133
 Hazzard, Christopher Andrew; 125 GLENWOOD DR, WESTFIELD, MA 01085-4920
 Kiesel, Martin E; 172 GRANDVIEW RD, SOUTHURRY, CT 06488-1968
 Nielsen, Paul; 4 MARTIN AVE, WATERVILLE, ME 04901-4626
 Pekari, Jeremy R; 5 WAYNE RD, PEABODY, MA 01960-1011
 Sorenson, Andrew Jacob; 627 POQUONNOCK RD, GROTON, CT 06340

Voting Lay

Arbesman, Paul; 125 HILL ST, BRISTOL, CT 06010-2969
 Fuller, Peter; PO BOX 1433, MIDDLEBORO, MA 02346
 Hergert, David D; 111 SHEFFIELD RD, WALTHAM, MA 02451-2322
 Meyer, Marie L; 80 HOYTS HL, BETHEL, CT 06801-2703
 Picanso, Richard F; 47 WHITE PLAINS AVE, LONDONDERRY, NH 03053-4616
 Sauer, William N; 140 HEBRON RD, BOLTON, CT 06043-7810
 Warnock, Kylee; 17 PIERCE ST, ENFIELD, CT 06082

Advisory Commissioned

Bischoff, Marianne; 379 LINDEN ST APT 1, HOLYOKE, MA 01040-3152

New Jersey District

Voting Ordained

Dinger, Andrew David; 1630 AMWELL RD, SOMERSET, NJ 08873-2862
 Dunne, Michael Patrick; 203 TAYLORS MILLS RD, MANALAPAN, NJ 07726-3201
 Gewecke, Stephen A; 1606 HARBOURTON ROCKTOWN RD, LAMBERTVILLE, NJ 08530-3004
 Herring, Robert G; 222 SKYLANDS RD, RINGWOOD, NJ 07456-2905

Herzberg, Terry R; 801 E BALDWIN ST, HACKETTSTOWN, NJ 07840-1508
 Rockett, Dennis W; 129 GLASGOW TER, MAHWAH, NJ 07430-1635

Voting Lay

Chedister, Kyle N; 140 N LIVINGSTON AVE, LIVINGSTON, NJ 07039-2100
 Chenault, Larry D; 9 VICTORY CT, DOVER, NJ 07801-5559
 Knorr, Stuart T; 743 MONTAUK DR, FORKED RIVER, NJ 08731-5331
 Onder, Paul M; 127 MOUNTAIN CIR S, WEST MILFORD, NJ 07480-3213
 Schmidt, William H; 291 N FARVIEW AVE, PARAMUS, NJ 07652-3349
 Visbeck, Charlotte P; 560 SMITH DR, PT PLEASANT, NJ 08742-5431

Advisory Ordained

Kletke, William R; 214 YORKSHIRE TER, WRIGHTSTOWN, NJ 08562-1623

Advisory Commissioned

Vogt, Caren M; 251 WHEATSWORTH RD, HAMBURG, NJ 07419-2607

North Dakota District

Voting Ordained

Chepulis, Mark Andrew; PO BOX 42, CAVALIER, ND 58220-0042
 Daenzer, Sean C; 300 MAIN ST, BARNEY, ND 58008
 Drews, Mark Roger; 119 W CENTRAL AVE, BISMARCK, ND 58501-1636
 Puffe, Thomas L; 207 2ND ST SE, LAMOURE, ND 58458-7139
 Roth, Carlyle L; 1511 GLACIAL DR, MINOT, ND 58703-1222
 Waldvogel, Christopher Carl; 1316 11TH AVE S, FARGO, ND 58103-3004

Voting Lay

Bauer, Robert E; 927 ELM AVE, DICKINSON, ND 58601-6231
 Corwin, Sue; 1811 6TH AVE SW APT 12, JAMESTOWN, ND 58401-6262
 Link, William J; 1481 DOGWOOD AVE, GRAFTON, ND 58237-1742
 Riley, John P; 8098 5TH AVE NE, WILLOW CITY, ND 58384-9320
 Ruff, Del; 826 8th Ave E PO Box 247, West Fargo, ND 58078
 Trittin, Andrew E; 15975 COUNTY ROAD 22, HANKINSON, ND 58041

North Wisconsin District

Voting Ordained

Bahn, Daryn A; 300 N Adams Ave, Marshfield, WI 54449
 Bohn, Daniel Lee; 990 3RD ST, PORT EDWARDS, WI 54469-1250
 Brooks, Curtis Wayne; N6810 748TH ST, ELK MOUND, WI 54739-9048
 Cluppert, Jonathan D; 10868 OLD 51 N, ARBOR VITAE, WI 54568-9721
 Errer, Joshua Samuel; 1609 SWAN RD APT 2, DE PERE, WI 54115-8865
 Eyer, John C; W9304 OAK AVE, SHAWANO, WI 54166-6239
 Gehrke, Aaron R; 1010 MADELEINE ST, HOUGHTON, MI 49931-2512
 Karolus, David B; 300 LINCOLN ST, ANTIGO, WI 54409-1346
 Klug, James R; 1305 ROSE MARIE ST APT 2, WAUSAU, WI 54401-3422
 Kohn, Daniel L; 2241 HAYDEN AVE, ALTOONA, WI 54720-1548
 Lambrecht, Jeffrey A; W1143 HUCKLEBERRY ST, EDGAR, WI 54426-9739
 Sansom, James C; 306 S 45TH AVE, WAUSAU, WI 54401-3993
 Shackel, Paul L; FN1615 MEADOWVIEW DR, GREENVILLE, WI 54942
 Teeple, Jeffrey Steven; 1515 PARNELL ST, MARINETTE, WI 54143-3314
 Trewyn, John I; 884 PINECREST AVE, PHILLIPS, WI 54555-1035
 Uttenreither, Matthew J; PO BOX 68, TIGERTON, WI 54486-0068
 Voss, Dennis L; E11770 COUNTY ROAD HH, OSSEO, WI 54758-8850
 Weber, Brian Gary Scott; 42690 ELM CT, CABLE, WI 54821
 Wessel, Jonathan A; PO BOX 408, AUGUSTA, WI 54722-0408
 Wildauer, Leonard Paul; W5518 COUNTY HIGHWAY F, TREGO, WI 54888-9239

Voting Lay

Fisher, Steve; 411 DRIER ST, DURAND, WI 54736-1719
 Fleming, Sharon J; 722 BUFFINGTON CT, EAU CLAIRE, WI 54703-5701
 Garbisch, Joel; 9026 COUNTY ROAD N, ARPIN, WI 54410
 Gehrt, Robert L; 230 S HIGH ST, EMBARRASS, WI 54933
 Hoffman, Jerome R; 461 S MAPLE ST, ELLSWORTH, WI 54011-9166
 Huettl, Michael G; 5887 STATE HIGHWAY 52, WABENO, WI 54566-9056
 Kamke, David A; 802 18TH ST, MOSINEE, WI 54455-1041
 Kasten, Margaret; 3539 LEVER ST, EAU CLAIRE, WI 54701
 Kosterman, Marvin; 410 E CEDAR ST, BONDUCEL, WI 54107
 Kubley, Carl; 529 LENZ RD, GLIDDEN, WI 54527
 McGanigle, James; 210 S 32ND AVE, WAUSAU, WI 54401
 Miller, Karl; 6990 BENGSD RD # 17, THREE LAKES, WI 54562-9121
 Plockelman, Victor V; W7540 US HIGHWAY 8, LADYSMITH, WI 54848-9525
 Puro, Duane A; 8672 M.5 RD, GLADSTONE, MI 49837-9042
 Rakow, Ruben; 9110 WILLOW RD, SURING, WI 54174-9712
 Riske, Douglas E; 391 CORN RD, ATHENS, WI 54411-8648
 Rose, Martin W; 2372 20 1/4 ST, RICE LAKE, WI 54868-9783
 Rynish, Ruth; 1364 LEXINGTON CT, HOBART, WI 54155
 Timm, Craig V; 150 10TH ST N, WISC RAPIDS, WI 54494-4546
 Weber, Ruth J; 3541 N WINDWARD LN, APPLETON, WI 54911-1233

Advisory Commissioned

Bahn, Karen E; 300 N ADAMS AVE, MARSHFIELD, WI 54449-1708
 Pehlke, Todd Michael; 1400 NICKLAUS DR, MERRILL, WI 54452-8245

Northern Illinois District**Voting Ordained**

Allyn, Eric F; 44 N CORNELL AVE, VILLA PARK, IL 60181-2355
 Bestul, Mark C; 307 GREGORY M SEARS DR, GILBERTS, IL 60136-4051
 Borghardt, George F; C/O ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH 4206 W ELM ST, MCHENRY, IL 60050-4001
 Conrad, Matthew J; 5201 GALITZ ST, SKOKIE, IL 60077-2737
 Fiene, Hans William; 705 GALLANT DR, MINOOKA, IL 60447-8835
 Gallup, Roger B; 2624 OAK ST, RIVER GROVE, IL 60171-1647
 Geis, William S; 505 S PARK RD, LA GRANGE, IL 60525-6112
 Graham, Michael D; 550 4TH AVE, AURORA, IL 60505-4860
 Groth, Theodore W; 5859 S ARCHER RD, SUMMIT, IL 60501-1409
 Hahn, Kevin Eldor; 295 W SAUK TRL, FRANKFORT, IL 60423-7779
 Jahn, Wayne P; 618 W GROVE AVE, WAUKEGAN, IL 60085-1847
 Johnson, Thomas Roger; 1301 N LA SALLE DR, CHICAGO, IL 60610-1935
 Kinne, Timothy L; 21061 W MARION AVE, MUNDELEIN, IL 60060-3339
 Krause, Kenneth E; 2001 N ALPINE RD, ROCKFORD, IL 61107-1417
 Marks, Martin L; 498 WOOD ST, DEKALB, IL 60115-4087
 Mc Reynolds, Terry A; 325 RUSSELLWOOD CT, SCHAUMBURG, IL 60193-1096
 Meissner, Craig A; 1374 EAST ST, CRETE, IL 60417-3023
 Ognoskie, Daniel F; 315 E MAZON AVE, DWIGHT, IL 60420-1103
 Reeves, Bryan A; 424 INDIANWOOD BLVD, PARK FOREST, IL 60466-2249
 Schumacher, Stephen O; 1122 CATALPA LN, NAPERVILLE, IL 60540-7961
 Theiss, Terry L; PO BOX 405, PECATONICA, IL 61063-0405
 Tieman, Larry W; 409 RESERVE DR, CRYSTAL LAKE, IL 60012-3401
 Udoekong, Michael D; 245 E 138TH ST, DOLTON, IL 60419-1060
 Weidler, Ronald W; 1073 PONCA DR, BATAVIA, IL 60510-1145
 Wendt, Vernon E; 7135 W IRVING PARK RD UNIT 1, CHICAGO, IL 60634-2202
 Whitby, Kristopher R; 102 S DERBYSHIRE LN, ARLINGTON HTS, IL 60004-6712
 Winkelman, Mark P; 601 N JACKSON ST, MORRISON, IL 61270-3007

Voting Lay

Babchak, Andy; 1911 MAY DR, JOHNSBURG, IL 60051-6177
 Baker, Steven D; PO BOX 352, BOURBONNAIS, IL 60914-0352
 Bendixon, Daniel S; 1299 COBBLERS CROSSING CT, ELGIN, IL 60120-5047
 Berger, Jeff K; 236 W GLADE RD, PALATINE, IL 60067
 Brown, David; 11715 S JUSTINE ST, CHICAGO, IL 60643-5027
 Browne, Isabelle C; 3450 N PANAMA AVE, CHICAGO, IL 60634-2923
 Bruns, Ruby; 1117 EASTVIEW RD, ROCKFORD, IL 61108-4127
 De Young, David A; 14100 TOD WILLIAM DR, ORLAND PARK, IL 60462-2246
 Dobbs, Michael J; 197 PENNY LN, BOLINGBROOK, IL 60440-5202
 Eney, Patricia; 308 WINDSOR CT, LAKE VILLA, IL 60046
 Heller, Jeffrey S; 1124 TYRELL AVE, PARK RIDGE, IL 60068-1647
 Herman, Les; 29W170 CHISHOLM TRL, ELGIN, IL 60124
 Holtzen, Byron B; 5226 CARPENTER, DOWNERS GROVE, IL 60515
 Hunter, Michael Adrian; 1755 E 55TH ST APT 903, CHICAGO, IL 60615-5991
 Kessler, Robert J; PO BOX 207, WASCO, IL 60183-0207
 Leise, William G; 10316 LARAMIE AVE, OAK LAWN, IL 60453-4617
 Levan, Steve D; 327 E BENTON AVE, STOCKTON, IL 61085-1401
 Mauer, Janet M; 940 HOLBROOK RD APT 11B, HOMEWOOD, IL 60430-4519
 Nelson, Chris A; 213 STILLWATER CT, OSWEGO, IL 60543-8047
 Pitkus, Andrea; 1239 DEERFIELD PKWY APT 202, BUFFALO GROVE, IL 60089-2609
 Quinn, Patrick; 691 SHADOW WOOD DR, DIXON, IL 61021
 Reichel, William R; 702 DARTMOUTH LN, SCHAUMBURG, IL 60193-2523
 Rogers, Larry V; 811 S 4TH ST, AURORA, IL 60505-5149
 Steckelberg, Frank V; 671 KRENZ AVE, CARY, IL 60013-2011
 Stern, Mark O; 3525 S CASS CT UNIT 518, OAK BROOK, IL 60523-3718
 Streng, Willard L; 4356 W CHURCH RD, BEECHER, IL 60401-3585
 Wiethorn, Daphne; 12N220 Westview St, Elgin, IL 60124

Advisory Ordained

Oliphant, Anthony J; C/O ST PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH 43W301 PLANK RD, HAMPSHIRE, IL 60140-7901

Advisory Commissioned

Arfsten, Debra Joyce; 315 DES PLAINES AVE APT 107, FOREST PARK, IL 60130-1445
 Asher, Jennie J; 2313 S 11TH AVE, BROADVIEW, IL 60155-4033
 Heck, Julie Ann; 333 JACKSON ST APT 2E, MARENGO, IL 60152-3100
 Herman, Richard E; 414 WISCONSIN AVE APT D, OAK PARK, IL 60302-3697
 Huster, Scott A; 3916 214TH ST, MATTESON, IL 60443-2417
 Laabs, Jonathan C; 116 CAMBRIAN CT, ROSELLE, IL 60172-4782
 Laabs, June M; 116 CAMBRIAN CT, ROSELLE, IL 60172-4782
 Lis, Rogene Ann; 330 WILLIAMS ST, ROSELLE, IL 60172-1185
 Sander, Sharolyn May; 1290 COVENTRY CT, ROSELLE, IL 60172-1625
 Schilling, Scott D; 91 CHATEAU DR, DYER, IN 46311-2152

Northwest District**Voting Ordained**

Adams, Mark E; 1205 S 1ST ST, HERMISTON, OR 97838-8450
 Adrian, Mark Joseph; 1725 PARK AVE APT A202, BREMER-TON, WA 98337-1793
 Beck, James Wesley; 1609 3RD ST, TILLAMOOK, OR 97141-2121
 Bjornstad, Robert M; 2081 ROLLIN AVE NW, SALEM, OR 97304-4815
 Brandt, Nathan M; 8740 SW SAGERT ST, TUALATIN, OR 97062-9116
 Dinger, Jonathan Mark; 1350 BALDY AVE, POCATELLO, ID 83201-7104
 Donnan, John Michael; 470 NEVADA DR, LONGVIEW, WA 98632-5718
 Edwards, Michael; 12717 SE 301ST ST, AUBURN, WA 98092-2171

Garrison, Thomas B; 2477 SW CHERRY PARK RD, TROUT-DALE, OR 97060-2933
 Griesse, Mark E; 381 SINCLAIR LN, SELAH, WA 98942-9014
 Hirsch, Thomas William; 865 NW 5TH ST, GRANTS PASS, OR 97526-1530
 Jenson, James B; 15707 423RD AVE SE, GOLD BAR, WA 98251-9510
 Luther, John W; 748 S 48TH ST, SPRINGFIELD, OR 97478-6858
 Mantey, Matthew Robert; 20435 1ST PL S, DES MOINES, WA 98198-2802
 Onken, Kurt Dean; 6705 67TH DR NE, MARYSVILLE, WA 98270-7773
 Ries, Jeffrey E; 3410 6TH AVE, TACOMA, WA 98406-5402
 Rockey, Jonathan R; PO BOX 1994, PALMER, AK 99645-1994
 Sedlmayr, Roger M; 527 STONEHEDGE LOOP, TWIN FALLS, ID 83301-5540
 Shaver, Ross Patrick; 412 NECTARINE ST, NAMPA, ID 83686
 Sundquist, Robert Paul; 7948 N CARRINGTON LN, COEUR D'ALENE, ID 83815-8122
 Von Behren, Michael T; 7307 N NEVADA ST, SPOKANE, WA 99208-5516
 Werfelmann, Theodore P; 5307 NATHAN LOOP SE, AUBURN, WA 98092-0801

Voting Lay

Bauer, Louis E; 7303 NE 43RD ST, VANCOUVER, WA 98662-6755
 Brandhorst, Carl T; 683 CRAVEN ST N, MONMOUTH, OR 97361-1210
 Collison, Virginia A; 44111 SE TAPP RD, SANDY, OR 97055-6766
 Corder, Timothy L; 357 SE CORDER DR, MOUNTAIN HOME, ID 83647-5853
 Edmon, Harry; 23824 27TH PL W, BRIER, WA 98036-8477
 Fearn, Nigel R; PO BOX 576, ASHTON, ID 83420-0576
 Goerisch, Jeff A; 2850 PELICAN DR, ANCHORAGE, AK 99502-1663
 Goertzen, Matthew L; 610 WILLOWLAWN RD, YAKIMA, WA 98908
 Greenwalt, Pat; 12750 NW SEASIDE WAY, SEABECK, WA 98380-8813
 Hoehne, William H; 2915 LIBERTY ST SW, ALBANY, OR 97321-3461
 Hood, Bruce; PO BOX 625, ONALASKA, WA 98570-0625
 Howald, Gregory J; 257 MILLER LN, MYRTLE POINT, OR 97458
 Kessinger, Gregory L; 14005 E ROCKWELL AVE, SPOKANE VLY, WA 99216-2607
 Mai, Brent; 20303 SW TREMONT WAY, BEAVERTON, OR 97007-8595
 Murphy, Ann I; 4603 SW 327TH PL, FEDERAL WAY, WA 98023
 Nichols, Michael A; 25723 163RD AVE SE, COVINGTON, WA 98042-8803
 Rowe, Terry J; 155 BROOKLANE N, TWIN FALLS, ID 83301-0005
 Schultz, Gerald M; 8494 W RUSHMORE ST, RATHDRUM, ID 83858
 Schwark, August C; 1411010 209TH AVE NE, WOODEN-VILLE, WA 98077
 Seemers, Wayne; 7606 138TH DR NE, REDMOND, WA 98052
 Strege, John W; 503 STAGECOACH CT, RICHLAND, WA 99354-1734

Advisory Ordained

Doellinger, Paul David; 295 KNOX ST S, MONMOUTH, OR 97361-2233
 Hoelter, Mark E; 16452 NE FARGO ST, PORTLAND, OR 97230-5528
 Schumacher, Warren W; 2254 NE 13TH AVE, HILLSBORO, OR 97124-1363

Advisory Commissioned

Bass, Gerod Robert; 1807 187TH STREET CT E, SPANAWAY, WA 98387-4141
 Dressler, Derwin J; 8023 A ST, TACOMA, WA 98408-5802
 Kunkel, Dustin; 4538 NE 74TH AVE, PORTLAND, OR 97218-3818

Ohio District**Voting Ordained**

Adamson, Terrance Sean; 133 CENTRAL DR, AMHERST, OH 44001-1601
 Arse, Berhanu D; 6213 STORNOWAY DR N, COLUMBUS, OH 43213-2161
 Casci, Arthur M; 820 AUTUMN LEAF DR, BEAVERCREEK, OH 45430-1491

Haugen, James A; 15871 PINWOOD DR, STRONGSVILLE, OH 44149-5625
 Hoffman, Robert August; 15914 LAUREL RD, CHAGRIN FALLS, OH 44022-3955
 Hough, Ralph Clark; 7707 MARKET AVE N, N CANTON, OH 44721-1642
 Kane, David F; 17 UNIOTO DR, CHILLICOTHE, OH 45601-7827
 Marcis, Peter C; 610 CRIPPLE CREEK, NAPOLEON, OH 43545
 May, Curtis A; 11917 BEAN RD, CHARDON, OH 44024-9097
 Patterson, Jeffery Lynn; 17396 SCHUMM RD, WILLSHIRE, OH 45898-9837
 Riggs, Robert V; PO BOX 186, SUNBURY, OH 43074-0186
 Rodencal, Larry J; 5367 RAWHIDE CT, CINCINNATI, OH 45238-4248
 Rutz, John M; 601 LOUISIANA AVE, PERRYSBURG, OH 43551-2274
 Tursic, Richard Ernest; 969 LAKEWAY CT, UNION, KY 41091-9555
 Welter, Austen Lee; 908 S GREEN RD, SOUTH EUCLID, OH 44121-3453

Voting Lay

Ahrens, Robert C; 11583 MAPLERIDGE DR, N ROYALTON, OH 44133-2901
 Carothers, Randy C; 21709 COUNTY ROAD R, FAYETTE, OH 43521-9607
 Englemann, William C, 26855 Cook RD, Olmsted Falls, OH 44138
 Gibson, Daniel W; 613 SACKETT ST, MAUMEE, OH 43537-2860
 Henkel, Charles E; 6767 HENDRICKSON RD, MIDDLE-TOWN, OH 45044-8801
 Kelm, Gary; 8524 ALTHAUS RD, CINCINNATI, OH 45247-2530
 Larkin, Thomas R; 8 RICHARDSON DR, CINCINNATI, OH 45246-3853
 Leithart, Paul; 133 MISTY OAK PL, GAHANNA, OH 43230-6132
 Mc Greehan, Paula R; 4542 PEARL RD, CLEVELAND, OH 44109-4876
 Schrock, Jeffrey C; PO BOX 74, HOMER, OH 43027-0074
 Smith, Steven; 7390 PINECREST DR, ZANESVILLE, OH 43701
 Spudich, Peter P; 36613 STEVENS BLVD, WILLOUGHBY, OH 44094-6354
 Stoops, Joseph L; 409 VICTOR AVE, CUYAHOGA FLS, OH 44221-2153
 Stottlemeyer, Sarah E; 30316 NEW BAVARIA RD, DEFIANCE, OH 43512-8942
 Wilms, David E; 2650 BROWN RD, ASHTABULA, OH 44004-8852

Advisory Ordained

Kleimola, Ryan Dale; 126 YALE DR, TOLEDO, OH 43614-2944
 Weiss, Donald E; 5211 EAGLES LANDING DR, OREGON, OH 43616-1106

Advisory Commissioned

Brantsch, Robert John; 3764 ELM RD, STOW, OH 44224-3919
 Mills, Kathleen Victoria; 140 EVERGREEN TER, COLUMBUS, OH 43228-1824

Oklahoma District

Voting Ordained

Borntrager, Phillip A; 725 WALLACE ST NW, ARDMORE, OK 73401-1961
 Boster, Kory B; 832 E CREEK AVE, SALLISAW, OK 74955-5016
 Brown, Eric J; PO BOX 128, LAHOMA, OK 73754-0128
 Carter, Mark E; 3700 WOODLAND RD, BARTLESVILLE, OK 74006-4531
 Hefta, Donald R; 500 S COUNTRY CLUB RD, EL RENO, OK 73036-4302
 House, Thomas Wendell; 55526 CEDAR RIDGE DR, ENID, OK 73945
 Moerbe, Ned A; 930 S 6TH ST, BLACKWELL, OK 74631-4212
 Schneider, Eugene William; 102 SW 7TH ST, LAWTON, OK 73501-3922
 Schroeder, Dwayne J; 11505 WINDMILL RD, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73162-2033

Voting Lay

DeBolt, Donald J; 414 E CLAREMORE ST, CLAREMORE, OK 74017-7709
 Hilderbrand, Justin M; 3311 22ND ST APT 220, WOODWARD, OK 73801

Kastens, Louis W; 18501 AUBURN MEADOWS DR, ED-MOND, OK 73012-0612
 Laffin, Gregory K; 3401 TECUMSEH RIDGE RD, NORMAN, OK 73069-8334
 Pope, Gerald; PO BOX 126, COVINGTON, OK 73730
 Postier, Richard L; 1123 S RUSSELL ST, SKIATOOK, OK 74070-2125
 Stehr, Richard; 7412 NW 7TH ST, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73127-5114
 Wasillak, Eric H; 4212 NW 59TH ST, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73112-1331
 Watkins, Andy; 500 S HUGHES AVE, MORRIS, OK 74445-2228

Advisory Ordained

Henschel, Marvin A; 7320 NW 114TH ST, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73162-2703

Advisory Commissioned

Stewart-Watt, Suzanne J; 2550 E 71ST ST, TULSA, OK 74136-5531

Pacific Southwest District

Voting Ordained

Austin, Kevin W; 6080 HAVEN AVE, RCH CUCAMONGA, CA 91737-3004
 Barth, Gregory J P; C/O OUR REDEEMER LUTH CHURCH 8520 WINNETKA AVE, WINNETKA, CA 91306-1142
 Bock, Douglas P; 3158 MAVERICK DR, LK HAVASU CTY, AZ 86404-4042
 Daly, Thomas Robert; 9210 N FIREBRICK DR, FOUNTAIN HLS, AZ 85268-6604
 Dannenberg, Richard A; 820 W IMPERIAL HWY, BREA, CA 92821-3808
 Dargatz, Robert A; 2534 BURLY AVE, ORANGE, CA 92869-3611
 Demel, Mark W; 1544 LINDA ST, FALLBROOK, CA 92028-4378
 Frank, Paul J; 9601 E BROWN RD, MESA, AZ 85207-4400
 Harman, Vincent Ronald; 2242 E SAN MARCOS DR, YUMA, AZ 85365-3219
 Harris, James C; 22130 OTTAWA RD, APPLE VALLEY, CA 92308-6538
 Hausch, Nathan A; 325 CANYON DIABLO RD, SEDONA, AZ 86351-9196
 Helfrich, Matthew P; 28330 LILAC RD, VALLEY CENTER, CA 92082-5415
 Jennings, Matthew Hamilton; 58318 YUCCA TRL, YUCCA VALLEY, CA 92284-6066
 Jones, Brandon Scott; 2317 CANEHILL AVE, LONG BEACH, CA 90815-2259
 Krueger, Dennis J; 11650 PERRIS BLVD, MORENO VALLEY, CA 92557-6536
 La Feve, Joshua Christopher; 3420 SWEETWATER SPRINGS BLVD, SPRING VALLEY, CA 91977-3143
 Manthei, Jonathan M; 106 ECHO RUN, IRVINE, CA 92614-7425
 Nelson, Paul A; 3721 MODOC RD, SANTA BARBARA, CA 93105-4444
 O Neal, Patrick Fine; C/O MESQUITE LUTHERAN CHURCH 450 TURTLE BACK RD, MESQUITE, NV 89027-4957
 Oldenburg, Donald R; 4942 BISHOP ST, CYPRESS, CA 90630-2603
 Palka, John M; 9524 MILDEN ST, LA MESA, CA 91942-4115
 Parker, Dustin T; 13633 183RD ST, CERRITOS, CA 90703-8940
 Perling, R John; 436 S BEVERLY DR, BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90212-4402
 Poedel, David G; 3480 W GOLDEN LN, CHANDLER, AZ 85226-1497
 Skopak, Jeffrey Eric; 10629 E RALPH ALVAREZ PL, TUCSON, AZ 85747-5888
 Smith, Wiley James; 1566 CAMPUS AVE, REDLANDS, CA 92374-3908
 Sonnenberg, Roger R; 512 W DUARTE RD, ARCADIA, CA 91007-7323
 Umbenhour, Rexford E; 6705 W 77TH ST, WESTCHESTER, CA 90045-1101

Voting Lay

Axelson, Gene H; 12515 W KEYSTONE DR, SUN CITY WEST, AZ 85375-4212
 Brunner, James W; 2819 AVENIDA VALERA, CARLSBAD, CA 92009
 Bunn, Debbie; 19 ROCKWOOD, IRVINE, CA 92614
 Callies, Ann C; 6485 E CRESTED SAGUARO LN, SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85266-7368
 Camargo, Paul; 838 S CHAPEL AVE, ALHAMBRA, CA 91801
 Collins, Richard; 2029 CARTY PL, NEEDLES, CA 92363

Edwards, Carolyn; 5458 EL CARRO LN, CARPINTERIA, CA 93013
 Evelyn, Ann C; 457 ARBRAMAR AVE, PACIFIC PALISADES, CA 90272
 Fahnce, Daniel; 10822 N HIGHWAY 191, ELFRIDA, AZ 85610-8957
 Fulk, Forrest D; 6887 CUCAMONGA ST, RIVERSIDE, CA 92505-1009
 Gilmore, Dorinda L; 6042 APACHE RD, WESTMINSTER, CA 92683
 Hittinger, Wayne; 4309 CEDAR AVE, EL MONTE, CA 91732
 Holst, Jon D; 3237 KNOLL WAY, RIVERSIDE, CA 92501
 Madding, Curtis L; 28641 VALLEY OAK RD, KEENE, CA 93531
 Jesse, Albert F; 10810 VISTA DEL SUR, SPRING VALLEY, CA 91978-1243
 Johnstone, Phyllis; 9341 TUDOR LN, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92841
 Kelly, Mary Helen; 46100 BURROWWEED LN, PALM DESERT, CA 92260-5575
 Kunkee, Mark W; 5390 ORANGE AVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92115-6017
 Latzke, David J; 16326 OAK SPRINGS DR, RAMONA, CA 92065-4223
 Lindsay, Karina; 3500 W MANCHESTER BLVD UNIT 15, INGLEWOOD, CA 90305
 Manger, Charles E; 1555 BROCKMAN RD, EL CENTRO, CA 92243
 McInnis, Scott; 712 N CALLE LARGO, MESA, AZ 85207
 Niederbach, Jonathan; 19791 QUIET BAY LANE, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA 92648
 Pacheco, Fernando; 2448 CASS PL, HUNTINGTON PARK, CA 90255
 Peters, Richard D; 873 WHITE PINES TRL, AMERY, WI 54001-5360
 Smith, James B; 915 BAY HILL PL, PLACENTA, CA 92870
 Williams, Beverly R; 1924 PINE TREE DR, PRESCOTT, AZ 86303-6615
 Wollin, Marvin A; 2505 PUTTING GREEN DR, HENDERSON, NV 89074

Advisory Ordained

Kusel, Ronald J; 3520 LADOGA AVE, LONG BEACH, CA 90808-2952
 Manske, Charles L; 19 SPINNAKER, IRVINE, CA 92614-7062
 Meyer, Thomas F; 2124 ROYAL LYTHAM GLN, ESCONDIDO, CA 92026-1073
 Puls, Arthur H; 2666 COLUMBINE RD, ALPINE, CA 91901-1333

Advisory Commissioned

Hoger, Charles E; 5344 E GERDA DR, ANAHEIM, CA 92807-3111
 Kolander, Eugene E; 15740 W EDGEMONT AVE, GOOD-YEAR, AZ 85395-8125
 Maxwell, Deryl R; 2336 BEDFORD DR, FULLERTON, CA 92831-1506
 Sims, Carolyn C; 27042 PINJARA CIR, MISSION VIEJO, CA 92691-4444
 Stuewe, Isabel J; 1734 NEW HAMPSHIRE DR, COSTA MESA, CA 92626-2026

Rocky Mountain District

Voting Ordained

Besel, Keith Le Roy; 3137 W 132ND CT, BROOMFIELD, CO 80020-5243
 Borchert, Alan D; 12723 S PARK AVE, RIVERTON, UT 84065-5651
 Clemmer, Seth M; 1030 WOODLAND CT, ESTES PARK, CO 80517-7513
 Davis, Timothy P; 514 DEXTER ST, WRAY, CO 80758-1630
 Heimer, Karl P; 716 HORNCastle RD, EL PASO, TX 79907-4710
 Jacoby, Jeremy Michael; 13889 ADAMS ST, THORNTON, CO 80602-7218
 Langewisch, David John; 11230 W FORD DR, LAKEWOOD, CO 80226-3766
 Lietzau, Elisha J S; 5347 LA COLONIA DR NW, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87120-2489
 Lucero, Dennis F; 846 E PIKES PEAK AVE, COLORADO SPGS, CO 80903-3636
 Packer, Andrew Loren; PO BOX 2156, PAGOSA SPGS, CO 81147-2156
 Peters, Gregory G; 12095 W BOWLES PL, LITTLETON, CO 80127-2317
 Praeuner, Daniel C; 3117 FUTURA DR, ROSWELL, NM 88201-7703
 Ryan, Jeffrey C; 1156 GRAND AVE, DELTA, CO 81416-2037

Schulz, Donald Richard; PO BOX 126, GENOA, CO 80818-0126
 Wright, Karl F; 703 DOUGLAS DR, ALAMOSA, CO 81101-2020
 Ziegler, Larry E; 202 ELM AVE, CASTLE ROCK, CO 80104-2308

Voting Lay

Abel, Charles H; 3712 GENE LITTLER LN, CLOVIS, NM 88101-3132
 Green, Michael J; 2390 S 2050 W, SYRACUSE, UT 84075-9365
 Hoffman, Gary; 3860 W 66TH AVE, ARVADA, CO 80003
 Holeton, John E; 435 S AVENIDA DEL ORO E, PUEBLO WEST, CO 81007-2038
 Kingsley, Robert; 5208 RIM ROCK LN, FORT COLLINS, CO 80526-5043
 Koch, Ruth N; 2741 S GARFIELD ST, DENVER, CO 80210-6621
 Kopff, Christian; 1331 Kennedy Ave, Louisville, CO 80027
 Liesman, Joel S; 257A 28 RD, GRAND JCT, CO 81503-2166
 Mc Nerney, Hal; 355 10TH ST, BURLINGTON, CO 80807-1820
 Morley, John W; 4695 MONTEBELLO DR, COLORADO SPGS, CO 80918-2717
 Sanchez, Mary L; 5209 TIMBERWOLF DR, EL PASO, TX 79903-2219
 Sloniger, Peary W; 156 S PINE DR, BAILEY, CO 80421-2328
 Tobias, Damon P; 34 MELCOR DE CANONCITO, CEDAR CREST, NM 87008-9429
 Walter, Barry E; 17601 COUNTY ROAD Q.8, FORT MORGAN, CO 80701-8536
 Weber, Lisa; 34237 Hwy 550 28, DURANGO, CO 81301
 Wood, Tim; 8416 S Parfet Cir, Littleton, CO 80127

Advisory Ordained

Krause, Roger L; 8094 INSPIRATION DR, PARKER, CO 80138-8625

Advisory Commissioned

Busacker, William P; 920 NORWAY MAPLE DR, LOVELAND, CO 80538-5642
 Fischer, Michelle Diane; 2100 WADSWORTH BLVD, LAKEWOOD, CO 80214-5707
 Kurth, Robin Renea; 9709 E JEWELL AVE APT 205, DENVER, CO 80247-5716
 Marshall, Gwen E; C/O TRINITY LUTHERAN 4225 W YALE AVE, DENVER, CO 80219-5710
 Nyen, Duane M; 2921 BOX ELDER CIR, SAINT GEORGE, UT 84790-6903
 Wegner, Paulette E; 8897 UTE DR, GOLDEN, CO 80403-8319

SELC District

Voting Ordained

Biber, Paul R; 766 CHEVRON DR, SAINT LOUIS, MO 63125-5206
 Morens, Mark C; 1295 CLUBHOUSE DR, ROCKLEDGE, FL 32955-6791
 Perling, John F; 290 DELAVAN AVE, GREENWICH, CT 06830-5946
 Telloni, John L; 1034 IRVINGTON AVE NE, MASSILLON, OH 44646-4424

Voting Lay

Barclay, Robert E; 1634 STODDARD LN, MT PLEASANT, WI 53406-4388
 Kwiatkowski, Millicent B; 2223 KEYSTONE RD, PARMA, OH 44134-3020
 Schultz, Larry A; 1566 BUSHKILL CENTER RD, BATH, PA 18014-9527
 Weidner, Emily C; 415 E PINE ST APT 1714, ORLANDO, FL 32801-6629

South Dakota District

Voting Ordained

Denke, Glenn R; 27281 251ST AVE, NORRIS, SD 57560-8515
 Ellis, David W; PO BOX 467, MENNO, SD 57045-0467
 Garland, Curtis Doyle; PO BOX 3661, WALL, SD 57790-3661
 Koch, Timothy Allen; PO BOX 52, CRESBARD, SD 57435-0052
 Nix, Matthew W; 6205 N Purple Martin Ave, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57107
 Otten, David Gene; 40201 270TH ST, DIMOCK, SD 57331-5202
 Pater, Paul Michael; PO BOX 607, HOWARD, SD 57349-0607
 Rynearson, Timothy J; 1018 4TH ST, BROOKINGS, SD 57006-2257
 Vogts, Kevin D; 369 PARTRIDGE CIR, DAKOTA DUNES, SD 57049-5330

Voting Lay

Baumann, Guy W; 24133 461ST AVE, CHESTER, SD 57016-7416
 Borkowski, Ralph J; 485 57TH ST SE, HURON, SD 57350-7992
 Brandt, Russell P; 824 N STATE ST, ABERDEEN, SD 57401-2578
 Harnisch, Glenn W; 42086 270TH ST, PARKSTON, SD 57366-5203
 Marquardt, John R; 2809 W CITY LIMITS RD, YANKTON, SD 57078-1208
 Mc Kinstry, Earl R; 13053 BIG ELK DR, PIEDMONT, SD 57769-7336
 Rieck, Donald E; 25120 430TH AVE, SPENCER, SD 57374-7613
 Siekmann, Jeffrey A; 1012 11TH ST S, BROOKINGS, SD 57006-3932
 Zirpel, Dennis M; PO BOX 312, PRESHO, SD 57568-0312

Advisory Ordained

Paepke, William A; 11160 MOUNTAIN SHADOW RD, PIEDMONT, SD 57769

Advisory Commissioned

Ockander, Marli M; 7121 W 56TH ST APT 75, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57106-7567

South Wisconsin District

Voting Ordained

Beardsley, Brian M; N2506 STATE ROAD 49, BERLIN, WI 54923-8360
 Billings, Steven Stewart; 300 BROAD ST, MENASHA, WI 54952-3045
 Boeck, Alan G; 850 ARMSTRONG ST, PORTAGE, WI 53901-1601
 Brassfield, Joel Matthew; N3770 WEEKS RD, CHILTON, WI 53014-9322
 Burakowski, Jonah Peter; 1000 BLUFF ST, BELOIT, WI 53511-5167
 Carlson, Neil Lars; 3357 LASALLE ST, RACINE, WI 53402-3856
 Fabrizius, Karl F; 7390 HILL VALLEY CT, GREENDALE, WI 53129-2725
 Giebel, Franklin H; 219 N STATE ST, NESHKORO, WI 54960-9501
 Jabs, Frederick K; 6502 S BUSINESS DR, SHEBOYGAN, WI 53081-8988
 Kilps, William R; 3504 PIERCE CT, TWO RIVERS, WI 54241-1858
 Kroemer, James G; 9440 N BETHANNE DR, BROWN DEER, WI 53223-1210
 Liermann, Brian D; 3705 COUNTY ROAD H APT 5, FRANKSVILLE, WI 53126-9332
 Meador, Nathan Michael; 124 SOUTH ST, PLYMOUTH, WI 53073-2422
 Miller, Joshua M; PO BOX 233, OREGON, WI 53575
 Nielsen, Michael J; 1106 S MAIN ST, Necedah, WI 54646-8207
 Paape, David B; N71W23588 HOMESTEAD RD, SUSSEX, WI 53089-3285
 Rajek, Cory J; 2940 MINERAL POINT AVE, JANESVILLE, WI 53548-3297
 Roberts, Guy Willard; 660 S 14TH AVE, WEST BEND, WI 53095-3712
 Schueler, Dennis R; 728 CHURCH ST, WISC DELLS, WI 53965
 Sims, Timothy Andrew; 5335 W OKLAHOMA AVE, MILWAUKEE, WI 53219-4416
 Stowe, Douglas John; 1480 E MONROE AVE, HARTFORD, WI 53027-9297
 Thomas, Steven E; N8529 FRONT ST, BURNETT, WI 53922-9636
 Torkelson, Daniel T; 305 N MAIN ST, NORTH PRAIRIE, WI 53153-9728
 Totsky, David W; 2945 COTTONWOOD CT, BROOKFIELD, WI 53005-3869
 Wangerin, Mark E; 1821 W DAISY LN, GLENDALE, WI 53209-2117
 Wildauer, Micah James; 2808 W JUNEAU AVE, MILWAUKEE, WI 53208-2921
 Ziemann, Kurt R; W8497 BRAZELTON DR, RANDOM LAKE, WI 53075-1106

Voting Lay

Baker, Michael; 802 MCCOY PARK RD, FORT ATKINSON, WI 53538
 Bellis, Timothy M; 3709 E EDGERTON AVE, CUDAHY, WI 53110-1903
 Burris, Christopher D; 29911 PINEWOOD DR, BURLINGTON, WI 53105-9482

Buss, Myron G; 824 LINDEN RD, KOHLER, WI 53044-1453
 Eaton, David A; 3335 4TH AVE, RACINE, WI 53402-3727
 Eberhardt, David M; 1826 17TH AVE, GRAFTON, WI 53024-2033
 Gohr, Phillip F; 280 N MOUNTAIN DR, MAYVILLE, WI 53050-1470
 Gorgen, Thomas A; W6352 BIGHORN LN, WAUTOMA, WI 54982-7824
 Hemenway, Kenneth; 1408 N 28TH ST, SHEBOYGAN, WI 53081-3141
 Johnson, Lowell; 125 CEDAR RIDGE DR APT S141, WEST BEND, WI 53095-3682
 Kabitzke, Ronald O; 6811 HICKORY RD, WEST BEND, WI 53090-8948
 Kirk, Randall S; W204N6382 LANNON RD, MENOMONEE FLS, WI 53051-5416
 Konetzki, Alan R; 4519 Hunters Glen Dr, Sheboygan, WI 53083
 Krause, Richard E; 15980 W HEATHERLY DR, NEW BERLIN, WI 53151-5620
 Ludeman, Daniel R; 9956 E RACHEL DR, CLINTON, WI 53525-8660
 McCumber, Timothy; S8161 KASSNER RD UNIT 1, MERRIMAC, WI 53561-9432
 Milbrath, Michael H; 4152 GLENWAY ST, WAUWATOSA, WI 53222-1116
 Mueller, Gary L; 2241 N 66TH ST, WAUWATOSA, WI 53213-2037
 Netz, Timothy G; N 9598 WINNEBAGO PARK RD, FOND DU LAC, WI 54937
 Ott, Gina R; N4255 Long Rd, Chilton, WI 53014
 Paterson, Mark R; 4635 W BLUE MOUND CT, MILWAUKEE, WI 53208-3607
 Pulley, Robert; 23624 FLAME AVE, TOMAH, WI 54660-8010
 Steffenhagen, William P; 5372 PARK WAY, MADISON, WI 53705-2663
 Thur, Jeffrey D; 2895 CIMARRON TRL APT 1, MADISON, WI 53719-2438
 Wilant, Daniel B; 3537 S 2ND ST, MILWAUKEE, WI 53207-3237
 Williams, Pete; 775 THACKERAY TRL, OCONOMOWOC, WI 53066-4346
 Zillmer, Stephen J; N8754 JEFFERSON RD, WATERTOWN, WI 53094-8501

Advisory Ordained

Hipenbecker, Dennis William; 12220 W RIPLEY AVE, WAUWATOSA, WI 53226-3828
 Johnson, Robert E; N111W16328 CATSKILL LN, GERMAN-TOWN, WI 53022-4019

Advisory Commissioned

Bellin, Willard H; 2601 OLE DAVIDSON RD, MT PLEASANT, WI 53405-1440
 Douglas, Joshua David; 17641 OLD YORKVILLE RD, UNION GROVE, WI 53182-9556
 Fick, Jeffrey A; 802 CRESTWOOD DR, WAUKESHA, WI 53188-4448
 Fischer, Derek John; W173N5144 MULBERRY LN, MENOMONEE FLS, WI 53051-7815
 Haas, Walter D; 1800 W MANGOLD AVE, MILWAUKEE, WI 53221-5063
 Johnson, Stephen P; 2115 CARDINAL CT, WAUKESHA, WI 53186-2610
 Ladendorf, Gene W; 865 W AUTUMN PATH LN, BAYSIDE, WI 53217-1605
 Laesch, Roger C; 4503 N 106TH ST, MILWAUKEE, WI 53225-4518
 Mercier, Gary L; 749 HOMESTEAD TRL, GRAFTON, WI 53024-1160
 Mueller, John L; N80W13494 RIVER PARK DR, MENOMONEE FLS, WI 53051-7236
 Wolff, Jennifer; 4000 W RIVERS EDGE CIR APT 2, BROWN DEER, WI 53209-1128
 Zuehlsdorf, James F; 8279 N 46TH ST, BROWN DEER, WI 53223-3701

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Alms, Paul Gregory; PO BOX 187, CATAWBA, NC 28609-0187
 Bean, Matthew D; 14518 PINERY WAY, MIDLOTHIAN, VA 23112-4490
 Beyer, William Davis; 2920 NC HIGHWAY 42 W, CLAYTON, NC 27520-9229
 Birner, Paul D; 6175 ST PETERS CHURCH RD, CONOVER, NC 28613-8752
 Bohlmann, Timothy Paul; 100 MAPLE AVE, WAYNESBORO, VA 22980-4607

Deddeh, Suah S; 7415 BUCHANAN ST, LANDOVER HLS, MD 20784-2323
 Dolby, Benjamin Aaron; 628 LEONARD LN, NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23601-1712
 Drosendahl, John Charles; 101 N MARTIN RD, GOLDSBORO, NC 27530-7790
 Foelber, John Thomas; 9701 HARDING AVE, PARKVILLE, MD 21234-2662
 Gann, Jaim E; 12818 10TH ST, BOWIE, MD 20720-3651
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 Ulmer, Matthew Tyler; 307 HICKORY CT, BISHOP, TX 78343-2256
 Winter, Thomas William; 807 E BRAZOS ST, PEARSALL, TX 78061-3705
 Wirgau, Samuel S; 19113 COUNTY ROAD 132 E, HARROLD, TX 76364-3730

Voting Lay

Adams, N David; 15235 SPRING CYPRESS RD, CYPRESS, TX 77429-6379
 Angst, Lonnie W; 5037 VIKING DR, HOUSTON, TX 77092-4231
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 Bogs, Randy L; 27710 BRIAR MEADOW RD, TOMBALL, TX 77377-6227
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 Doederlein, Tommy; 1309 COUNTY ROAD R, LAMESA, TX 79331-1853
 Edwards, Dennis; 397 COUNTY ROAD 133, RIESEL, TX 76682-3740
 Fuller, William G; 15115 MULE TREE ST, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78232-4615
 Headley, Matthew C; 9316 Muskberry Cove, Austin, TX 78717
 Heckmann, Debra E; 1110 CR 341, GATESVILLE, TX 76528
 Jones, Roy R; 3314 SIERRA CT, SAN ANGELO, TX 76904-6937
 Karle, Fred G; 8100 N 23RD ST, MCALLEN, TX 78504-9685
 Kubitz, Marcia L; 8591 COUNTY ROAD 124, VERNON, TX 76384-9013
 Landgraf, Martin J; PO BOX 691721, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78269-1721
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 Maxwell, Stephen J; 3017 DEER TRL, MC KINNEY, TX 75071-3437
 May, Kenneth J; 2612 CHESTNUT DR, PAMPA, TX 79065-2914
 Moerbe, Ed H; 5407 BENT TRL, DALLAS, TX 75248-2034
 Moore, Adolphus; 17426 N BARKER ST, HOUSTON, TX 77084-1100
 Morgan, David; 420 REDBUD DR, FORNEY, TX 75126-9651
 Newton, Charles M; 1411 TOWNSHIP CT, ROSENBERG, TX 77471-6116
 Ogg, Larry T; 1107 SPRINGDALE CT, SUGAR LAND, TX 77479-6250
 Patschke, Dennis R; 1029 PRIVATE ROAD 8023, LINCOLN, TX 78948-6469
 Prestridge, Marceil M; 8320 FM 153, WINCHESTER, TX 78945-5312
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 Rohloff, Douglas G; 477 HIDDEN MEADOW CT, RHOME, TX 76078-2169
 Runzheimer, James D; 2405 GARDEN PARK CT STE A, ARLINGTON, TX 76013-1341
 Sampson, Steven P; 222 LEE DR, KILGORE, TX 75662-1422
 Waterman, William L; 6129 PEBBLE BEACH DR, CRP CHRISTI, TX 78413-3124
 Wilson, Michael A; 171 HIDDEN OAK LN, SEGUIN, TX 78155-8180
 Yox Andrew; 409 Southgate Dr, Mt Pleasant, TX 75455
 Zieschang, Michael W; 3206 CENTRALIA CV, AUSTIN, TX 78745-6705

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 Graf, Herbert C; 8 VILLAGE HILL DR, CONROE, TX 77304-3526

Stoppenhagen, Norman W; 9513 GRACELAND TRL, AUSTIN, TX 78717-2971

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 Himmler, Jonathan C; 13331 LYNDONVILLE DR, HOUSTON, TX 77041-5862
 Jacobsen, Julie M; 1938 GARDEN RD TRLR 256, PEARLAND, TX 77581-8781
 Jeffers, Debra W; 12871 WESTLEIGH DR, HOUSTON, TX 77077-3738
 Kleb, Michelle M; 28402 SPICEBERRY DR, KATY, TX 77494-3215
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 Wilson, Allison L; 5801 IMOGENE ST, HOUSTON, TX 77074-7727

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Cain, Paul J; 910 IDAHO AVE, SHERIDAN, WY 82801-2733
 Hill, John E; 3630 NAVARRE RD, CASPER, WY 82604-5020
 Humphrey, Kenneth Lawrence; 405 JACKSON CT, MORRILL, NE 69358-4534
 Maas, Mark J; 1301 HACKAMORE RD, CHEYENNE, WY 82009-1247
 Martin, James R; 351 SUNSET ST, GREEN RIVER, WY 82935-4024
 Strawn, Allen K; PO BOX 452, BRIDGEPORT, NE 69336-0452

Voting Lay

Campbell, Kiley R; PO BOX 11742, JACKSON, WY 83002-1742
 Fink, Richard A; 8130 E GEARY DOME RD, EVANSVILLE, WY 82636-9787
 Lakin, Stan W; 907 ERIE DR, BUFFALO, WY 82834-2592
 Merritt, Ronald; 1345 6TH ST, GERING, NE 69341-3340
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Hartwell, Robert E., Bronxville, NY
 Taylor, Dien Ashley, Bronx, NY

California-Nevada-Hawaii District

Hartmann, Theodore E., Garden Valley, CA
 Kramer, Timothy J., Napa, CA

Eastern District

Bernard, David E., Wayland, NY
 Foerster, Robert C., Orchard Park, NY

Florida-Georgia District

Guelzow, James R., Tampa, FL
 Weidner, David L., Orlando, FL

Indiana District**Iowa District East**

Rothchild, Dean F., Cedar Rapids, IA

Iowa District West

Dreyer, Lee L., Fort Dodge, IA
 Gerken, Mark A., Fort Dodge, IA

Kansas District

Frith, Mark T., Olathe, KS
 Schotte, Mark L., Winfield, KS

Michigan District

Kasper, Robert E., Ypsilanti, MI
 Krueger, Richard C., Grand Rapids, MI

Mid-South District

Simko, Janet, Crossville, TN

Minnesota South District

Clemmensen, Lucille, Burnsville, MN

Missouri District

Gehrke, Dennis E., Valley Park, MO
 Snyder, Paul, Maryland Heights, MO

Montana District

Tabbert, Christopher J., Eureka, MT

Nebraska District

Von Seggern, Virginia A., Orchard, NE
 Weber, Donald C., Seward, NE

New England District

Butler, James E., Randolph, MA
 Palkewick, Nathaniel AI, New Fairfield, CT

New Jersey District

Kiefer, Jason T., Annandale, NJ
 Vossler, L. Richard, Livingston, NJ

North Dakota District**North Wisconsin District**

Johnson, Dennis, Wausau, WI

Northwest District

Reinke, Langdon J., Aumsville, OR

Ohio District

Davidson, John C., Lancaster, OH
 Dutton, Karen, Cleveland, OH

Oklahoma District

Tabisz, Richard, Glenpool, OK
 Wilke, John M., Broken Arrow, OK

Pacific Southwest District

Abbott, William, Lomita, CA

Farley, Barbara A., Lakewood, CA

Rocky Mountain District

Albers, Paul A., Brighton, CO
Tuell, James A., Highlands Ranch, CO

SELC District

Dzuravcik, Andrew J., Clark, NJ

South Dakota District

Olson, Darren R., Sioux Falls, SD
Sailer, Scott C., Sioux Falls, SD

South Wisconsin District

Bergelin, Darrel L., Elkhart Lake, WI
L. Heureux, Mark J., Germantown, WI

Southeastern District

Hiller, Sally J., Alexandria, VA
Maack, David R., Severn, MD

Southern District

Ramsey, Mc Nair, Valley Grande, AL

Southern Illinois District

Walther, Michael P., Collinsville, IL
Sprengel, Roger A., Belleville, IL

Texas District

Braunersreuther, Jon M., Tomball, TX
Lammert, Ron, Helotes, TX

Wyoming District

Mars, Kenneth R., Kimball, NE

C. Staff and Guests

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Audio/Visual

Engfehr III, William F., Collinsville, IL

Chief Administrative Officer

Schultz, Ronald, St. Louis, MO

Chief Financial Officer

Wulf, Jerald C., St. Louis, MO

Chief Mission Officer

Williamson, Gregory K., St. Louis, MO

CONCORDIA TECHNOLOGY

Koehn, Myron, St. Louis, MO

Daily Worship

Janssen, Matt, St. Louis, MO
Magness, Phillip, Bolingbrook, IL
Weedon, William, Hamel, IL

Human Resources

Rhoden-Kimbrough, Val, St. Louis, MO

Legal Counsel

Strand, Sherri, St. Louis, MO

Parliamentarian

Dickey, Chris, Kirkwood, MO

President's Office

Asbury, Rachel C., St. Louis, MO
Below, Barbara, Fenton, MO
Collver III, Albert B., Manchester, MO
Endicott, Georgia, St. Louis, MO
Smithson, Jeannie, St. Louis, MO
Vieker, Jon D., Manchester, MO
Vieker, Kim, Manchester, MO

Protocol

Collver III, Albert B., Manchester, MO
Quill, Timothy, Fort Wayne, IN

Secretary's Office

Rosin, Walter L., Shawano, WI

Today's Business Staff

Asbury, Rachel, St. Louis, MO
Berner, Tani, St. Louis, MO
Clark, Barbara, St. Louis, MO
Fangmann, Kathy, St. Louis, MO
Muhlke, Marie, St. Louis, MO
Presley, Kim, St. Louis, MO
Schreder, Brenda K., Waterloo, IL
Weeke, Pam, Fenton, MO
Wilson, Brenda, St. Louis, MO

Travel and Meeting/Convention Staff

Croghan, Peggy, St. Louis, MO
Foote, Suzie, St. Louis, MO
Knehans, Barb, St. Louis, MO
Marvin, Lynne C., Ballwin, MO

GUESTS

Convention Essayists

Krey, Ted, Santiago, Dominican Republic
Bolay, Amos, Monrovia, Liberia
Cwirla, William M., Hacienda Hts, CA
Mueller, Steven P., Lake Forest, CA

Convention Preachers

Baneck, James A., Mandan, ND
Bode, Gerhard H., Glencoe, MO
Gieschen, Charles A., Fort Wayne, IN
Mendoza, Tilahun Mekonnen, Valley Grande, AL
Sanchez, Leopoldo Antonio, St. Louis, MO
Scharr, Timothy J., Aviston, IL
Seltz, Gregory P., Chesterfield, MO
Seter, Bernhard M., Grafton, ND
Streltsov, Alexei, Novosibirsk, Siberia

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia

Bolay, Amos, Bishop/President, Monrovia, Liberia

Lutheran Church of Togo

LARE, Kolani Lambon, President
DAPOKLE, Lari Miboike, Secretary of L.C.T.

Lutheran Laymen League/Lutheran Hour Ministry

Wurdeman, Bruce, Executive Director, Wildwood, MO
Buchholz, Kurt, Glen Arm, MD

LCMS Presidents Emeritus

Bohlmann, Ralph A., Des Peres, MO
Kieschnick, Gerald B., Georgetown, TX
Kuhn, Robert T., Oviedo, FL

Lutheran Women Missionary League

Krekla, Kay, President, Drayton, ND

Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Lytkin, Vsevolod, Bishop, Novosibirsk, Siberia
Streltsov, Alexei, Rector of Lutheran Theological Seminary

Thrivent

Hewitt, Brad, President and CEO, Medicine Lake, MN

CONVENTION FLOOR COMMITTEES

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS:

C = Chairman; **SVP** = Synod Vice President; **DP** = District President; **VOM** = Voting Ordained Minister; **VL** = Voting Layperson; **AOM** = Advisory Ordained Minister; **ACM** = Advisory Commissioned Minister; **AL** = Advisory Layperson

DISTRICT ABBREVIATIONS:

AT = Atlantic; **CI** = Central Illinois; **CNH** = California-Nevada-Hawaii; **EA** = Eastern; **EN** = English; **FG** = Florida-Georgia; **IE** = Iowa East; **IN** = Indiana; **IW** = Iowa West; **KS** = Kansas; **MI** = Michigan; **MDS** = Mid-South; **MNN** = Minnesota North; **MNS** = Minnesota South; **MO** = Missouri; **MT** = Montana; **ND** = North Dakota; **NEB** = Nebraska; **NE** = New England; **NI** = Northern Illinois; **NJ** = New Jersey; **NOW** = Northwest; **NW** = North Wisconsin; **OH** = Ohio; **OK** = Oklahoma; **PSW** = Pacific Southwest; **RM** = Rocky Mountain; **SD** = South Dakota; **SE** = Southeastern; **SELC** = SELC; **SI** = Southern Illinois; **SO** = Southern; **SW** = South Wisconsin; **TX** = Texas; **WY** = Wyoming.

Committee 1: WITNESS

C: James Baneck (ND);
DP: Vice chair: Daniel May (IN);
 John Denninger (SE); Dwayne Lueck (NW);
 Dean Nadasy (MNS); Roger Paavola (MDS);
SVP: Daniel Preus (MO);
VOM: Eric Andrae (EA); Ruben Dominguez (TX);
 Brandon Jones (PSW); Keith Lingsch (FG);
 Jeffrey Ries (NOW);
VL: Neal Breitbarth (MNS); Martha Mahlburg (MI);
 Gerhard Mundinger, Jr. (SO);
AOM: Ted Krey (EN);
ACM: Duane Nyen (RM).

Committee 2: MERCY

C: David Benke (AT);
DP: Vice chair: Kenneth Hennings (TX);
 Carl Krueger, Jr. (SELC); Robert Newton (CNH);
VOM: Karl Fabrizius (SW); John Foelber, Sr. (SE);
 Christopher Maronde (IW); Matthew Rueger (IE);
 Timothy Winterstein (MNN); Gary Zieroth (MNS);
VL: Larry Chenault (NJ); Gregg Hein (MT);
 Janet Simko (MDS);
ACM: Richard Krueger (MI).

Committee 3: LIFE TOGETHER

C: Donald Fondow (MNN);
DP: Vice chair: Russell Sommerfeld (NEB);
 Barrie Henke (OK); Timothy Yeadon (NE);
SVP: John Wohlrabe, Jr. (SW);
VOM: Sean Daenzer (ND); John Hill (WY);
 Todd Peperkorn (CNH); Christopher Tabbert (MT);
 Aubrey Watson, Jr. (SO);
VL: Albert Collver, Jr. (MDS); Paul Lagemann (EN);
 Donna Lucas (SE);
ACM: John Bobzin (MO).

Committee 4: THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

C: Scott Murray (TX);
DP: Vice chair: Terry Forke (MT);
 Terry Cripe (OH); David Maier (MI);
 Brian Saunders (IE);
VOM: Stewart Crown (CNH); Jason Lane (EN);
 Ned Moerbe (OK); Kurt Onken (NOW);
 Thomas Trapp (MNS);
VL: Benjamin Hagemann (MNS); Matthew Phillips (NEB);
 Allan Spelbring (SI);
AOM: McNair Ramsey, Jr. (SO);
ACM: Jennie Asher (NI); Janet Muth (TX).

Committee 5: SEMINARY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

C: Dale Sattgast (SD);
DP: Vice chair: Timothy Scharr (SI);
 David Stechholz (EN); Allen Anderson (RM);
SVP: Paul Maier (MI);
VOM: Kevin Vogts (SD); Roger Gallup (NI);
 Paul Alms (SE); Kevin Golden (MO);
 George Borghardt, III (NI); Steven Briel (MNS);
VL: Christian Kopff (RM); Andrea Pitkus (NI);
 Carol Hack Broome (CNH);
ACM: Jane Obersat (TX).

Committee 6: ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

C: John Wille (SW);
DP: Vice chair: Chris Wicher (EA);
 Paul Linnemann (NOW); Mark Miller (CI);
 Ray Mirly (MO); Kurtis Schultz (SO);

VOM: Charles Ferry (MI); Jeffrey Hemmer (SI);
 Kevin Robson (MNN); Dennis Voss (NW);
VL: Louis Bauer (NOW); Claire Carlson (EA);
 David Hawk (IN); John Loessin (TX);
ACM: Kathleen Mills (OH);
AL: Elaine Graff (RM).

Committee 7: STRUCTURE AND ECCLESIASTICAL MATTERS

C: Richard Boche (WY);
DP: Vice chair: Paul Sieveking (IW);
 Anthony Steinbronn (NJ); Larry Stoterau (PSW);
VOM: Arthur Casci (OH); Peter Lange (KS);
 Paul Nielsen (NE); David Totsky (SW);
VL: Myron Buss (SW); Doug Meyer (SI);
 Roy Schmidt (MI);
AOM: Dien Taylor (AT); Michael Walther (SI);
ACM: Martha Milas (CI).

Committee 8: REGISTRATION, CREDENTIALS AND ELECTIONS

C: Daniel Gilbert (NI);
DP: Vice chair: Gregory Walton (FG);
 Keith Kohlmeier (KS);
VOM: Bradford Scott (EN); Karl Ziegler (NEB);
VL: Randall Kirk (SW); William Schmidt (NJ);
 Larry Schultz (SELC);
ACM: Isabel Stuewe (PSW).

Committee 9: CONVENTION NOMINATIONS (Elected by Districts)

(Committee 9 Legend: C = Chairman; O = Ordained Minister; L = Layperson).

C: Carl Egger (IE);
O: Vice chair: John Sias (MT);
 Thomas Chryst (SW); John Davidson (OH);
 Paul Huneke (NJ); Loren Kramer (PSW);
 Jonathon Krenz (EN); Kenneth Lampe (MDS);
 Justin Panzer (KS); Stephen Sohns (TX)
L: Secretary: Leslie Sramek (SI); Kari Anderson (MNN);
 Robert Bauer (ND); Jamie Giovanetto (RM);
 Walter Grzyb (EA); Alvin Macke (NE);
 Janis McDaniels (SE); David Vallie (MI).

DIRECTORY—OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS OF THE SYNOD

OFFICERS OF THE SYNOD

President

Matthew C. Harrison (2013)

First Vice President

Herbert C. Mueller, Jr. (2013)

Second Vice President

John C. Wohlrabe, Jr. (2013)

Third Vice President

Paul L. Maier (2013)

Fourth Vice President

Daniel Preus (2013)

Fifth Vice President

Scott R. Murray (2013)

Secretary

Raymond L. Hartwig (2013)

Chief Administrative Officer

Ronald P. Schultz (Appointed)

Chief Financial Officer

Jerald C. Wulf (Appointed)

Chief Mission Officer

Gregory K. Williamson (Appointed)

Presidents Emeriti

Ralph A. Bohlmann
Robert T. Kuhn
Gerald B. Kieschnick

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

Chairman: Robert T. Kuhn (2013)
Secretary: Raymond L. Hartwig (2013)

Ordained Members

Victor J. Belton (2016)
Matthew C. Harrison (2013)
Raymond L. Hartwig (2013)
Robert T. Kuhn (2013)
Michael L. Kumm (2016)
Donald K. Muchow (2013)

Commissioned Members

Kurt Senske (2013)

Lay Members

Walter Brantz (2013)
Kermit Brashear (2013)
James W. Carter, Jr. (2016)
Gloria S. Edwards (2013)
Edwin H. Everts (2016)
Keith Frndak (2016)
Curtis Pohl (2013)
Warren Puck (2016)

Non-Voting Members

Herbert C. Mueller, Jr. (2013)

Advisory:

Ronald P. Schultz, Chief Administrative Officer
Jerald C. Wulf, Chief Financial Officer
Gregory K. Williamson, Chief Mission Officer

Legal Counsel

Thompson Coburn LLP

COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS

Chairman: Larry A. Stoterau (2015)
Vice Chairman: Kenneth M. Hennings (2015)
Secretary: Chris C. Wicher (2015)
Program Committee: Kenneth M. Hennings (2015)
Keith E. Kohlmeier (2015)

Ex-officio:

Paul A. Linnemann (2015)
Larry A. Stoterau (2015)
Chris C. Wicher (2015)
Matthew C. Harrison (2013)
Raymond L. Hartwig (2013)
Herbert C. Mueller, Jr. (2013)

COMMISSIONS

Theology and Church Relations (CTCR)

Commission Members:

Chairman: Lawrence Rast (2013)
Andrew Bartelt (2013)
Terry Cripe (2016)
Thomas Egger (2013)
Kirk Farney (2013)
Carl Fickenscher, II (2013)
Charles Gieschen (2013)
Timothy Hardy (2016)
Walter Lehenbauer (2013)
Jeffrey Oschwald (2013)
Philip Penhallegon (2013)
Andrea Pitkus (2013)
Arlo Pullmann (2016)
Robert Rosin (2013)
Jeffrey Schwarz (2016)
Jesse Yow, Jr. (2013)
Roland Ziegler (2013)

Advisory Members:

Matthew Harrison
Dale Meyer
Herbert Mueller, Jr.
Lawrence Rast
Joel Lehenbauer
Larry Vogel

Executive Director:

Associate Executive Director:

Doctrinal Review (CDR)

Commission Members:

Chairman: John T. Pless (2013)
Gerhard Bode (2013)
Walter A. Maier, III (2013)
Naomichi Masaki (2013)
Steven P. Mueller (2013)

Constitutional Matters (CCM)

Commission Members:

Chairman: Wilbert J. Sohns (2013)
Philip J. Esala (2013)
George J. Gude (2016)
Daniel C. Lorenz (2013)
R. Neely Owen (2016)
Raymond L. Hartwig

Non-Voting:

Handbook (COH)

Commission Members:

Chairman: Gordon D. Tresch (2016)
Albert M. Marcis (2016)
Richard T. Nuffer (2016)
Walter L. Rosin (2016)
Marvin L. Temme (2016)
Ex-officio: Raymond L. Hartwig
Ronald P. Schultz
CCM Rep: Wilbert J. Sohns

MISSION BOARDS

Board for National Missions

Ordained Members:

Mark A. Bowditch, Comstock Park, MI
Thomas E. Engler, Havertown, PA
Steven C. Briel, Maple Grove, MN
Samuel Cosby, Houston, TX
C. Bryan Wolfmueller, Aurora, CO

Commissioned Members:

Martha Milas, Champaign, IL

Lay Members:

Carla M. Claussen, New Brighton, MN
Ernest E. Garbe Dieterich, IL
Gary Quick, Edmond, OK
Linda Stoterau, Orange, CA
James Tallmon, Harpers Ferry, WV

Chief Mission Officer:

Gregory K. Williamson

Board for International Mission

Ordained Members:

Juan A. Gonzalez, Lehigh Acres, FL
Michael Lange, Brentwood, CA
Bernhard M. Seter, Grafton, ND
John F. Temple, St. Charles, MO

Commissioned Members:

Rose E. Gilbert Adle, Secor, IL
Phillip A. Magness, Bolingbrook, IL

Lay Members:

Kermit W. Almstedt, Weeki Wachee, FL
David E. Bruns, Topeka, KS
John W. Edson, Plymouth, MN
Lois Peacock, San Francisco, CA
Robert Van Gundy, St. Paul, MN

Chief Mission Officer:

Gregory K. Williamson

Other Ministry Units:

Communications

Executive Director: David L. Strand
Associate Executive Director, Strategic Communications: Adriane Dorr
Associate Executive Director, Communication Services: Pamela Nielsen
Director, Public Relations: Vicki Biggs
Director, Video Services: Albert Dowbnia

Pastoral Education

Executive Director: Glen Thomas

Mission Advancement

Executive Director: Mark Hofman
Director, Major Gifts, Grants and District Relations: Hans Springer
Director, Donor Care & Direct Response: Vicki Helling
LMI Campaign Director: Martha Mitkos
Director, Missionary Support Unit: Vacant

INTERNATIONAL CENTER SERVICE UNITS

Administrative Operations:

Chief Administrative Officer

Ronald P. Schultz

General Services

Interim Executive Director: Gene Weeke
Business Services, Director: Gene Weeke
Facilities Management, Director: Barbara Knehans
Purchasing, Director: Mike Magee
Travel and Meeting Planning, Director: Lynne Marvin

Human Resources

Executive Director: Val Rhoden-Kimbrough

Internal Audit

Executive Director: Joann P. Spotanski

International Center Chaplain

Chaplain: William Weedon

Financial Operations:

Chief Financial Officer

Jerald C. Wulf

Accounting

Executive Director: Charles E. Rhodes
Synodical Accounting, Director: Rosalito Silva
Tax Reporting, Director: Karen Sansone

Information Technology
 Executive Director: Myron A. Koehn

IT Infrastructure
 Director: Joel Rivers

IT Applications and Architecture
 Director: Mike Metcalf

IT Project and Policy Management
 Director: Pat Ulmer

Dennis Meyer (2013)
 John Mierow (2016)
 Gerhard Munding, Jr. (2016)
 Ronald Reck (2013)
 Orville Walz (2013)

Advisory Members:
 Kurt Krueger
 Ray Mirly
 Gregory Williamson
 Jerald Wulf

President's Representative: Bryan Salminen
 Concordia Administrative Information System: Scotti Hermansen
 Website: cais.cus.edu
 Concordia University Education Network (CUEnet): Heather Stueve
 Website: www.cuenet.edu

LeRoy Wilke (2013)
 Ray G. Mirly
 COP Representative: Paul G. Sieveking
 President's Representative: Daniel Preus

Concordia Theological Seminary—Fort Wayne, IN
 President: Lawrence Rast

Board of Regents
 Chairman: Wayne Graumann (2013)
 Howard J. Claussen (2016)
 Ronald M. Garwood (2016)
 Robert W. Harvey (2014)
 David P. Held (2013)
 Janet M. Johnson (2013)
 Leo S. Mackay, Jr. (2016)
 James H. Pragman (2013)
 Dennis L. Ross (2014)
 Jon R. Schumacher (2014)
 Bradd W. Stucky (2016)

COP Representative: James A. Baneck
 President's Representative: Scott R. Murray

Colleges/Universities
Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Mich.
 Interim President: Patrick Ferry

Board of Regents
 Chairman: Paul R. Naumann (2015)
 Fred Watkins (2014)
 David Bowers (2014)
 Hank Hajdas (2013)
 Mark R. Kirchenberg (2015)
 Phillip Leege (2014)
 David P. E. Maier (2015)
 Martin K. Moehring (2013)
 Dan Nickodemus (2014)
 Christian Preus (2013)
 Tina Wilks Putz (2015)
 Ronald Salvner (2015)
 Ian W. Schonsheck (2015)
 Leslie K. Sramek (2013)
 Wesley Wrucke (2013)

Advisory Regents
 Terry Cripe
 Steve DeBoer
 Rollo Fisher
 Dan May
 Karl Mueller
 Dennis Pudell
 Michael Roth
 David Stechholz

Concordia University Texas, Austin, Texas
 President: Thomas E. Cedel

Board of Regents
 Chairman: Keith Weiser (2014)
 Quentin Anderson (2015)
 Barry Burgdorf (2015)
 Albert Carrion (2013)
 Allen Doering (2015)
 Michael Dorn (2013)
 Stephen Eggold (2013)
 Mark Hazelwood (2014)
 Rebecca Kieschnick (2013)
 Max Kiesling (2015)
 Noreen Linke (2013)
 Kristi Matus (2013)
 Ed Moerbe (2014)
 Charles Requadt (2014)
 Robyn Roberts (2015)
 Daniel Schaefer (2015)
 Kenneth M. Hennings

District President: Kenneth M. Hennings

Concordia College—New York, Bronxville, N.Y.
 President: Viji D. George

Board of Regents
 Chairman: Jean Hanson (2012)
 Frederick W. Bernthal (2014)
 Howard F. Crumb (2012)
 Chester M. Edelmann, Jr. (2013)
 Heidi J. Fields (2013)
 James Jahnke (2012)
 Jonathan Laabs (2013)
 Michael T. Meese (2012)
 William J. Meyer (2012)
 Gary E. Muller (2014)

SYNODWIDE TRUST ENTITIES

Concordia Plan Services
 President & CEO: James F. Sanft
 Vice President and Chief Operating Officer: William J. Hofrichter
 Vice President and General Counsel: Ann T. Stillman
 Vice President and Chief Financial Officer: Michael C. Berkley
 Sr. Vice President and Chief Investment Officer: Thomas J. Neely
 Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer: Glenn A. Mehnken
 Education & Outreach, Vice President: Jack E. Pfitzer
 Information Technology, Vice President: Robert W. Cushman
 Plan Administration, Vice President: Linda A. Olsen

Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services

Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans
 Chairman: Fred G. Kraegel (2015)
 Kory B. Boster (2015)
 Kenneth Boerger (2014)
 Randall Boushek (2014)
 Philip Fluegge (2015)
 James R. Jaacks (2013)
 Thomas McCain (2014)
 George F. Nolde III (2013)
 Carol Reineck (2013)
 Mark E. Schmidtke (2015)
 Fred Schroeder (2013)
 Judy K. Stromback (2013)
 Ronald M. Wolf (2014)

Ex-officio: Jerald C. Wulf
 President's Representative: Roger C. Paavola

SYNODWIDE CORPORATE ENTITIES

Concordia Historical Institute
 Executive Director: Larry Lumpe
 Archives and Library, Assoc. Director: Rev. Marvin A. Huggins
 Board of Governors
 Chairman: Scott Meyer (2015)
 Gerhard H. Bode, Jr. (2015)
 Phyllis Duesenberg (2015)
 Carl Egger (2015)
 Henry Gensky (2015)
 Kathy Graumann (2013)
 Raymond Hartwig (2013)
 James Kalthoff (2013)
 Cameron MacKenzie (2013)

Advisory: Larry Lumpe
 President's Representative: John C. Wohlrahe, Jr.

Concordia Publishing House
 President & Chief Executive Officer: Bruce G. Kintz
 Vice President & Corporate Counsel: Jonathan D. Schultz
 Board Members:
 Heidi Abegg (2013)
 Mark Bender (2016)
 Robert Beumer (2013)
 Elaine Graff (2013)
 Ruth Koch (2016)
 Natalie Oleshchuk (2016)
 Gretchen Roberts (2016)
 Alvin Schmidt (2016)
 Karol Selle (2013)

President's Representative: Raymond Hartwig
 Ex-officio: Jerald C. Wulf

Concordia University System
 Interim President: Alan Borcherding
 Director of University Education: Vacant
 Director of Corporate Services: Gayle Grotjan
 Board Members:
 Chairman: Daniel Jastram (2016)
 David Hawk (2016)
 Melissa Knippa (2013)

Lutheran Church Extension Fund
 President / CEO: Richard C. Robertson
 Finance, Sr. Vice President/CFO: Thomas R. Helfrich
 Information Technology, Sr. Vice President/CIO: Richard Lauer
 Loans, Sr. Vice President/CCO: Thomas Buuck
 Marketing & Customer Support, Sr. Vice President: Becca Jones
 Ministry Support, Vice President: Max Biesenthal

Board of Directors:
 Chairman: Randall Peterson (2015)
 David L. Bahn (2013)
 Dennis Becker (2013)
 Susan Elsholz (2013)
 Jim Ingersoll (2015)
 Michael Kzirian (2014)
 Leon Langemeier (2014)
 Pamela Moksnes (2014)
 Max Phillips (2013)
 Carol Radtke (2015)
 David Wuenscher (2013)

Non-Voting Members: Mark Nuckols
 Jerald Wulf

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation
 President: David Fiedler
 Finance/Administration, Sr. Vice President: Wayne Price
 Joint Seminary Fund Development, VP: Paul Kienker
 Marketing/Communications, Sr. VP: Blake Tilley
 Gift Planning Services, Sr. VP: Terry Gerds
 Trust Admin./Customer Support, Sr. VP: Tom Angus

Board of Trustees
 Chairman: Don Graf (2013)
 Patricia Bokenkamp (2014)
 Mark Charron (2015)
 Richard Drews (2013)
 Ernest Garbe (2013)
 Don Graf (2013)
 Bill Kernen (2014)
 Roger Prigge (2014)
 John Schaller (2015)
 Mark Sheldon (2013)
 Hans Trinklein (2014)
 Jerald Wulf (2013)

Non-Voting: Jerald Wulf (2013)

PROGRAM AND SERVICE UNITS

KFUO AM & FM Radio Stations
 Director of Broadcast Operations: Rodney E. Zwonitzer
 Director of Operations: Gary Duncan
 Manager of Fundraising & Promotion: Joan Harwell

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF SYNOD/ SEMINARIES

Seminaries
Concordia Seminary—St. Louis, MO
 President: Dale A. Meyer
Board of Regents
 Chairman: Ralph Blomenberg (2016)
 Vice Chairman: Ulmer Marshall (2013)
 Albert Allen (2016)
 Richard E. Beumer (2016)
 LuJuana R. Butts (2013)
 David V. Disson (2013)
 Paul Hegland (2016)
 Louis Pabor (2013)
 Harold Senkbeil (2016)
 Alan E. Stumpf (2013)

DIRECTORY—OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS OF THE SYNOD

John M. Pietruski, Jr. (2014)
Thomas Roemke (2012)
Arthur W. Scherer (2013)
T. Scott Wittman (2014)
Hope Wittrock (2012)

President's Office: Charles Froehlich

Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.

President: Kurt Krueger

Board of Regents

Chairman:

Craig Olson (2014)
Paul Belden (2014)
Steven Buuck (2015)
John Friend (2015)
Elmer R. Gooding (2013)
James D. Henkell (2015)
Heather Manning (2013)
Michael A. Morehouse (2013)
Sandra Ostapowich (2013)
Glen Piper (2013)
Patrick Stackler (2014)
Cynthia M. Steinbeck (2014)
Larry A. Stoterau (2015)
Donald Tietjen (2014)
Audrey G. Williams (2015)
Non-Voting: David Leichtfuss
Advisory Member: Allen Anderson
Rachel Klitzing
Robert Newton

Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis.

President: Patrick T. Ferry

Board of Regents

Chairman:

Vice-Chairman:

Bob Schjervén (2013)
Terry Donovan (2013)
Mary Dittmar (2013)
Larry Floyd (2014)
Lynnette Fredericksen (2013)
Susan Groth (2015)
Susan Duda Hanas (2013)
Robert Knox (2013)
Ruth Koch (2013)
Karl Kreft (2014)
Nathan Meador (2015)
Christine Specht Palmert (2014)
James Pingel II (2015)
Mark Polzin (2014)
Rev. Klemet Preus (2013)
Robert Seefeld (2015)
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SYNOD REPORTS

R1-7

President's Report

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Baptized for *This Moment*?

Our world is becoming unglued—violence, pornography, promiscuity, rejection of natural law, mass murder (including the ultimate mass murder of now 50 million unborn babies since *Roe v. Wade*), militant Islam, war, false religions by the thousands, persecution of Christians, incessant ridicule of all that Christians hold sacred, worldwide political strife, Christianity in the West in serious decline, and much more. We are in the end times, perhaps at the very last gasp of sin, death, and the devil. Jesus' words are fulfilled daily before our very eyes.

The disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?” And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matt. 24:3–14)

Jesus' ominous words are doubly troubling when he tells us that the Church will suffer persecution from without, but also, be wracked from within—so much so that “the love of many will grow cold.” Unfortunately, we in the Missouri Synod are hardly immune from Jesus' prophetic predictions. But Jesus also says the end will not come until the Gospel has been “proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations.” This means, does it not, that God still

has some use for the Missouri Synod? Even us? Could it be that we are together baptized into Christ's death, that together we may lead a new life, a life lived outside ourselves and as a witness to our neighbor who needs Jesus?

Witness versus Doctrine?

In Dr. Walther's very first sermon at a Synod convention, he opened with a statement we would do well to hear even today. It takes us to the genius, the heart, the gift of the Missouri Synod. Some might even see it as the contradiction of the Missouri Synod! Walther ceaselessly emphasizes “pure doctrine,” but not for its own sake, not for smug self-assurance or an excuse for laziness. Hardly! While in our day it is common to pit doctrine against mission, and vice versa, from the beginning the Synod did not do so. And that's because the Bible does not do so! (Matt. 28:19–20; 1 Tim. 4; Eph. 4). Pure doctrine and witness, witness and pure doctrine belong together. Imagine yourself at that first tiny convention gathering in Chicago in 1847. Dr. Walther preached:

The very most important matter in a Synodical fellowship is pure doctrine and knowledge. A Synod must certainly be a part of the church of God on earth and evidence for this is given that in her midst ‘the Gospel is preached purely and the holy Sacraments are administered purely of the Gospel!’ [AC VII] It must also be built upon nothing but the foundation of the apostles and prophets, where Jesus Christ is the cornerstone [Eph. 4]. It must also be a little flock of those ‘holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their shepherd.’ [John 10:27] Also, it is established to carry out the commission bequeathed by the Savior, ascending into heaven, to his church on earth: ‘Teaching them to hold fast to everything that I have commanded you’ [Matt. 28:19]. **Its ultimate goal is the salvation of sinners, which is accomplished through nothing but the pure Gospel.** So her first and foremost prayer must not be: ‘Thy kingdom come!’ but rather: ‘Hallowed be thy Name.’ (“Sermon at the Synod's First Convening [1847],” in *Treasury of C. F. W. Walther*, vol. 7, p. 7, trans. by J. Baseley)

By “pure doctrine” Dr. Walther, founder of our Synod, simply meant believing, teaching, and acting in accord with what the Bible says. That means walking the golden road between demanding more than the Bible does and, on the other hand, ignoring the plain teaching of Scripture. And why do we believe, teach, and act according to what the Bible, God's Word, says to us? We do so for the salvation of sinners (including ourselves!), *the ultimate goal* of the Synod. The whole Bible points to and delivers the Gospel, Jesus Christ, who was conceived, born, lived, suffered, died, and rose again for the salvation of the world (John 20:30; Rom. 15:4); “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!” (John 6:68).

Our special emphasis in the 2013 convention is on the biblical teaching of Baptism and what it means for our witness, mercy, and life together today, at this challenging moment in the Church's life. It is vital that the Word of God have its way with us. The Word—even Baptism (Eph. 5:26)—forgives (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38), regenerates (Titus 3:5), renews (Titus 3:5), restores (Titus 3:7), and casts us headlong into our sacred vocations as spiritual priests, propelling us to bear witness to Jesus (1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 8:38; Heb. 10:19ff.), to have mercy on those in need (Acts 16:15, 34), and to live with one another in faith and love (1 Cor. 1:13; 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5), and to do so with joy (1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 16:34) and thanksgiving (Col. 2:7).

Thankfulness: Has Our Love “Grown Cold”?

Have you ever considered how many times the words “thanks” and “thankfulness” occur in the Small Catechism?

- “... pray, praise, and *give thanks*” (Second Commandment)
- “For all this [First Article gifts!] it is my duty to *thank and praise*, serve and obey Him” (Creed, First Article)

- "... receive our daily bread *with thanksgiving*" (Lord's Prayer, Fourth Petition)
- "... and when He had *given thanks*, He broke it and gave it" (Jesus' giving thanks is right in the Words of Institution!)
- "I *thank* You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger" (Morning Prayer)

This is but a small reflection of the topic of thankfulness in the Bible. Thanksgiving is faith's response to the Gospel. "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, *abounding in thanksgiving*" (Col. 2:6–7, emphasis added).

The issue of thankfulness for the Gospel and the Word of God was an extremely significant one for Martin Luther. In fact, he gave an ominous warning about what happens where such thankfulness wanes. Read Luther's words below about Germany. Has it not come true? Is this not happening in America now?

Let us remember our former misery, and the darkness in which we dwell. Germany, I am sure, has never before heard so much of God's Word as it is hearing today; certainly we read nothing of it in history. If we let it just slip by without thanks and honor, I fear we shall suffer a still more dreadful darkness and plague. O my beloved Germans, buy while the market is at your door; gather in the harvest while there is sunshine and fair weather; make use of God's grace and Word while it is there! For you should know that God's Word and grace is like a passing shower of rain, which does not return where it has once been. It has been with the Jews, but when it's gone, it's gone, and now they have nothing. Paul brought it to the Greeks; but again when it's gone, it's gone, and now they have the Turk. Rome and the Latins also had it; but when it's gone, it's gone, and now they have the pope. And you Germans need not think that you will have it forever, for *ingratitude and contempt will not make it stay*. Therefore, seize it and hold it fast, whoever can; for lazy hands are bound to have a lean year. (WA 15:32; AE 45:352)

Is It Still Raining in Missouri?

This "passing rain shower" passage was intimately familiar to the fathers of the Missouri Synod. Dr. Walther in fact notes it at the end of his very first Synod sermon. Just before quoting Luther's famous passage, Dr. Walther preached:

Whether our synod may have friends or enemies, honor or shame, decline or growth, peace or unrest, it doesn't matter to us; if only she preserves her jewel, pure doctrine and knowledge. But should she, someday, become indifferent to that, should she lose it through indifference or sell it, as a traitor to the world or to a false church: Then may she fail forever and the name "Missouri" rot as a name synonymous with shame. But, so that this may never happen, let us, in conclusion, hear with open hearts the well intentioned warning and prediction of our German prophet, which he made way back in 1524. (*Treasury of C. F. W. Walther*, vol. 7, p. 17)

As I consider my own life, along with that of our dear Synod, the words of Jesus to the Church at Ephesus ring in my head: "I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for My name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first" (Rev. 2:3–4). **The intolerable 40-year decline of the Missouri Synod gives us tremendous concern.** Growth is the Lord's doing, to be sure (1 Cor. 3:5ff.). But it may be impeded by ignorance of the Word or opposition to it; by laziness; by strife, dissention, anger, envy; by sins unresolved, unrepented of, and unforgiven; also by hurting church workers and congregations—in short, a lot of the sinful activity and pain exacerbated by the average LCMS convention year!

What's the answer? The Small Catechism on Baptism points the way, the only way:

- "*What benefits does Baptism give?* It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare." Said Luther,

"Baptism is a deluge of grace, just as the flood was a deluge of wrath" (Erlangen ed., *Op. Lat.*, 3:397).

- "*What does such baptizing with water indicate?* It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." Said Luther, "What is so pious about having God's Word and Command if you don't act accordingly?" (St. Louis ed., 10:2108).
- "*Where is this written?* St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: 'We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life'" (Rom. 6:4). Only in repentance will God preserve the shower of His grace among us, a repentance unto thanksgiving and thankful living. Luther wrote, "For our whole life should be baptism ... since we have been set free from all else and given over to baptism alone, that is, to death and resurrection" (AE 36:70).

So "What Does This Mean" for the 2013 Convention?

Let's die together in repentance, dear delegates. Let's rise with Christ to lead the Synod in humility and repentance (Phil. 2). It's inevitable. We are sinners all (Rom. 3:23). We will sin against each other "in, with, and under" (before, during, and after!) this convention. We all love this church body and want to see her prosper and grow, but we all have our ideas and viewpoints. And wonder of wonders, we don't always agree! As we prepare for the convention, I would ask this of all of you:

- *First, repent.* Confess your sins and receive absolution at church. Go to private confession with your pastor if possible. If you are not reconciled with others around you, in your congregation, and especially other delegates to the convention, "go" (Matt. 18) and be reconciled. It is essential for us to "maintain the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).
- *Second, pray.* Start praying now and daily! Add a petition for the convention, for repentance and humility in the face of the Word of God for all participants:
 - That we would all "tremble before the Word of God!" (Is. 66:5)
 - For charity in matters not mandated by the Word of God (Rom. 14:13–19)
 - For safety for all participants, and for edification for all, that we all might grow in our desire and ability to witness, have mercy, and live together in joy as the Missouri Synod

I find the litany very helpful to this end. It can be found in *Lutheran Service Book* (p. 288) or *The Lutheran Hymnal* (p. 110).

- *Third, open the Scriptures.* Check passages referenced in overtures. **It would be good for all delegates to have worked through all 13 letters of St. Paul** (or significant sections of Scripture of their choosing!).
- *Fourth, read the Augsburg Confession and/or Luther's Large Catechism.* Those with some zeal might like to read the Epitome of the Formula of Concord and note how it resolved differences among Lutherans in 1580. The issue in controversy is defined. Theses of agreement on what is true and what is rejected follow. We are bound to these documents as a church body—and each of us individually as church workers and as individual congregations. If you have doubts (we all struggle with this or that teaching, and through struggle are confronted with God's Word) about what the confession teaches, keep struggling. **If you simply reject what the church's confession teaches, you should not be a delegate. It's that serious.** And these confessions will be referenced over and again. Let's be ready to be edified by serious study of Holy Baptism on the basis of the Holy Scriptures. And for what? To be ever more grounded in our assurance of salvation and strengthened for witness, mercy, and life together! Luther, in his typical bombastic manner, urged that we pay attention to God's Word on Baptism, lest we miss the whole point and look at it as a mere water, a view no different than a "cow or sow"!

Can We Visit about the Mission?

The Constitution of the Missouri Synod requires “visitation.” In fact, the whole system of church governance is designed for “visitation” (Bylaws 5.1.1ff.). The *Handbook* of the Synod defines “ecclesiastical supervision” this way:

Ecclesiastical supervision: The responsibility, primarily of the President of the Synod and district presidents, to supervise on behalf of the Synod the doctrine, life, and administration of its members, officers, and agencies. Such supervision, subject to the provisions of the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, includes visitation, evangelical encouragement and support, care, protection, counsel, advice, admonition, and, when necessary, appropriate disciplinary measures to assure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are followed and implemented. Thus, ecclesiastical supervision is also the presenting, interpreting, and applying of the collective will of the Synod’s congregations.

Where does this come from? Way back in 1528, Luther’s sidekick Philip Melancthon wrote “Visitation Articles” for the Lutheran Church in Saxony. We have them in English, published by CPH (AE 40:263). In the early years after Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses and the church began to reorganize, there were only a few Roman Catholic bishops who converted to Lutheranism. Luther naively thought that because the clear, pure Gospel was now proclaimed, people would break out in living wonderful, sanctified lives of love and service. Any structure beyond the local parish would be unnecessary! Well, you might be able to guess how that turned out! Things were so bad in Wittenberg that on more than one occasion Luther was ready to quit and move away!

Luther became convinced that an office of “visitation” or “ecclesiastical supervision” was absolutely necessary for the church. Having a system of leaders in the church (Luther called them “bishops”; we call them “synod and district presidents”) who supervise the doctrine and life of other pastors and congregations, said Luther, *was not commanded by the Bible*, but the church *in its wisdom* from the beginning had set up such a system. Luther wrote:

Both the Old and the New Testaments give sufficient evidence of what a divinely wholesome thing it would be if pastors and Christian congregations might be visited by understanding and competent persons. For we read in Acts 9[:32] that St. Peter travelled about in the land of the Jews. And in Acts 15[:2] we are told that St. Paul together with Barnabas revisited all those places where they had preached. All his epistles reveal his concern for all the congregations and pastors. He writes letters, he sends his disciples, he goes himself. . . . Samuel travelled around, now to Gilgal [1 Sam. 10:8; 11:14; 13:8; 15:12] and other places, not out of delight for taking a walk but out of love and a sense of duty in his ministry and because of the want and need of the people. Elijah and Elisha did the same. . . . More than any, Christ has done this kind of work on behalf of all, and on this account possessed no place on earth where he could lay his head or which he could call his own. (AE 40:269)

Luther’s reference to Acts 15:36 is enlightening. “And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us return and *visit* the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the Word of the Lord, and *see how they are.*’” The word for “visit” in Luke’s original is *episkepeste*. The noun form—*episkopos*—is used by St. Paul in verses we all know extremely well. “An *overseer* (i.e., bishop or pastor) should be a man of one wife.” It’s been quipped that the problem with the Missouri Synod is not that we don’t have bishops, it’s that we have too many! **For according to St. Paul, every local pastor is an overseer/bishop. Only the local pastor is divinely mandated.** In freedom, the church devised a form of governance almost right from the start where certain men were chosen by the clergy and people to lead and have responsibility for the doctrine and life of other pastors and congregations. Said Luther: “Actually, bishop means supervisor or visitor, and archbishop a supervisor or visitor of bishops, to see to it that each parish pastor visits and watches over and supervises his people in regard to teaching

and life. And the archbishop was to visit, watch over, and supervise the bishops as to their teaching” (AE 40:270). While we (and much of Lutheranism) did not retain the term “bishop” for our leaders out of a desire not to be associated with wrong Roman Catholic views on church leadership, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod are a classic representation of the ancient way the church was organized (Constitution, Art. XI B; Bylaws 3.3.1 ff.; 3.10.1.2; 4.4.2; 4.4.4).

Visitation is vitally important. The Synod President is charged with visiting all districts with respect to doctrine and administration. He also gives account to each district. This happens especially during district conventions. I made it to 22 district conventions last year. The Synod vice-presidents represented me at those conventions I was not able to attend personally. The President of the Synod also has visitation duties with respect to the seminaries and universities of the Synod, as well as the corporate entities. District presidents are required by the Bylaws of the Synod to visit each congregation. That’s a tough, almost impossible, task. They often make use of district vice-presidents, district staff, and circuit counselors.

So what does visitation look like? It looks like the ministry of Jesus. Note how He goes, sends, preaches, plants, returns, and strengthens! It looks like the ministry of Paul. It goes. It walks. It visits people where they are. It proclaims Christ. It begins a mission station. It then goes to the next place. It returns and encourages, admonishes, sets things in order, and appoints ministers. It rebukes and corrects; it forgives and urges people forward in the mission of the Gospel. It does not coerce (Bylaw 4.4.4 [c]). It respects local freedom and wisdom. Dr. Walther wrote in his “Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod” that “without visitation, it is probably impossible for a church to remain in unity.”

It’s vital for us to encourage one another in visitation, from the local parish to the President of the Synod, so that we can be mutually responsible to one another. We should return to Missouri’s traditional language of “circuit visitor.” “Counselor” is about therapy when things are not going well. People see a “counselor” when there’s a problem. Visitation is also vital for our international mission and missionaries, for our international schools, as well as for our parochial schools, all so we can encourage one another—so we can spur one another on in love toward excellence in all we do (1 Cor. 15:29); so we can urge one another on to become better preachers, better pastors, better teachers; so we can care for one another; so we can be united and encouraged in the mission of sharing the Gospel of free forgiveness in Christ’s death and resurrection to all (Rom. 1:13). Toward that end, you should know that Rev. Bart Day, executive director of the Office of National Mission, is focusing *all* programs and activities of his department on one top priority for our districts and congregations: revitalization for mission. Please note his report later in this document.

Missouri’s Moment?

In recent weeks there has been a “tectonic shift” in world Lutheranism. It’s the most significant shift in a century or more. The ELCA’s acceptance and promotion of same-gender marriage has caused the world’s largest and fastest growing Lutheran church body, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) with some 6.1 million members (and Africans count only people who actually come to church!), to sever its ties with the ELCA and the Church of Sweden. At the same time, these Ethiopians expressed their desire to work toward fellowship with the Missouri Synod. That will take some time. The shock waves are rippling through Africa, and there is a surge of activity and interest in the LCMS in several other very large church bodies and many smaller bodies. Years of kindness and excellence by our seminary professors, missionaries, and others have developed strong and lasting relationships. These Africans want

our theological capacity. They want to be orthodox Lutherans and associate with orthodox Lutherans. We need their mission capacity, prayers, and zeal, especially as we reach out to African immigrants in the U.S. There are similar developments elsewhere in the global south among Lutherans. That's why our Global Seminary Initiative (GSI), providing scholarships for future international church leaders to come to our seminaries and our international theological conferences, are so vital. Our Wittenberg Project is also very significant in this context, offering a place for global Lutherans to gather, learn, strengthen one another, and together confess Christ in a dark world.

It's a great day to be who we are! As someone once quipped, "The first step in becoming better than you are is to *be* who you are!" So let's continue to be biblical Lutherans! We *are* baptized for this moment!

Restructuring

Actions were taken in 2010 that changed the structure of our Synod. The 2009 final report of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance (BRTFSSG) made a recommendation to "Realign the National Synod Ministries" around two mission commissions. These commissions evolved to become boards, and the 2010 LCMS convention voted in Res. 8-08A to realign the national office. This work began almost immediately after the convention and continues today. The official start day of the new structure for the International Center, the Synod's national office headquarters, was July 1, 2011.

We have described the development and implementation of the new structure as "trying to rebuild a 747 airplane while it was flying through the air." The finalized, approved Bylaws took several months to complete and be published. In the meantime, we continued to move forward to understand the pertinent new bylaws and translate the past structure of departments and ministry areas into what was newly outlined in the Bylaws. With the restructure effort, new departments were created, positions were shuffled, job descriptions were changed, and some 66 positions were eliminated.

The restructure called for internal processes to change. The BRTFSSG report and Res. 8-08A made reference to the fact that departments within the International Center needed to work together better. Each department operated within its own "silo" rather than with open doors and lines of communication to others. Frequently, one department did not know what the other department was doing, did not share resources, and lacked coordination. With the new structure the silos came down!

We now have one Department for Mission Advancement that coordinates all the fund-raising efforts for all departments and ministries at the International Center. We now have a unified Communications Department that is responsible for overseeing all communications for the LCMS through the International Center. These two departments work daily together to coordinate efforts, combine resources, and jointly assist each other in reaching their goals.

The restructuring adopted in Res. 8-08A also called for the creation of a new element to the Synod structure. The Operations Team, made up of the Chief Mission Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Chief Administrative Officer, regularly work together to oversee, supervise, manage, and coordinate the operations of the International Center. The Administrative Team, consisting of the Operations Team and others, also meets to assist the President and the Board of Directors to carry out their respective responsibilities. With these important elements in place and regularly meeting, work within the International Center is carried out in a more coordinated and efficient fashion.

Several key leadership positions have been filled, including Rev. Greg Williamson, the Chief Mission Officer. Additionally, Rev. Randy

Golter, executive director of the Office of International Mission; Rev. Bart Day, executive director of the Office of National Mission; and Mark Hofman, executive director of Mission Advancement, have been added to the leadership team.

One very important element of restructuring is the way in which the International Center is working to improve the connection to districts and congregations. The Office of National Mission is primarily tasked with seeing to this important relationship and sponsored a National Mission Conference in September 2011, inviting all district presidents, district mission executives, and other key stakeholders. This conference was a "listening conference" and became the first of a number of opportunities for national stakeholders and representatives to weigh in and provide input on important matters facing the church. Rev. Bart Day has used much of the input provided at this conference to guide and steer his development of the work of the Office of National Mission.

In 2010 as the delegates adopted Res. 8-08A, no one really knew what the new structure was going to look like and how work would continue to get done. All International Center employees who have gone through and continued their service during the last three years should be commended. Many employees dealt with uncertainty, confusion, and frustration, while at the same time coming to work every day and doing their very best. The success of restructuring is not due to convention resolutions or organizational charts but to the dedicated, excellent employees of the Synod who have implemented the new structure.

Values and Priorities

I call your attention to the strategic "values and priorities" section of the report of the Chief Mission Officer below. Through a significant internal process we identified five values that will mark all of the work of the national office of the LCMS.

1. Fidelity: Faithfulness to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, with a clear focus on witness to Christ.
2. Quality: Clear, measurable excellence in all we do, for the sake of the mission of Christ!
3. Credibility: "The ability to inspire belief or trust," because we do what's right and we do it well.
4. Sustainability: We must plan to stand the test of time, for the sake of the mission.
5. Stability: We manifest strategic constancy in an ever-changing world.

As we pushed through restructuring, we have identified six strategic priorities for all the work of the national office, each vital to the mission of the church:

1. Plant, sustain and revitalize Lutheran churches.
2. Expand and enhance theological education.
3. Perform mercy work in proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry.
4. Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners.
5. Nurture church workers.
6. Enhance elementary, secondary, tertiary education, and youth ministry.

Might these priorities be adapted to your congregation?

Financial Issues We Face

Across Synod, even as total congregation membership is slowly declining, our Lord has provided abundantly and moved the hearts of His people to continue to increase total Sunday morning offerings. According to the 2013 *Lutheran Annual*, in 2011, **total Sunday morning offerings across all our congregations were over \$1.37 billion, a record amount.** However, the distribution of these unrestricted resources among congregation, district, and Synod mission and ministry programs and operations shows that, during this time of increased giving, financial support for district and Synod mission

and ministry activities has not increased. In fact, in 2010 and 2011, **the share of the resources provided by our Lord and set aside for district and Synod mission and ministry declined more than \$6 million.**

As encouraged by several Synod conventions, we increasingly appear to see our local congregations as “mission outposts,” attempting to do more and more mission and ministry locally. Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with anyone and everyone the Lord places in our path is our task, wherever we find ourselves. However, even as we focus on mission and ministry opportunities in our neighborhoods and communities, it seems that the worldwide vision of the Great Commission is going out of focus.

Look around your neighborhood and community, your circuit, your district, our nation, and our world. What opportunities for mission and ministry can you see? Is your congregation capable of assembling adequate resources to address those opportunities? If so, it should, but not without coordination with other mission and ministry opportunities that are being addressed by your circuit or your district or our Synod. Any identified mission and ministry opportunities that your congregation cannot meet by itself should be elevated to your circuit convocation, your district convention, and/or our Synod in convention. These larger organizations can and should be able to bring coordination and economies of scale in seizing the identified mission and ministry opportunities that cannot adequately be addressed by an individual congregation. Cooperation in these efforts is not only essential but also promotes good stewardship.

As we approach every triennial convention, we should ask ourselves: “Are the activities we determined in the past to do together (as expressed in our Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions) still appropriate? Should we cease doing some of these common activities, or should we pursue different common activities? Should we be doing other activities together?” Once the common activities have been identified, we need to ask ourselves, “Are we providing adequate resources to our districts and to the Synod at levels that allow these common tasks to be meaningfully pursued, each year? If we are not providing adequate resources now, what can be done to ensure adequate resources are provided? If we are providing adequate resources, how can we better distribute them for the work we have collectively decided to pursue?”

Being good stewards of the resources God graciously provides is key. This means prioritizing projects, coordinating efforts, and trusting that those who have been assigned these tasks will do them to the glory of God, for the sake of the Gospel.

By God’s grace, and under the most capable leadership of our new Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Jerald C. Wulf, we have been able to reduce the amount borrowed for operations against funds designated for specific purposes from nearly \$16 million in 2010 to \$6.6 million as of this writing. We are in the black for this fiscal year, and we are intent on eliminating all internal borrowing and coming to the point where we have at least 120 days of operating reserves—a healthy standard for all non-profits. God help us!!

Koinonia Project

The “Koinonia Project” is a *long-term* initiative of my Office under the Constitution of the Synod, Art. XI B 3, which enjoins the President to “conscientiously use all means at his command to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of the Synod.” *Koinonia* is the Greek word meaning “communion,” “partnership,” or “participation or sharing” in something. The project fosters *theological study and discussion groups at many levels* designed to bring together capable and respected people to study God’s Word and the Confessions of our church so that, by God’s grace, we come to clear agreement on

1. the points at issue;
2. what we confess together;
3. what we reject; and
4. what we will therefore do together, on the basis of Scripture and our Confessions.

This effort to develop spiritual and theological solutions under the Word of God for some of our long-term issues we have chosen to call the “Koinonia Project,” because we pray that God will build and strengthen our unity in the Word of God, that is, our fellowship, our “koinonia,” together.

Some have expressed the fear that the Koinonia Project would be used to “root out” and “get rid of” dissidents. Others have expected the Koinonia Project to work quickly to “deal” with our differences so that we move with dispatch into a more unified future (however particular individuals envision what that future should be!). Actually, the Koinonia Project is neither. It’s not a “purge” of undesirables, nor will it be a “quick fix.” Instead, the Koinonia Project is a *long-term* effort on the part of our Synod to draw us together under the Word of God. **Audaciously we pray the Koinonia Project will become an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work a “cultural shift” among us, i.e., a positive change in our shared expectations of one another and our life together.**

The project has roots in the “model theological conferences” pursued in the previous decade. It takes into account the work of the Harmony Task Force appointed in response to 2007 Synod Res. 4-01A. In a paper I initially presented to the pastoral conference of our Southern Illinois District in 2009 titled “It’s Time,” I described broad outlines for a “koinonia project.” In July 2010, I asked First Vice-President Herbert Mueller to develop the concept in consultation with many across the Synod—the CTCR, the Council of Presidents, the Praesidium, seminary faculty members, as well as an advisory group of pastors representing various constituencies: Pastor Wally Arp, St. Luke’s, Oviedo, Florida; Pastor Allan Buss, Immanuel, Belvidere, Illinois; President Terry Forke, Montana District; Pastor Wayne Graumann, Salem, Tomball, Texas; President Dale Sattgast, South Dakota District; Pastor Harold Senkbeil, New Berlin, Wisconsin; and President Anthony Steinbronn, New Jersey District (chosen while he was a district executive). This group has met several times by phone with Vice-President Mueller to discuss drafts of the concept paper and how the concepts might be communicated more broadly. They will continue to help him evaluate and extend the process. This group should be expanded soon to include a wider variety of people, including ethnic representation.

As indicated, the first step in the process has been the development of a “concept paper,” available on the Synod’s Web site at <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1041>. We encourage you to read and prayerfully consider the paper and the accompanying accountability document for a Koinonia Project theological study group. Beyond the concept paper, during the present triennium we have been developing a number of pilot projects around the country involving various groups in a variety of ways, trying different approaches to see what is most helpful. Following is a list of the activities to this point, mostly by district:

Council of Presidents and CTCR

- The Commission on Theology and Church Relations has reviewed the concept paper.
- CTCR Staff is helping with ongoing review of the concept paper.
- The Council of Presidents has reviewed the concept paper and is involved in ongoing discussions of the project.
- The COP is also engaged in koinonia-like discussions regarding “church and office,” Walther’s *The Church and the Office of the Ministry*, the Augsburg Confession, etc.

- Both receive regular reports and have been very helpful and cooperative.

Nebraska District

- Vice-President Mueller met with the district praesidium to present the concept and to begin the planning process.
- A larger planning group was developed in the district.
- This planning group also became a Koinonia Project study group discussing the nature of *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions.
- Vice-President Mueller discussed the project with the Nebraska District Pastoral Conference. These conversations were extensive and helpful.
- A very helpful “accountability document” was developed in Nebraska (which others have used as well, to good effect).
- Circuits are to study and discuss issues and resources provided.
- Regional groups are to be developed to work on specific controversial issues.
- More needs to be done to follow up on what is being learned, as well as to summarize for the sake of others what we are learning.

Northern Illinois District

- Vice-President Mueller met with the district praesidium to begin the planning process.
- A larger planning group was developed to design an approach for the district.
- Twelve pastors from the NID were chosen by the district praesidium to attend an initial retreat Aug. 28–29, 2012. The major topic was the question: Is it worth it to work under the Word of God toward greater unity? This retreat turned out to be crucial.
- The end result of the retreat is that 11 pastors and the district president are committed to the process.
- They have begun with the question “How do brother pastors help each other deal with couples living together who want to get married?” More recently, they have begun discussion of issues surrounding admission to the Lord’s Supper.
- More needs to be done to follow up on what is being learned.
- The retreat was paid for through Thrivent grant monies.

South Wisconsin District

- Vice-President Mueller met with the district praesidium to begin the planning process.
- He presented the Koinonia Project to a meeting of the praesidium and circuit counselors, as well as to a meeting of interested pastors with approximately 50 in attendance.
- The district president and vice-presidents decided to form two groups—one led by the first vice-president to discuss worship issues; another led by the second vice-president to discuss Communion practice.
- These groups have been chosen and are presently preparing to meet.

Texas District

- Vice-President Mueller worked with both the outgoing and the new circuit counselors to present the concept to a circuit just north of Houston.
- A chaplain/facilitator has been chosen to lead, and the group has been meeting regularly.
- Vice-President Mueller will be returning in 2013 to work with them on how to carry this forward.

Kansas District

- Vice-President Mueller presented the Koinonia Project to the Topeka Circuit Forum. Pastors and laypeople were present.
- The pastors have discussed the project and have indicated that they want to engage in the effort. More follow-up is needed.

Ohio District

- The Dayton Circuit asked for a presentation of the concept. Vice-President Mueller made the presentation over the course of about six hours in March 2012.
- They have developed a group that has now met several times with the help of a facilitator.
- The preliminary word is that the first meetings have gone well. They want to discuss Communion practice because the circuit has been divided on that issue.
- Further meetings have been held and the group has realized the difficulty of the project. They are, however, eager to continue.

Minnesota South District

- Vice-President Mueller met with the district praesidium at the district convention in June to begin the planning process.
- He also presented briefly at the Fall Pastoral Conference in October 2012.
- He met over dinner with the MNS District praesidium in October 2012 to discuss the formation of regional groups.
- The president and vice-presidents are *very* keen to get this going.
- Regional groups are planned for 2013.

Theological Faculties

- The Koinonia Project was presented to the theological faculties of the seminaries, colleges, and universities in May 2012.
- Some response was received. More work should be done.
- Could there be a koinonia study group organized between the two seminary faculties? It has been discussed, but nothing has yet materialized.

Northwest District

- Vice-President Mueller presented the Koinonia Project in detail to the Oregon Regional Pastoral Conference in October 2012.
- The concept was well received by all, and it is hoped that a plan can be developed for moving forward in this district in the near future. The district president and leadership are supportive.

Rocky Mountain District

- Vice-President Mueller made a two-hour presentation of the Koinonia Project to the Rocky Mountain District Pastoral Conference in October 2012, having been asked by both outgoing and incoming district presidents to do so.
- The concept paper has been distributed with the hope of forming some kind of group here.

Wyoming District

- Vice-President Mueller presented the Koinonia Project in detail to the Wyoming District Pastoral Conference in October 2011.
- This district didn’t see the need for this specific project within their district.
- However, the Wyoming District volunteered to help in other areas wherever needed (see below).

Wyoming/Atlantic Districts

- Several years ago, there was discussion regarding the desirability of bringing the Wyoming and Atlantic Districts together in a joint pastoral conference to discuss the issues of unionism and syncretism. Nothing came of this discussion, mostly due to lack of financial support.
- This possibility is being revived with the possibility of using some of the grant monies we have received for the pilot phase of the project.
- Both district presidents have eagerly expressed willingness.

Office of the President

- In 2011, the Office of the President received a grant of \$150,000 from Thrivent for the pilot phase of the project.
- The Office of the President has engaged in Koinonia Project-type discussions with representatives of the Pastoral Leadership Institute regarding issues having to do with our Synod's theology of missions. This needs to continue, in my opinion.
- Reports regarding Koinonia Project activities have appeared on the wmltblog.org Web site and in *Reporter*.

Work for the Future

Please note that we have been taking the time necessary to develop the Koinonia Project, first with the concept paper and more recently with the pilot projects outlined above. We are trying several different approaches to see what is most helpful. Our work in the next triennium to expand the project will benefit from our reflection on these experiences. One of our important learnings is that the most effective way to start a koinonia study group appears to be with a focused retreat involving all the participants. From the very modest beginning we have made, we need to take the project to the next level. For this we need to expand the advisory group, develop a Web site that can be regularly updated with information about the Koinonia Project, develop more resources (particularly Bible studies), develop ways for study groups to share results across the Synod, and so forth. We need to do more to involve the Council of Presidents as well as the seminary and university theological faculties. More laypeople need to be drawn in as well. Our purpose is to discuss and to teach the truth of the Scriptures so that ultimately the Word of God has its way with us. We pray for God-given courage to resist the danger of shrinking back from the difficulty of the task.

In summary, the Koinonia Project cannot be a political process but must be a spiritual effort centered in the Word of God, repentance and prayer, forgiveness, and charity. Resolutions of the Synod passed by slim margins will not solve our difficulties. Nor do we need a "new confession." But we do pray for a deeper understanding of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions as they apply to the issues troubling us. God grant it for Jesus' sake!

2010 Resolutions Assigned to the President

The following is a brief summary of the actions taken regarding several resolutions assigned to the President's Office. Additional information regarding some of these resolutions is provided elsewhere in this report or this *Convention Workbook*.

Res. 1-03. To Increase Outreach to Immigrants at a Congregational Level

The delegates of the 2010 convention encouraged the Office of National Mission (ONM) to find ways to strengthen the commitment to and increase the effectiveness of working with immigrants in the midst of our congregations and schools. The ONM is being organized to work directly with congregations and districts to assist, enhance, support, and encourage work among immigrants. The recent CTCR document *Immigrants Among Us* (2013) will help give guidance to this work. ONM's work continues under the leadership of Rev. Bart Day based on the office's threefold foci of rural/small town, suburban, and urban/inner city.

Res. 1-08. To Encourage the "Wittenberg Project" as a Gospel Witness Opportunity

This resolution commended LCMS leadership for initiating work on the Wittenberg Project and encouraged the Synod to pursue opportunities in Wittenberg to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The LCMS members of the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW) Board, the President of the Synod, the LCMS Board of Directors, and the Council of Presidents have kept the Synod informed

of the Wittenberg Project's progress and opportunities for participation in and support of this project.

At the November 2011 LCMS Board of Directors meeting, the President was given authority to oversee the Wittenberg Project. Since then, a Wittenberg Advocacy Cabinet has been established to help generate interest in the project and to promote fund development for it. In addition, an education steering committee, chaired by Dr. Jacob Preus III, has been established to set forth a plan for the use of the facility to encourage visitation and use of the project. This team has made a site visit and worked with our German partner church, the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK). The site will have primarily an educational emphasis, encouraging the expansion of LCMS involvement in Luther studies in Germany. Additionally, theological discussions/symposiums, servant events, workshops, and conferences will be able to be held at the Wittenberg Project facility.

In January 2013, the ILSW board convened in St. Louis to bring several things up-to-date and move the project forward. All members of the board from the LCMS, CPH, and SELK were present. Under the direction of Rev. Michael Kumm, chairman of the ILSW board, and with the full support of President Harrison and SELK Bishop Hans Jörg Voigt, momentum toward the goal of completion by 2017 took a great leap forward. The board approved a bridge loan with LCEF to prepare detailed construction drawings while fund-raising efforts were begun. Mr. Mark Hofman, executive director for LCMS Mission Advancement, kicked off the fund-raising efforts with a gathering of donors at the International Center who were able to meet and talk with all members of the ILSW board. Plans have been developed and adopted to show donors the possibility for naming rights in different areas of the facility as well. This meeting played a huge role in getting the wheels turning on the project. Quarterly board meetings by telephone have been scheduled, while the Advocacy Cabinet will meet via telephone on a monthly basis. The ILSW board has planned another face-to-face meeting for January 2014. You can read more about the progress of the Wittenberg Project at <http://thewittenberg-project.org>.

Res. 1-10. To Make a Concerted Effort to Reach Generation X (born in the late '60s through the late '70s) and the Millennials in the U.S. (those born after 1980 who are coming of age around 2000ff) with the Gospel of Jesus

The 2010 convention recognized the important mission field among our young adults. This work has been carried out by ONM's Youth Ministry department. During the past triennium, the LCMS young adult Web site has been refreshed and updated, providing information about these generations and a forum for young adults to express themselves around issues of faith and life. The Youth Ministry 2012 Symposium, which targets professional youth workers, focused on intergenerational ministry, especially on how to integrate high school and young adults in their early 30s into the life of a congregation. The 2011 symposium focused on developing a solid theological foundation for youth ministry. The UnWrapped campus ministry conference in January 2013 provided an opportunity for more than 400 young adults and campus ministers to gather. ONM's Youth Ministry department also worked with LCMS Life Ministries on the March for Life Conference in January 2013 and in helping young people to be informed on life issues. This summer's National Youth Gathering will also address the needs and opportunities to work with young adults of these two generations, especially regarding issues that will nurture their faith and equip them to live their faith in their various vocations. Totalling nearly 700 persons, the largest gathering of 20- to 25-year-olds in the LCMS is the Young Adult Volunteer Corps at the National Youth Gathering. In working with Millennials, Lutheran Youth Fellowship has provided training for teens to train their peers in leadership skills (2011), apologetics (2012), and outreach (2013).

Res. 1-11. *To Urge the Prompt Appointment of an Individual for Strategic Development of Hispanic Ministries*

The 2010 convention affirmed the need for faithful and effective outreach to Hispanic people and the need for strategic development of Hispanic ministries. Rev. Carlos Hernandez was appointed in July 2011 to serve in this capacity. That work will expand in the future with additional staff focused on Hispanic ministry. Rev. Hernandez continues to work with Rev. Bart Day, executive director of the ONM, to incorporate Hispanic ministry efforts in ethnic ministry outreach efforts in rural, suburban, and urban areas of the country.

Res. 1-12. *To Ensure Solid Lutheran Theological Training for Missionaries*

The Board for International Mission (BIM) drafted policies (still pending review by the CCM) to be implemented by the Office of International Mission (OIM) that

1. encourage strong missional leadership;
2. assure that missionaries will have adequate theological understanding and missional vision consistent with LCMS theology; and
3. will result in the establishment of appropriate levels of ongoing training, goal-setting, and sharing of the unifying vision.

These policies serve to ensure that LCMS missionaries have a solid Lutheran theological foundation for proclaiming the Gospel.

OIM, in accord with the BIM policies advocating strong missional leadership, adequate theological understanding and mission vision, and ongoing training, has begun a process to implement theological integrity that includes

1. theological interviews for every career missionary applicant;
2. a two-week orientation that reviews basic doctrines of Lutheran theology;
3. establishing of a visitation process for field staff to provide pastoral care and to evaluate ongoing need for continuing education;
4. at least annual regional field retreats for OIM missionary staff to provide spiritual care and ongoing theological engagement;
5. intentional theological engagement at top OIM leadership quarterly gatherings via biblical and confessional studies, while also engaging the latest missiological research;
6. integration of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* into regional strategies; and
7. a required MDiv or higher for all ordained career missionaries because of the complexities of false theologies in the field. Career missionaries also are encouraged to seek continuing education and other professional studies such as a PhD in missiology.

Res. 2-01. *To Continue to Support Children's Ministry, Family Ministry, School Ministry, Singles Ministry, Stewardship Ministry, and Youth Ministry*

The 2010 convention recognized the importance of supporting these ministries at the national level for the future growth of Christ's Church. Rev. Bart Day began his service as executive director of ONM in June 2011 to oversee these important ministry areas. ONM has begun to structure much of their work around three foci: rural/small town, suburban, and urban/inner city. These three different types of communities are used to understand, plan, and develop networks, resources, and ministry efforts for children, family, school, singles, stewardship, and youth ministries. Youth ministry has been expanded to include outreach and support to young adults who are in college, employed, military service, or seeking opportunities. The area of stewardship was served in ONM by Rev. Wayne Knolhoff until he moved to other opportunities in 2012. Currently, Rev. Day is seeking candidates to fill the position of Director of Stewardship in order to advance and expand this ministry. School ministry continues to be a very strong and active program and ONM is most grateful for the exemplary service of Mr. Bill Cochran, who will be retiring in 2013 after a long and distinguished career as LCMS teacher, principal, and

Executive Director of Schools. Candidates for this position are currently being considered.

Res. 3-03. *To Cooperate in Externals with Theological Integrity*

The Praesidium, in consultation with the CTCR, was asked to provide an assessment of the current state of "cooperation in externals" and criteria for the ongoing assessment of the same. In December 2010, the CTCR prepared an excellent document, *Principles for Cooperation in Externals with Theological Integrity*. In June 2011, the Praesidium unanimously voted to endorse this document and instructed all those charged with evaluating recognized service organizations of the Synod as well as those involved in cooperative endeavors with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to use these criteria and guidelines in their ongoing work to evaluate on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions whether or not a particular venture can be undertaken or sustained.

Res. 3-04A. *To Amend Bylaw 3.9.6.2.2 re Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with Small, Formative, or Emerging Confessional Churches*

During this triennium, Bylaw 3.9.6.2.2 © was exercised two times:

1. President Harrison declared fellowship with the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) in December 2010.
2. President Harrison declared fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia (ELCL) in April 2012.

Additional detail on these can be found elsewhere in this report as well as in the Commission on Theology and Church Relations report.

Several other churches have requested fellowship with the Missouri Synod and, where appropriate, the use of Bylaw 3.9.6.2.2 (c) will be helpful in the future. This bylaw streamlining the church fellowship process for emerging churches is very helpful in establishing a positive presence in global Lutheranism.

Res. 4-08. *To Improve Procedure for Establishing Synod Convention Times and Locations*

Study of future convention dates is underway and, once dates are identified, the Board of Directors of the Synod will be engaged to establish future sites of Synod conventions (Bylaw 3.1.9 [jj]).

Res. 6-02A. *To Be a Light for Life*

Maggie Karner, Director of Health and Life Ministries of the Office of National Mission, has continued to be the "Light for Life" for the LCMS. Through her programs, resources, and advocacy efforts, she continues to serve as a spokeswoman on life issues. Over the past several years, Mrs. Karner has spoken on panels and programs as a representative of the LCMS and a pro-life advocate. Ongoing support to the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee, annual participation in the January March for Life in Washington DC, along with hosting the January 2013 Life Conference are just some of the work done to equip and encourage more LCMS members to become involved in pro-life activities, advocacy, and service.

Res. 6-07A. *To Support Efforts to End Human Trafficking/Slavery*

In 2012, a letter was sent to Ury Fedotov, executive director of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, to continue and increase efforts to end human trafficking/slavery. In partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), resources to pastors and congregations have been developed and made available online. A Bible study on ending human trafficking is now available, as well as information to encourage advocacy in support of ending this horrible reality for so many.

Res. 8-07. *Congregations Walking Together in Mission in Larger Clusters (Districts): To Study Future District Function and Configuration*

A 15-member task force was established, in consultation with the Board of Directors of the Synod and the Council of Presidents, to take action on the tasks outlined in Res. 8-07. John Edson, task force chairman, led the group through several meetings of discussion and research. Please see the report of the task force elsewhere in this *Convention Workbook*.

Res. 8-30B. *Congregations Walking Together in Mission with Covenants of Love: To Study Art. VI of Synod's Constitution*

The study of Art. VI of the Synod's Constitution is an important task. The President's Office created a page at <http://lcms.org/churchfellowship> to gather study materials to elucidate Art. VI. The resources currently on the new site:

- Art. VI of the LCMS Constitution.
- 2001 Res. 7-17A "To Affirm Synod's Official Position on Church and Ministry." A summary on the Web site about this resource notes: "In *Kirche und Amt* (Church and Office) by C. F. W. Walther, the first president of the Missouri Synod, is a series of theses with explanations about the Church and pastoral ministry. In Thesis VIII on the Church, Dr. Walther clearly explains what is meant by 'unionism' and 'syncretism.' Art. VI of the Synod's Constitution can be illuminated by Dr. Walther's Thesis VIII on the Church. At convention in 2001, the Synod declared that the entire book, *Kirche und Amt* (Church and Office) is the official position of the Missouri Synod. This is a reaffirmation of the Synod's declaration in 1851 and 1852 of this stance."
- C. F. W. Walther's Thesis VIII from *Church and Office* (CPH, 2012).
- "A Reader of LCMS Church Fathers (especially C. F. W. Walther): On Avoidance of Unionism and Syncretism" (trans. by Joel R. Baseley).
- Excerpts from *The Church*, by Kurt E. Marquart. "The Lutheran Confessions have a great deal to say about church fellowship," notes a summary of this resource. "Dr. Kurt Marquart, in his book *The Church*, has a section on church fellowship with passages from Dr. Martin Luther, the Lutheran Confessions and the fathers of the Missouri Synod."
- *Union and Confession*, a book by Hermann Sasse that addresses unionism and syncretism.
- *Admission to the Lord's Supper* (CTCR, 1999).

The plan for the Web site is to add other items, including Bible studies, videos, and a complete bibliography of resources through which a more comprehensive study might be conducted.

Res. 8-32B. *Congregations Walking Together in Mission with Covenants of Love: To Study Art. VII of Synod's Constitution*

The study of the document *Congregations of the Synod: Background Materials on the Advisory Nature of the LCMS* together with the relevant CCM opinion, enjoined upon the Synod by Res. 8-32B (to be implemented by the President of the Synod), has been discussed in the President's Office. We note that the study must also involve the Council of Presidents, districts, circuits, colleges, universities and seminaries, as well as pastors and, presumably, congregations. Following the study, the Commission on Handbook, in consultation with the President and others, was to submit a proposal to clarify and affirm or amend Art. VII of the Constitution to the 2013 convention.

We note that the process here outlined is quite an ambitious undertaking. Given the press of concerns regarding the restructuring mandated by 2010 Res. 8-08A and the work necessary to establish a new administration, this task has been left incomplete. It is still on the list and is a priority for the next triennium. In the meantime, we commend the Synod to read C. F. W. Walther's *The Church and the Office of the Ministry* (CPH, 2012), affirmed in 2001 Res. 7-17A "To Affirm Synod's Official Position on Church and Ministry," as "the definitive statement under Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions of the

Synod's understanding on the subject of Church and Ministry," and "the official position of the LCMS."

Current International Mission and Partner Churches

During this past triennium, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been more ecumenically engaged than perhaps at any time in her history. In addition to ongoing work with our 34 partner churches, the LCMS maintained an active role in the International Lutheran Council (ILC) and held conversations with several Lutheran churches with whom we are not presently in fellowship, as well as conservative Anglicans and Roman Catholics, particularly in matters related to the public square and natural law. The LCMS has sponsored conferences with worldwide Lutheran Church leaders that collectively represent more than 20 million Lutherans worldwide. These conferences provide the forum to echo the call to Christ and His Gospel—that is, a call to repentance—so that the truth may be proclaimed and unity found in the confession of Christ Jesus.

Details of these activities can be found in the CTCR convention report. There are, however, some areas that merit attention here: world Lutheranism, the LCMS fellowship process, and other discussions domestic and international.

World Lutheranism

World Lutheranism is in the process of a seismic realignment, which creates tremendous opportunities and challenges. In 1951, Dr. Herman Sasse noted: "One must see the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) as the last organization of Protestant churches in which a memory of the Reformation is still alive." Since the decisions to support same-sex marriage and the ordination of practicing homosexuals by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and the Church of Sweden (CoS) in 2009, the memory of the Reformation in the Lutheran World Federation is in serious danger of extinction. Lutheran churches, particularly in Africa, that are members of the LWF and in fellowship with the ELCA and the CoS are seeking not only to preserve the memory of the Reformation but also to uphold the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. In the search for a mutual conversation of fellow Lutherans, many of these churches concerned about the unscriptural decisions made by the ELCA and CoS are seeking out the LCMS. This has propelled the Missouri Synod to be the most ecumenically engaged that she has been perhaps in her entire history. This is a tremendous opportunity not only for the Missouri Synod but also for world Lutheranism and the church at large.

Indicative of this trend was the momentous and difficult decision taken and the bold confession made earlier this year by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), the largest Lutheran church in Africa with over six million members. The EECMY made the decision to sever fellowship with the Church of Sweden and with the ELCA, which has been her historic partner for approximately a hundred years. The EECMY indicated that the CoS and the ELCA no longer teach the same Lutheran doctrine that the missionaries who came to Ethiopia a century ago taught. Other large African churches have noticed this action of the EECMY and are encouraged by her confession to remain steadfast to the Holy Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions. These churches also are encouraged by the confessional stand proclaimed by the Missouri Synod. Ecumenical Lutheranism offers mutual encouragement while proclaiming Christ crucified.

"Genuine Lutheranism is ecumenical Christianity," wrote Francis Pieper in 1930. He continues, "This ecumenical Lutheranism is the Lutheranism of Luther and the Lutheran Church in her Symbols. Luther powerfully inculcates the Christian duty to bear the weak in love and patience. . . . But Luther will not tolerate the weak making their weakness the source and norm of Christian doctrine." Truly

ecumenical Lutheranism boldly and clearly confesses both the Law and the Gospel to a world lost in sin. In this bold proclamation of the call of Jesus to both repentance and the forgiveness delivered by the Gospel, the Holy Spirit works by calling, gathering, and enlightening the whole Christian church on earth. As a result of the historic and unwavering confession of the Missouri Synod, world Lutherans and even Christians from other denominations desire to draw closer to the Missouri Synod. Worldwide, the Missouri Synod has a reputation for being both faithful and loving, yet unwavering in her doctrinal convictions. This fact has attracted many churches in Africa to desire conversation with the Missouri Synod in the face of an alternative that changes the Bible to fit societal norms. At the same time, we cannot take for granted the great blessing that the Lord has bestowed upon our church, but earnestly pray that we remain faithful and thankful for the gift of the Gospel of Jesus.

Many of these Lutheran churches are seeking what have been historic strengths of the Missouri Synod—a commitment to the inerrant Holy Scriptures and a desire to be faithful to the Lutheran Confessions. The number one request that comes to my office from international churches is for assistance in theological education. These churches recognize how the Lord has blessed the Missouri Synod with excellent theological education in the training provided by our two seminaries—Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. They are the best seminaries in the entire world at preparing men to be Lutheran pastors. The training of future church leaders at LCMS institutions is among the highest priorities of Lutheran churches in Africa and elsewhere, so that their churches will be well equipped to train pastors and evangelists in context.

LCMS Fellowship Process

The LCMS at the time of this writing has 34 partner churches. After the 2010 convention, Bylaws 3.9.5.2.2 (b–d) provide two ways in which a church body can be recognized in altar and pulpit fellowship, and one way to be recognized as a self-governing partner church. Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (b) has been the standard way toward recognition of fellowship. This process served the church well but was rather lengthy, taking a minimum of three years to complete and in some cases a decade or more. The Synod, recognizing the need for a more streamlined process, at the 2010 convention passed a resolution that created Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (c), which allows the President of the Synod as the Chief Ecumenical Officer to declare fellowship with a smaller or emerging church body after consultation with the Praesidium and approval of the CTCR. Over the past three years, this bylaw has been used twice to declare fellowship with the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) and with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia (ELCL). The 2013 convention, in accord with this bylaw, will be asked to “endorse” the fellowship declared. Per Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (d), which declares formal recognition of a mission start as a self-governing partner church, this convention will also be asked to recognize the Lutheran Church of Togo as a partner church. Several other Lutheran churches in Africa have inquired about fellowship and requested doctrinal discussions. Currently, the Synod is involved in discussions with churches from every continent, either for fellowship or partner church recognition. Should these discussions, our Lord willing, come to fruition; the Synod’s convention in 2016 will be tasked with considering additional church bodies for fellowship. We have been baptized for this moment—to be ecumenical Lutherans in the true sense!

Other Discussions Domestic and International

Over this past triennium, the Synod has engaged in discussions with church bodies with whom it is unlikely that fellowship will be

declared in the near term and perhaps not at all. Some may wonder why bother? Herman Sasse wrote that the concern of an ecumenical church is for the truth. “Thus ‘the call to unity,’ that is, to the one church of God, is the call to repentance, the call to Christ and his Gospel. The more earnestly this call is heard, the more earnestly the Christians of all confessions wrestle for the one truth of the Gospel, so much more will the hidden unity of the church of Christ come into view.” To talk to other Christians who are willing to discuss theology, doctrine, and practical matters of the church’s life in this world is missional because it is keeping the Lord’s Great Commission in Matthew 28, “... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” In the mutual conversation with Christians from other denominations, we have the opportunity to speak the truth in love and give bold witness to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

In these conversations with Roman Catholics, conservative Anglicans, and other Lutheran bodies within the United States, we have learned that those who hold to the scriptural view of natural law and morality are important friends in the public square, as society and the government is becoming increasingly hostile to historical, biblical Christianity. Although altar and pulpit fellowship is not a likely outcome of these discussions, we can cooperate with these churches particularly in the realm of defending the biblical view of marriage and family and in defending the constitutional right of religious freedom. These discussions serve more than the creation of goodwill. They also serve as a source of mutual encouragement in these dark last days before our Lord and Savior returns in glory.

Following the ELCA’s 2009 statement on human sexuality, the 2010 LCMS convention adopted Res. 3-03: “To Cooperate in Externals with Theological Integrity.” That LCMS convention action was in response to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly’s approval of opening ELCA ministries to gay and lesbian pastors and other professional workers living in committed same-sex relationships. The LCMS Praesidium, working with the CTCR, was given the task to develop the guidelines on cooperation with theological integrity. The Praesidium in consultation with the CTCR concluded that it would be possible for the Synod to continue to work with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran World Relief, and Lutheran Services of America. However, they also determined that it would not be possible for the Synod to continue to work cooperatively with the ELCA on a national (church-to-church) level in Lutheran Disaster Response, military chaplaincy, and institutional chaplaincy. Although it is regrettable that direct cooperation between the church bodies is no longer possible in these areas, it is necessary to maintain the integrity of the Scriptures and the position of the LCMS in an age where it is becoming more difficult to confess and speak publicly the historic Christian message.

After more than 50 years, mostly of silence, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) held informal discussions in late 2012. Although differences exist between the church bodies, the informal discussions demonstrated that there is a basis to explore further conversations between the churches. When WELS suspended fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1961, the president of WELS was charged with seeking opportunities to continue the conversation with the Missouri Synod. This convention will be asked to consider an overture to seek opportunities for further discussion with WELS.

Now is the time for us to be ecumenical Lutherans—that is, to be who we are and to confess and uphold the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions to the world. The Lord has baptized us for this moment! May He give us strength to answer this opportunity and help us to overcome the challenges.

Wittenberg Project

The Wittenberg Project is on track. A business plan has been enthusiastically accepted by LCEF. It is strong and carefully crafted. We know that the effort will be self-supporting once we restore the Old Latin School, located not 25 yards away from Luther's church in Wittenberg, Germany. As this report is made, we have \$1.3 million given or pledged. We will need gifts/pledges (three- to five-year commitments) nearing \$3 million to begin construction next January.

This project is significant for several reasons:

1. We will establish a stronger conservative Lutheran presence in the place where the Reformation was born and to which the whole Lutheran world still looks.
2. This presence is vital as more and more Lutheran churches worldwide seek to partner with the LCMS.
3. The educational and edifying programs offered will be a great blessing to thousands of LCMS students, pastors, and teachers, laypeople, members of our German partner church (SELK), and many others all over the world.

The following paragraphs are taken from the business plan. If you have questions, visit www.thewittenbergproject.org; or email David.Mahsman@lcms.org. If you would like information on building- and room-naming rights, contact Mark.Hofman@lcms.org. Let's get this done now!

- The Wittenberg Project is being developed by the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW), a German nonprofit corporation established in 2007 and owned by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Concordia Publishing House, and Germany's Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK). The ILSW also is a recognized service organization of the LCMS.
- The Wittenberg Project will offer a diverse menu of academic and non-academic options that will appeal to the needs and interests of a wide variety of people. The range of options will run from youth servant events to college and seminary courses (partnering with the CUS schools and two seminaries), to continuing education for church workers, to learning opportunities and pilgrimages for laypeople, to elder hostels, and the like.
- Our ministry center (the International Lutheran Welcome Center) will be located in the renovated Old Latin School, a building that originally was dedicated in 1564 and is located in the heart of Wittenberg's historic old town. There we will provide inexpensive group-friendly accommodations (which will include lodging) and the opportunity to learn, reflect, and/or study in a historic environment. In addition to being the venue for presenting our programs, this facility also will be available to other church-related groups, including LCMS and SELK schools, seminaries, and congregations, for use in presenting their own study programs, retreats, and conferences.
- The mission of the Wittenberg Project is to increase among those who participate in its programs knowledge of and appreciation for God's blessings through the Reformation of the 16th century. In so doing, it will seek to strengthen the faith of Christians and to introduce the Christian faith to non-Christians. The project will develop a presence in *Lutherstadt* Wittenberg that will attract students and visitors, promote confessional-Lutheran theology, and open doors to witness and mercy work in the community and surrounding area.
- Wittenberg, Germany, is the very place God chose for restoring the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Church and to the world. This is the place where He raised up reformers, most notably Dr. Martin Luther, who would boldly proclaim the truth of His Word even in the face of powerful opponents and the threat of death.
- Our mission will be accomplished through a Christian education and outreach center in Wittenberg that will be located in the town's Old Latin School (*Alte Lateinschule*). Sometimes also known locally as the "Altes Gymnasium," the Old Latin School is a historic building dedicated in 1564 and located just steps from St. Mary's Church (the *Stadtkirche*, or Town Church), the "mother church of the Reformation."

Our Great Demographic Challenge

The Missouri Synod has continued its 40-year numerical decline. I recommend that all of us study "‘Nones’ on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation," by The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. [http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious_Affiliation/Unaffiliated/NonesOnTheRise-full.pdf]

The Pew study documents the steady and quickening decline of mainline Christianity and also evangelicalism (the LCMS is somewhere in between). Thirty years ago, we had some 220,000 high school youth in the LCMS. Today, we have just less than half that number. The Pew study demonstrates that religious decline in America is concentrated particularly in demographic categories heavily represented by the LCMS. Anglo-Americans are having fewer children. People are waiting longer to get married. The study notes that among the WWII generation, only 1 in 16 Americans was not affiliated with a church. Today, the number is 1 in 5! And worse still, of those under age 30, one in three is unaffiliated; 90 percent of the unaffiliated have no interest in religious affiliation and are not seeking a church; 75 percent of the unaffiliated are opposed to the moral values on sexuality and marriage given by the Bible.

Several thoughts come to mind:

1. The "fields are ripe for the harvest." In a day and age when many denominations have lost their evangelical way, we have a message, a strong saving message of Christ.
2. The demographics are tough and getting tougher. But the demographics looked much worse about the time Paul was converted! And we have growing opportunities and successes by the grace of God among immigrant communities, where the demographics often are quite different.
3. Of the "unaffiliated," fully 25 percent have conservative values with respect to sexuality and marriage. And 10 percent *are* looking for a church! There is plenty of room for us to work! The Gospel is the "power of God unto salvation," even in the rockiest soil! We are baptized for *Witness*, for *Mercy*, and for *Life Together*.

Kingdom of the Left Issues

Many of you saw my testimony on Capitol Hill regarding the Health and Human Services contraceptives mandate (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=527spTZiwBU>). We viewed the mandate as a violation of religious freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The LCMS also won a Supreme Court case (*Hosanna-Tabor v. The EEOC*: <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/11pdf/10-553.pdf>). We are also struggling in many places with existing or impending legislation on sexuality and its effects on Lutheran adoption agencies, congregations, and so on. The IRS has increased its questioning of "ministerial exception" regarding our school teachers. I do not believe the tide of secularization in America will be turned back; however, as traditional Christians, we do need to have an aggressive "defense" against infringement on our First Amendment rights. To that end we are now pursuing a small but effective office in Washington DC, where we can partner with others (Alliance Defense Fund; Becket Fund; other like-minded church bodies, etc.) when appropriate, on issues the LCMS has clearly established positions. And we can make known those positions to our legislators. We will be nonpartisan. We will not produce voter lists or guides. We have appended a statement that we sponsored (see Appendix III of this *Convention Workbook*). Stay tuned.

Compassionate Action for Those Struggling with Same-Sex Attraction

It has become increasingly difficult to stand and oppose the advance of the homosexual agenda when I am well aware of the fact

that the LCMS has invested very little in actually reaching out to and caring for those individuals and families who are affected by same-sex attraction. I have appointed a task force of experts who are busy identifying the LCMS capacity that exists on this issue and who are also planning the future of a national consortium/coalition of care and ministry on this topic. Pray for its success! It's time for compassionate action.

National Offering

Every three years, LCMS households, congregations, and organizations are invited to participate in a synodwide ingathering of financial gifts called the National Offering. Culminating in a collection to be received in worship services during the 2013 convention in St. Louis, this triennium's offering gives participants five choices through which they can share Christ's forgiveness and mercy both at home and abroad. It also affords LCMS congregations and their members an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to our life together as the world's leading confessional Lutheran body.

For the 2013–2016 triennium, five gift designations cover a range of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* efforts, all of which happen only with broad support from LCMS congregations and households. *Baptized for This Moment*, you are free to join with your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in sharing His forgiveness and mercy in a world desperately in need of it. Please join with others in support of this triennium's National Offering. The five National Offering designations are as follows:

- Together as Synod
- Global Mission
- Lutheran Malaria Initiative
- The Joint Seminary Fund
- Global Seminary Initiative

Worldwide KFUE: The Messenger of Good News

Our new branding ("Worldwide KFUE: The Messenger of Good News!") expresses the mission of our Synod's radio station to expand to a worldwide audience the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and resurrected for the forgiveness of sins. With the Lord's blessing, this mission continues to be met. We like to say that "Worldwide KFUE is on the move!" We are expanding in the following areas.

New Listeners

Through intentional efforts (weekly church bulletins and *HisTime* congregational participation), we are seeking to expand beyond our St. Louis area base on AM 850 to the rest of the Synod and to the world. New technologies allow us to do this: iPhone and Android phone apps (over 5,000 users), iPod casts, and streaming through such devices as laptop computers, iPads, WiFi radios, and even now some TVs with WiFi radio apps. This allows listeners all over the world to listen live to our streams and archive much of our programming on demand. All of this has blessed Worldwide KFUE with increased listener analytics. They show that in an average month we have listeners from all fifty states and the District of Columbia, as well as 86 countries, including Egypt, Brazil, Argentina, China, India, Nigeria, Kenya, Iraq, Canada, and many more. Worldwide KFUE reaches all continents with the Good News of Jesus Christ, and these numbers are increasing!

New Programs

As we reach outside the St. Louis area, our program schedule continues to meet the needs of all demographics, covering the gamut of our church body, our country, and our world. To date, we have added four new programs produced and originating from KFUE:

- *HisTime*: Our morning program revolving around the Church Year, featuring daily Bible studies, interviews, news, and a Matins worship service.
- *Faith 'n' Family*: Lutheran family experts help all of us with our families under attack from so many angles these days.
- *BookTalk*: Interviews and conversations with the best Christian authors.
- *WLN (World Lutheran News) Digest and the Minute*: Provides a reliable source for significant, timely news for the Lutherans worldwide.

These additions to our existing program lineup, and some others now in development for high school and college listeners, are growing our listener base. Our musical library has undergone major purging, and music purchases permit the oldest and most reliable stream of classical and sacred music to be streamed 24/7 at kfuo.org and classic99.com.

New Underwriters

We are "listener supported" and so depend on the kind and generous gifts of listeners as well as our "underwriters." This group of organizations has been expanding as they see KFUE expand, at the time of this writing including Mid-American Coaches, Children's Concern Society, Concordia University Wisconsin, Lutheran Senior Services, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri, Reliable Heating & Cooling, and Thrivent Financial. By the time you read this report, many others will likely be joining the KFUE team.

New Studios

The historic studios formally located on the St. Louis Seminary campus were in need of extensive and prohibitively expensive renovation. Further, the daily need to interview Synod staff as well as guests to the International Center led to the building of the new, beautiful studio complex there. These new facilities are also extremely functional, allowing Worldwide KFUE to expand our mission—to be "The Messenger of Good News!"

SMP Task Force

Here following is a letter regarding the work and report of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Task Force. In Appendix IV elsewhere in this *Convention Workbook*, you will have opportunity to read the report provided by the task force, as also provided to the LCMS Council of Presidents and the two LCMS seminaries. I commend this report to your reading so that as this matter is discussed at the convention, you may have access to a number of facts about the program. I agree with the thrust of the report. The program fills an important need for specific situations, but the program also needs to comport more narrowly with its intended purposes.

Wednesday of Lent III, AD 2013
March 6, 2013

Dear Delegates and Members of the Synod,

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus.

In January 2012, I asked three very competent individuals to serve on a task force to provide information and a thorough evaluation of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program at our two seminaries. The members of the task force are Rev. Dr. Raymond Hartwig (Secretary of the Synod, and thus very knowledgeable about the history of convention action on this issue and related issues); Rev. Randy Golter (former District President of the Rocky Mountain District and now executive director of the Synod's Office of International Mission,

with significant experience managing the SMP program from a district president's perspective and a keen interest in mission); and Rev. Timothy Mech (who brought invaluable experience as an SMP mentor). Rev. Dr. Glen Thomas, executive director of the Synod's Office of Pastoral Education, provided a great deal of staff assistance.

On the first page of the report you will find the questions I originally posed to this working group. The report is thorough and well-documented. The conclusion of the report is that we need the flexibility that the SMP program provides but must take some care to keep it focused on "specific ministry" contexts. The report provides honest critique and praise for the program by all parties involved. There are surprises along the way and many suggestions for improvement.

My main concern in forming the task force was that the SMP numbers had risen so dramatically in a brief period that I wondered about the future ability to sustain residential seminary education. (The report notes that in 2011 the ratio of residential to SMP students was 4 to 1 at Fort Wayne and 3.1 to 1 at St. Louis.) I was also concerned with the potentially very high percentage of the pastorate that would eventually not have had the benefit of a full residential education and its many blessings. These concerns remain. However, it is clear that there are contexts well served by the program and its dedicated students and graduates.

This will continue to be a challenging issue. Please give your careful attention to the report. I hope we can find a middle road that we can all affirm so that we can have the flexibility to place men in situations where the Gospel might not otherwise be delivered, or the church nurtured and grown, and still remain overwhelmingly committed to the fine manner of seminary education which has marked our entire history with such blessings for the sake of the Gospel all over the world.

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
President

R1-7-CMO

Chief Mission Officer

Preface

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has the privilege of serving Christ at a time of historic opportunity and unique challenges. The Synod is well equipped to minister in this time of opportunity and challenge, and restructuring has helped prepare our church for mission and ministry in this changing environment. The Synod is also assisted by past convention deliberations, including the adoption of the LCMS Mission Statement:

In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and world. [Adopted by the 1995 convention]

And the program areas of Synod, under the supervision of the Chief Mission Officer, establish their mission within the context of the LCMS mission, as follows:

The program areas of the Synod's national office will synchronize strategic internal ministry capabilities and coordinate with the agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations of the Synod in order to enhance efforts and activities that make known the love of Christ throughout the world.

Furthermore, St. Paul encourages us to work as one in mission that we may grow together in the bond of Christian love:

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph. 4:15–16)

Finally, the Lutheran Confessions affirm this work of grace, saying:

That we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. (AC V)

Scope

The scope of this report includes activities in the Office of National Mission (ONM), the Office of International Mission (OIM), the area of Pastoral Education (PE), Mission Advancement (MA), and Communications (COMM) during the last triennium. These program areas were organized and restructured under the supervision of the Office of the President in accord with the 2010 convention resolutions in order to enhance mission effectiveness, efficiency, and collaboration.

Executive Summary

The program areas began working under the new structure on July 1, 2011, per the resolutions of the 2010 convention. Minor internal programmatic organizational adjustments will continue as functions evolve and collaboration among the program operational areas matures.

Other than restructuring, Unit Executive Directors (UEs) developed three common activities: mission synchronization, multiyear planning cycles, and budget development and execution. Coordinating these three activities among the executives enhanced overall operational efficiency and provided a means to measure mission and mission support effectiveness.

The Synod adopted the following mission statement during the 1995 convention: "In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and world." Developing values, priorities, goals, and vision continues in congruence with the Synod's mission and objectives.

In order to accomplish this Synod-wide mission, corporate Synod began to synchronize and coordinate the various programs and program support activities by identifying five operational lines of ministry: mission, mercy, information, advancement, and education. These five lines of operation were synchronized within the scope of the Synod's mission statement, objectives, values, and priorities.

The Synod's mission statement above provides unity of purpose and work for our church in order that we may more effectively nurture the faithful and reach the lost for Christ. Furthermore, the objectives in Art. III of the Constitution articulate the essentials of the mission. Values and priorities shape cultural identity and provide a focus for ministry and resources.

Values

The Scriptures and the Confessions have served the Lutheran Church well throughout the centuries. They encourage unity among the faithful, identify ecumenical foci, norm catechetical instruction, and shape practice. Upon them the church has stood against heresy, secular attack, and internal strife; and from them enduring values were identified.

Values articulate core cultural identity, and first among them is fidelity. Be faithful to the Scriptures and the Confessions of the church. The LCMS remains Lutheran in teaching and practice. The same principles that brought new freedom to the church of the Reformation continue to bring spiritual liberty and freedom today.

1. Fidelity. Faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures and to the Confessions continues to mark the Synod as a corporate confessor of the one true faith and clearly identifies the Synod as a witness to the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Quality. Quality accompanies faithfulness. As St. Paul says, “Let us do all things as unto the Lord.” Excellence is a response to the Lord’s call. It is integral to the Synod’s witness. Parishioners deserve the best pastors, teachers, deaconesses—every rostered worker, and they depend on them to provide for their spiritual well-being. These called servants daily nurture men and women in the midst of spiritual battle. Nothing short of excellence will do.

3. Credibility. Credibility is defined as “the ability to inspire belief or trust.” Mission, vision, planning, and resource management create credibility. Applying planning objectives and goals to a multiyear plan provides a clearer way to accomplish mission goals for rostered workers, congregations, and the entire Synod. Credibility fosters confidence among the Synod’s members, which in turn fosters assurance among the laity. Credibility ultimately creates an environment of mission boldness.

4. Sustainability. Given fiscal realities, every program must stand the test of sustainability. The Synod has the privilege of reaching the lost for Christ. Legacy partners have stood the test of time, but they require ongoing engagement. Partner churches, some the direct result of LCMS mission efforts, now reach many for the Kingdom throughout the world. Sustaining these partner relationships is vital to global engagement.

5. Stability. Congregations manifest stability in the midst of an ever-changing cultural environment. Families, communities, and nations morph over time. In the midst of familial, community, and national transformation, God provides stability by means of the Church.

Fidelity, quality, credibility, sustainability, and stability work together to enhance discipleship, and discipleship is a Synod-wide responsibility.

Priorities

As values shape the cultural environment for planning, so priorities provide a way to implement those activities that most effectively engage the church in the world via witness, mercy, and life together. These are the mission planning priorities:

1. Plant, sustain, and revitalize churches. Foremost among mission priorities is planting, sustaining, and revitalizing a global network of spiritually healthy, vibrant, and orthodox Lutheran congregations and international partners committed to reaching the lost, nurturing disciples, and bearing witness through Word and Sacrament to the Lord and Savior of the Church, Jesus Christ.

2. Expand and enhance theological education. Foreign and domestic pastoral education is central to the ministry of congregations, church partners, and the Synod. The Synod intends to enhance institutional instruction, pastoral mentoring, and ongoing vocational training as they seek to shape the next generation of church leaders.

3. Perform mercy work in proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry. The LCMS mission statement includes reaching people with the Gospel, baptizing, and catechizing them into the faith. It also provides for the church’s response to a world that often suffers starvation, sickness, homelessness, and a variety of natural and man-made disasters. Response to such suffering is part and parcel of the Christian life; therefore, it must find root in Word and Sacrament that it may alleviate not only human suffering but also address the very real spiritual suffering that leaves the world in sin, death, and darkness. These acts of mercy must be in proximity to Word and Sacrament so that they may always have reference in the Church and her presence in the world.

4. Collaborate with the Synod’s members and partners. The Synod will collaborate with members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness. Strategic partners in ministry are essential to reaching all people, all nations, and all cultures for Christ; therefore, the LCMS engages her international church partners to formulate a coordinated, strategic plan to fulfill the Lord’s mandate to “make disciples” (Matt. 28:19–20). Coordinating with these partners provides for more effective employment of full-time and part-time missionaries. By formulating a synchronized global strategy, regional partners are able to better predict LCMS involvement and support, and they are also able to identify targeted needs for local and regional engagement.

5. Nurturing church workers. Nurturing pastors, missionaries, and professional workers to promote spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being is essential to the health of the Synod. Resilient rostered leaders are more likely to produce healthy, resilient congregations. This cadre of called servants requires nurture and a commitment to enhance their own spiritual lives as they shepherd those in their care.

6. Enhance elementary, secondary, tertiary education, and youth ministry. Youth live in a world opposed to Christianity and are regularly exposed to philosophical and religious disinformation. As the church of tomorrow, they deserve the church’s fullest attention and care; therefore, the final priority is to enhance elementary, secondary, tertiary education, and youth ministry.

Mission planners employed these six priorities to link available resources with activities deemed most relevant to achieving the mandates provided in the Synod’s mission statement. Efficiencies are improving as these values and priorities are integrated in mission planning and execution. First among the processes was the development of mission synchronization—that is, aligning the activities of the various program activities with the Synod’s mission statement, values, and priorities. As this ability grows, greater overall effectiveness will result.

Mission and program support leaders are transitioning to multiyear planning cycles. The goal is a consistent five-year plan that identifies personnel and project requirements. These plans will enable more effective personnel recruitment and enhance fiscal projections.

Closely related to the planning cycle is the budgeting process. Restructuring created a new paradigm for planning and executing the budget. As unit executives develop multiyear plans, they are able to coordinate, synchronize, and prioritize their revenue requirements with other programs; furthermore, this enhances collaboration with partners and other corporate entities (entities and partners such as CPH, LCEF, LCMS Foundation, CPS, LWML, and LHM).

These various methods are all subject to our Lord’s blessing and leading; we plan, but God gives the increase. God gives us wisdom and resources to nurture and extend His kingdom, and by His grace, the Church shall prevail. We pray for an abundant harvest.

Office of National Mission (ONM)—Unit Executive Director, Rev. J. Bart Day

ONM has a broad scope of responsibilities that requires extraordinary ethnic, cultural, and theological acumen. Rev. Bart Day, Unit Executive, created three broad areas of ministry in order to address ministry venues. They are rural/small town, suburban, and urban/inner city. Within these three ministry environments, ONM encourages and supports various mission and mercy activities.

ONM also provides ministry support to assist the functional and enduring ministry requirements of local congregations, schools, and districts. These activities include, but are not limited to worship, stewardship, evangelism, health and life issues, disaster response, youth ministry, school leadership enhancement instruction, and deaconess ministries.

ONM continues to grow relationships with recognized service organizations (RSOs) who provide valuable mission and mercy

ministries in support of the Synod's mission and objectives. These RSOs are instrumental in meeting the needs of a variety of unique and diverse ministries that enhance the Synod's spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

As ONM matures in its relationships among the Synod's stakeholders, it will seek to assist as mission and mercy emerge in an ever-changing culture. ONM is posturing to engage the world with God's grace and mercy.

Office of International Mission (OIM)—Unit Executive Director, Rev. Randall Golter

The Office of International Mission has a vast area of responsibility—the world. More than 7 billion people now inhabit planet Earth, and approximately one-third identify themselves as Christians. Of that one-third, about 70 million identify themselves as Lutherans. Of those 70 million, approximately 2.3 million identify themselves as LCMS members. How can so few make a difference in such a large world?

When Synod restructured, it created the Office of International Mission. This new organization has the responsibility to make that difference on behalf of the Synod in the international arena with domestic and international partners. In order to accomplish this most effectively, OIM divides the world into five regions: Eurasia, Latin America, Southern Asia and Oceania, Africa, and Asia Pacific. Regional directors oversee the Synod's mission work in their assigned regions of responsibility.

Currently, 63 career missionaries and 46 Globally Engaged for Outreach (GEO) men and women serve on the mission field. They are funded through networks of donors—districts, congregations, and individual donors—and are referred to as Network Supported Missionaries (NSM). This funding paradigm has been remarkably successful and continues to grow a network of mission partners dedicated to sharing their time, talents, and treasure.

Mission work incorporates witness, mercy, and life together activities. These activities include preaching, teaching, pastoral care, human care, church worker advocacy, church planting, theological instruction, partner church relations, mission advancement, and a variety of oversight responsibilities such as strategic planning and budget preparation.

Opportunities await our Synod's mission efforts. These gifted workers toiling in the fields faithfully proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They covet your prayers and support. May God grant a bountiful harvest.

Pastoral Education (PE)—Unit Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Glen Thomas

The scope of pastoral education addresses the development of candidates and pastors from enrollment in one of Synod's universities, through seminary education, to post-seminary graduation into the parish. The Synod's seminaries continue to provide outstanding instruction for men preparing for the ministry, and they bear the burden of recruiting, teaching, and mentoring qualified candidates. This is an enormous responsibility as the cost of education continues to rise and as congregations expect to receive talented candidates fully prepared for ministry in a variety of different venues.

As the number of candidates declines within our Concordia University System, more candidates are seeking admission from less traditional pre-seminary venues. Furthermore, undergraduate costs continue to rise, creating a net effect of greater graduate indebtedness. The Synod and the seminaries are well aware of these challenges and the necessary requirements to prepare the next generation for ministry. Together, the Synod can and will continue to prepare well-qualified men for ministry.

Mission Advancement (MA)—Unit Executive Director, Mr. Mark Hofman

Mission Advancement (MA) is charged with fund development on behalf of the Synod, and following restructuring was consolidated into a single department in order to accomplish this task more effectively and efficiently. As a result, advancement personnel from various program areas were assigned to MA. The consolidation prompted internal reorganization and assigning roles, duties, and responsibilities within four functional areas: major donor and district relationships, direct response (mail, telephone, e-mail and web giving), campaigns and special projects, and missionary support (including Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa).

MA's responsibilities include a wide variety of development activities in support of International and National Missions, the Office of the President, and a variety of projects in support of Synod's congregations, districts, schools, and other development activities and campaigns as directed by the Synod in convention. MA incorporates all available methods, resources, and venues to connect donors with appropriate ministry opportunities designed to help the donor accomplish his or her own charitable goals and objectives (a symmetrical fund-raising paradigm).

MA's incorporation of proven fund-raising techniques and methodologies is improving relationships with donors, the church, and gift recipients, contributing to more favorable outcomes for all stakeholders. As an example, MA began publishing *Lutherans Engage the World* in order to tell the mission and mercy stories about the work that donors support. This, along with numerous other innovations, will enhance the Synod's ability to make known the love of Christ throughout the world.

Communications (COMM)—Unit Executive Director, Mr. David Strand

Communications (COMM) also went through reorganization as a result of restructuring. Communications personnel from various program areas consolidated into one entity under a unit executive director and are responsible for the official publications of the Synod—*Reporter* and *The Lutheran Witness*.

COMM continues to develop various platforms by which to engage the church. These platforms include print, video, social media, digital publications, and web-based tools. Communications methods, technology, and means rapidly evolve, and COMM must engage the Synod and the public through innovative change and adaptation to the information evolution. This, in itself, requires significant skills, imagination, funding, and work, and is absolutely necessary to keep the Synod informed and aware.

In order to accomplish their tasks, COMM is divided into four divisions: News and Information, comprising the Synod's official periodicals, the news bureau and e-news delivery systems, graphic design and layout, and an array of other print material; Integrated Communications, comprising public and media relations, social media, advertising and marketing, business plans and rollouts, ministry promotion, special events, and the Church Information Center; Internet, comprising the look, feel, content, and functionality of the LCMS Web site and many other sites and blogs within the Synod; and Digital Media, comprising video and photography.

COMM will meet future challenges through collaboration and innovation. Constrained resources—time, talent, and treasure—are the constant adversaries of communications successes; yet, these same adversaries can, and do, motivate the communications team. They continue to “up their game” with *The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter*, and they will do likewise as they tackle the ever-changing domains and technologies of communications. God has given the Church the responsibility to nurture the faithful and reach those yet

outside the Kingdom. May He use these communications capabilities to enhance His work through the Church.

Full Report

The Office of National Mission

The Office of National Mission will enliven, equip, coordinate, and engage with domestic congregations, schools, districts, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations in order to enhance their local and regional missions and ministries.

The last triennium has brought joy and challenges as the newly established Office of National Mission (ONM) has been created to support districts and congregations of our Synod. Bringing together various domestic ministries from nearly every previous program area of the LCMS, ONM's purpose is to enliven, equip, coordinate, and engage domestic congregations, districts, and recognized service organizations in order to enhance their local and regional missions and ministries.

Flowing out of the values and mission priorities of the Synod, ONM is working to identify and formulate a variety of ways to strengthen, renew, revitalize, and transform the congregations, schools, and workers of the LCMS through the life of Christ crucified and risen in His Means of Grace.

- ONM will strengthen faith through fostering growth in the way God's Word has free course in our congregations and homes (strengthening preaching, teaching, and the family altar).
- ONM will strengthen love through fostering growth in ministries of mercy (local, regional, and national) flowing from the gifts received at font, pulpit, and altar.
- ONM will strengthen hope through fostering growth in partnerships in the Gospel that help to clearly confess Christ.
- ONM will strengthen workers through fostering intentional care of body, soul, and relationships.
- ONM will strengthen schools through fostering renewed clarity and commitment to the mission of Lutheran education.
- ONM will strengthen youth work through fostering in our young people a culture shaped by the Lutheran values of devotion to the means of grace, vigorous service to the neighbor, and providing our young people a sturdy apologetic for the faith.
- ONM will strengthen congregations through fostering a faithful Lutheran approach to confessing Christ to the neighbor and to planting daughter congregations.

It has taken the better part of a triennium to pull all of the pieces together in an organized and effective way. Much energy and efforts have gone into structuring ONM in a way that will be most helpful to the church. Many conversations, formal and informal, with key stakeholders have taken place. These conversations have given clear direction to ONM in how they are to relate to districts and congregations to support and strengthen their work. Our shared collaborative work will do great things. It is especially exciting to have all of our Synod's assets for domestic work collaborating for the sake of districts and congregations. This is the most critical change and benefit of the new structure. For the first time, all of the domestic ministries are connected and working together.

The following brief ministry reports reflect some of the major work done within ONM. A few things will be noticeably absent below. ONM is still working in conjunction with the Black Clergy Caucus to identify a Director of Black Ministry. Currently, Dr. Frazier Odom is serving on an interim basis so that work continues with a special eye toward the Black Convocation scheduled for the summer of 2014.

Rev. Wayne Knolhoff, Director of Stewardship, accepted a position at the St. Louis seminary, leaving a vacancy. ONM is currently evaluating how best to support the work of stewardship in collaboration with other Synod partners. Complete updates of the Stewardship

Manual, along with other new stewardship resources, are scheduled for release in the coming months.

Following the Hispanic Convocation in 2012, dialogue has continued between ONM and the convention's elected officials, with the goal of creating a Memorandum of Agreement to clearly outline and identify ONM's support for Latino ministry in the LCMS.

ONM also continues to support the work of several task forces funded through special grants: Same Sex Attraction, Domestic Violence, and Disability. These task forces are producing materials that will be shared throughout the church.

Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry began the triennium by hosting the twelfth National LCMS Youth Gathering, "We Believe," held in New Orleans, Louisiana, with 22,250 youth and adults participating in the event. An additional 2,500 programmers, planners, and volunteers provided support service. Planning for the 2013 Gathering in San Antonio, Texas, is well underway.

The Teen Leadership Initiative of Lutheran Youth Fellowship provided training for teens in three crucial areas: 2011—"Teens Leading Teens" focused on nurturing basic leadership skills; 2012—"Teens Answering Teens" was an apologetics course that focused on helping teens answer their peers' questions about God, faith, and life; 2013—"Teens Reaching Teens" provided outreach training for teens to their peers. A basic principle of the Initiative is to provide training to teens which they can replicate with their peers.

Leadership training for adults included the National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference, July 2012, in San Antonio, with 225 participating. The Annual Youth Ministry Symposium for professional youth workers dealt with the National Study of Youth and Religion in 2011, theology for youth ministry in 2012, and intergenerational youth ministry in 2013.

Servant events, modeling the Synod's emphasis on mercy work, attracted more than 2,000 youth and adults each year of the triennium. Resource development included continued monthly publication of theSource online programmatic resource; the E-Bulletin, updating what's happening in the world of teens; the Young Adult Web site targeting a post-high school audience; and support for a renewed campus ministry effort in the Synod called "LCMS U."

School Ministry

Leadership development has been the focus of School Ministry during the last triennium. Strong leadership by the administrators of Lutheran schools helps a school be "A School of Choice" in its community. Several programs and initiatives have helped to focus on leadership development.

National Lutheran School Accreditation and related programs and efforts continue to be a strong program within the Synod:

- 655 Lutheran schools accredited
- The Exemplary School program focusing on "Best Practices"
- "Best Practice" Webinars shared with Lutheran schools
- "Standards" rewritten to focus on 21st-century learning

School Leadership and Development (SLED) continues to be one of the most requested programs that School Ministry provides. SLED is currently in its 15th year of operation, training future principals for early childhood through high school administration. Over 40 percent of those trained in the SLED program are currently serving as administrators in Lutheran schools. Eighty-five candidates successfully completed the SLED program during the last triennium.

The program "Funding Academy" was developed and shared to help administrators become better financial leaders for their schools. Funding Academy I helped administrators learn how to figure per-pupil costs, set budgets, and fill empty seats. It was so successful

that Funding Academy II and III have been set in motion. Funding Academy III is a partnership with Concordia Plan Services, focusing on the care of workers.

“Sandals to Sneakers” was a successful children’s ministry conference held in Orange, California, and co-sponsored by the Pacific Southwest District.

Rural and Small Town Mission (RSTM)

LCMS Rural and Small Town Mission (RSTM) understands that many rural and small town congregations suffer from a lack of hope, a lack of resources that are in tune with the unique culture of the rural and small town setting, and a lack of training that addresses needs of partnership ministry, revitalization, and leadership development. RSTM is aware that these needs are widespread and felt across the United States. Through extensive research RSTM has discovered that more than 3,000 of the 6,000 congregations in the LCMS can be considered rural. Of those, more than 800 LCMS congregations are in multipoint arrangements. The goal is to address these congregations’ needs by providing encouragement through training and resources. Judging by attendee evaluations of events, the eleven 2012 Engaging Rural Communities events and the 2012 RSTM National Conference averaged an 80 percent approval rating. RSTM also provides training through free monthly webinars on a variety of topics. Communication is provided through monthly e-news and printed quarterly newsletters, an active and growing Facebook page, and a Web site.

RSTM efforts moving forward are directed toward helping healthy congregations find strategies and funding models for small town church planting. When congregations are provided with multipoint ministry and partnership models and guidance from subject matter experts, they will find a multitude of new ways to serve God and their communities together. RSTM will offer training on how to address the unique needs of staffing, distance, use of properties, governance, scheduling, ministry priorities, and the relationships of congregations (based on size and budget) in rural and small town settings, allowing congregations to reach out more effectively in mission.

Urban and Inner City Mission (UICM)

Urban and Inner City Mission (UICM) is a new ministry organized in the spring of 2012 under the auspices of the Office of National Mission, intentionally focused on Gospel work among LCMS ministries situated in the cities and urban areas. The urban sectors have radically changed from as recently as 10 years ago, diversifying, growing rapidly, and presenting challenges to safety, security, and the delivery of needed human services for their inhabitants.

An overabundance of social problems, moral temptations, and the assault on human dignity present the urban church with opportunities to be creative and spontaneous in various and urgent ways for revealing the unseen Christ as the divine life source and hope for eternity with God. UICM seeks to advance the revitalization of LCMS urban and ethnic ministries, to understand the core issues, and to tackle them without fear by relying upon the unyielding grasp of our loving Savior Jesus Christ to preserve His message and His people as they shed His light of grace upon people living in the darkness of sin and unbelief.

UICM models servant leadership and facilitates changing membership to discipleship through lifelong learning and individual active engagement in outreach ministry. Discipleship can be catalyzed by UICM-assisted urban mission learning (and serving) clusters, partnering with districts for conferences, seminars, and webinars that build up Lutheran Christian faith, promote innovative best practices nationally, and result in sustainable new missions.

Witness and Outreach

One of the goals of the Synod’s reorganization was to provide support, services, and opportunities for God’s redeemed people to

participate more closely with districts in providing witness/outreach training to congregations.

The mission-critical work of “The 72” has been strengthened by working more closely with the districts to do their domestic work of witness/outreach. The underlying focus of all efforts has been to proclaim the Gospel while being good stewards of limited resources and to contain the vital ministry of The 72. To accomplish this:

- 51 volunteers, certified and available to partner with congregations
- partnership agreements with 20 districts
- 11 field representatives for The 72 who cultivate district-recommended congregations for witness/outreach training
- 34 congregations received training for witness/outreach
- 19 congregations are being cultivated for future witness/outreach training assignments
- 3,502 members of congregations were equipped for witness/outreach
- 2 team member training events for certification to serve congregations for witness/outreach
- 203 congregations served, from all 35 districts of the Synod

An upcoming summit is being planned for 72 field representatives and district mission execs for cultivating new witness/outreach opportunities.

Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs)

The granting of recognized service organization status by the Synod signifies that a service organization, while independent of the Synod, fosters the mission and ministry of the church, engages in program activity that is in harmony with the programs of the boards of the Synod, and respects and does not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod (Bylaw 6.2.1).

The restructuring of the Synod has provided clearer oversight of RSOs under the Office of National Mission. This structure now requires all RSOs to adhere to the same policies and requirements in order to receive RSO status. Currently, 167 RSOs provide a diversity of services from beginning to end of life. These organizations foster the mission and ministry of the LCMS while providing acts of mercy, witness, and life together.

RSOs have been blessed with the opportunity to diligently network and resource with the other ministry areas under ONM. They are becoming more involved with our youth and school ministry; rural/small town, inner city and ethnic ministry; and also the ministry of The 72. Resources are shared between congregations and RSOs through these ONM ministry areas. Some RSOs have also benefitted from consulting with other RSOs, which has enabled them to address needs in their organizations and boards, including leadership skills.

Faith-based organizations are facing challenges imposed on them by state and federal laws that infringe on their religious freedoms. These challenges include the areas of same-sex-couple adoptions of children, same-sex-couple habitation requirements for facilities for the aging, and concerns associated with euthanasia.

Worship

The position Director, Worship under the Office of National Mission was filled in May 2012 by Pastor William Weedon. Throughout the past triennium, Worship has continued to provide resources for the congregations and workers of the Synod, including the highly popular *LetUsPray* and *Lectionary Summaries*. Beginning in January 2013, Worship added a one-year lectionary version of *LetUsPray*.

Worship also introduced *Unwrapping the Gifts*, a bi-monthly e-zine that seeks to help pastors, musicians, and others charged with worship leadership in their congregations “unwrap” the many gifts and treasures of our rich and vibrant worship tradition by tapping

those who regularly practice excellence in worship to share their insights.

Also in January 2013, Worship sponsored a hymnwriters conference. Of the 71 applicants, 30 participants were chosen in a blind evaluation to attend for the strengthening of their hymnwriting skills and exploring ways to offer the fruit of their labors to the Church.

Director Weedon also provided consultation for a number of parishes experiencing worship difficulties, including onsite seminars. He spoke at several conferences (including two pastoral conferences). He has worked with other facets of ONM in coordinating the provision of orders of worship for such things as National Lutheran Schools Week, the National Youth Gathering, and the Unwrapped Campus Ministry conference in January 2013 (for which he also served as chaplain and a sectional leader). He provided catechetical training in the Synod's OIM missionary orientation, and provided worship materials and served as chaplain for the CTCR's International Conference on Confessional Leadership in Peachtree City, Georgia (October/November 2012).

Worship is currently planning for the synodwide Institute on Liturgy, Preaching, and Church Music to be held at Concordia Nebraska, July 28–31, 2014.

Deaconess Ministry

ONM Mercy Operations encourages and supports deaconess ministry—women who are called and commissioned by the church to provide diaconal care. Deaconesses serve through works of mercy, spiritual care, and teaching the faith while focusing on Word and Sacrament. Echoing “Baptized into Christ,” deaconesses serve as a channel for love and compassion within the Synod and its partner churches.

The Director, Deaconess Ministry engages and informs the Synod's districts, congregations, and partner church bodies of the Synod's work of mercy, thus increasing the awareness of diaconal needs and deaconess ministry of LCMS Mercy programs. In addition, the position serves as a catalyst in identifying, directing, and supporting educational and diaconal needs both domestic and worldwide. The ministry promotes deaconesses and deaconess ministry through different forms of media and speaking engagements. Over the past decade and a half, Mercy Operations has awarded \$300,000 in grants to enhance deaconess programs supporting scholarships and internships. Additional scholarships have been provided for deaconesses and students to take part in theological conferences.

The Synod is particularly blessed with a strong and growing corps of women who have been theologically trained and who, like the women of old, continue to work hard, labor in the Lord's harvest fields, and serve alongside the office of pastor, helping and supporting the office by using their gifts to bless and serve others.

Disaster Response

LCMS Disaster Response is focused on sharing moments of mercy that change lives for an eternity through ministry done in close proximity to Word and Sacrament. Congregation-based disaster response and relief involves working in a collaborative, cooperative, and coordinated manner with LCMS districts, congregations, worldwide partner churches, and other faith-based groups as well as governmental and nongovernmental agencies to meet the relief and recovery needs of local communities affected by disasters and tragedy.

Over the past triennium, LCMS Disaster Response actively engaged nationally with responses to the massive flooding and/or tornados in South Dakota, North Dakota, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Indiana, and Missouri, as well as an extensive ongoing response to the widespread destruction caused by Superstorm Sandy along the entire Eastern Seaboard of the United States. LCMS

Disaster Response staff were also on scene offering assistance and pastoral care following the tragic events in Newtown, Connecticut.

Internationally, LCMS Disaster Response has engaged in numerous disaster relief and recovery efforts worldwide, with the five major emphases providing aid and assistance in the Philippines, Japan, Haiti, Chile, and New Zealand. Other regions around the world also received financial or technical assistance (Thailand, Cambodia, Kenya, DR Congo, Liberia, India, Guatemala, Cuba, Panama, and Mexico).

In support of these efforts, LCMS Disaster Response provides appropriate training in disaster preparedness and volunteering to congregations, districts, regional areas, and partner churches. Backed by the donors of the LCMS, over \$20 million in aid and assistance were provided to those in need during this triennium.

Domestic Grants

Domestic grants are awarded to congregations, districts, Synod agencies, and recognized service organizations to develop or expand projects that reach out in communities and address unmet human needs while sharing the Gospel message and proclaiming Jesus Christ as the world's Savior. During the last triennium, ONM:

- Awarded 107 domestic grants totaling \$788,067 to benefit projects in 22 districts throughout the U.S. These grants assisted food pantries, after-school programs, immigrant assistance programs, community development, health and wellness programs, counseling, chaplaincy, elder care programs, and transitional care, among others.
- Awarded a total of 105 domestic disaster grants totaling over \$2.7 million for work in 19 districts. The majority of these grants aided US congregations involved with Haiti earthquake relief projects, assisted in recovery work related to the floods in Minot, North Dakota, and provided emergency assistance and initial recovery support to districts and congregations affected by Superstorm Sandy. Disaster grants also helped those affected by tornadoes (Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, and Ohio), Hurricanes Irene and Isaac (Southern states and Eastern Seaboard states), wildfires in Texas, and other local disasters.
- Awarded Soldiers of the Cross grants totaling \$375,000 to 27 districts, 11 congregations, and the two seminaries, providing short-term assistance to church workers experiencing a financial crisis due to unexpected situations.
- Awarded Veterans of the Cross grants through our partnership with Concordia Plan Services of over \$1,350,000 to support retired church workers and their spouses in financial need.
- Provided core budget support to inter-Lutheran partners Lutheran Services in America (\$545,875) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (\$525,625). In addition, four grants were awarded to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service totaling \$80,390 to assist Haiti refugees following the 2010 Haiti earthquake and to develop resources for LCMS congregations interested in providing assistance in the areas of detention visitation, human trafficking, and other immigration issues. The LCMS also provided \$10,000 as a sponsor of the Lutheran Services in America 2011 Annual Conference.

Specialized Pastoral Ministry

Specialized Pastoral Ministry (SPM) recruits rostered ministers of religion for ministry in institutional chaplaincy, emergency services chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education, and facilitates the process of ecclesiastical endorsement for these ministries. Over 500 chaplains, pastoral counselors, and clinical educators serve as “domestic missionaries,” working in religious pluralistic settings. They touch the lives of many people at their most stressful and painful moments in life. With hearts of compassion and words of the Gospel, chaplains and pastoral counselors serve in hospitals, nursing homes, retirement communities, parishes, counseling agencies, disaster sites, law enforcement agencies, fire and rescue agencies, hospice centers, and jails and prisons. Having received specialized clinical training beyond the master's degree level, chaplains and pastoral counselors

learn the art of effectively caring for the souls of those to whom they minister from a Lutheran theological perspective. They reflect God's mercy and compassion as they offer support and care, bringing words of forgiveness, life, and hope through Jesus Christ.

In the last triennium the LCMS has become responsible for the endorsement and support of Synod's VA hospital and Federal Bureau of Prison chaplains. In addition, the LCMS has discontinued a joint ecclesiastical endorsement process with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in light of the ELCA's decision to authorize the ordination of those who live in openly gay and lesbian lifestyles. At the request of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), we have shared our endorsement standards with them and opened the door for NALC candidates to use our process as the NALC endorses its own candidates.

Specialized pastoral ministry looks forward to the ability of the LCMS to extend divine calls to those who serve in these ministries, just as the LCMS extends divine calls to those who serve in active-duty military chaplaincy.

Life Ministry

Understanding that all human life is sacred, LCMS Life Ministries provided free online resources, a speakers' bureau, and contributed to numerous Synod publications. To observe the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, Life Ministries sponsored the first-ever LCMS Life Conference in Washington DC, "Lutherans and Pro-Life Advocacy—Good and Acceptable Service," based on 1 Timothy 2:1–4. Instrumental in bringing the largest number of Lutherans ever to the 2013 National March for Life, the goal was to promote a more pronounced Lutheran voice in the public square on life issues.

Life Ministries continued to represent the LCMS on the National Pro-life Religious Council and coordinated the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee's work. Life Ministries also provided consultation and domestic grant assistance for congregational pro-life mercy projects.

Increasing hostility to religious freedom and life concerns surrounding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) required Life Ministries to publish nonpartisan online statements and a national op-ed article reinforcing President Harrison's congressional testimony on the PPACA Birth Control Mandate. Life Ministries also contributed to a Heritage Foundation panel on women's concerns and infringement on religious freedom from the birth control mandate.

Critical and impending threats to sanctity of life, traditional marriage and family, and religious freedom to speak on these issues will require increased emphasis on public advocacy and involvement. LCMS Life Ministries will continue to serve as a resource on these issues to the "Free to Be Faithful" campaign and the LCMS Office of President.

Health Ministry

LCMS Health Ministries continued to serve as a catalyst, encouraging districts and congregations to care for both the body and soul of their members and communities in the name of Christ. As a leader in the national parish nursing movement, LCMS Health Ministries coordinates the popular parish nurse program in all 35 districts. Parish nurses serve congregations and communities by encouraging care of body and soul, and support the work of the pastoral office through assistance with shut-in visitation, senior ministry, and hospital visits. Regular e-mail list serves, e-newsletter publications, quarterly regional phone conferences, and individual mentoring have encouraged increased and robust networking among parish nurses, helping to maintain a standard of professional excellence and theological integrity. Work has begun to develop remote-learning, Web-based continuing education modules for dual use by domestic parish and

school nurses, and additionally by nurses in our partner churches internationally.

Health Ministries coordinates the LCMS Disability Task Force efforts to encourage and provide resources to congregations seeking outreach to those with disabilities and their families. The group is comprised of professionals in various disciplines affected by or contributing to a healthy ministry with and to those with special needs.

Concerns surrounding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and the PPACA Birth Control Mandate will require continuing communication and ongoing coordination between LCMS leadership, Concordia Health Plans, and LCMS Health Ministries as we seek to promote affordable health care for all while navigating the uncertainties of changing health care regulations and increasing threats to our religious freedom.

Future Direction of *Ablaze!* Goals

2010 Res. 1-02 "To Provide Guidance for Future Direction of *Ablaze!*" resolved to encourage congregations and members not to extinguish the Spirit's fire as the Board for Mission Services re-evaluated plans for the future. With the restructuring of the Synod, the Board for National Mission and ONM have taken up the task of keeping the *Ablaze!* goals and priorities alive.

In September 2011, the Office of the President hosted a National Mission Conference, the purpose of which was to engage in dialogue with relevant stakeholders about the work of the Office of National Mission and how it can best support the work of districts and congregations.

Prior to the conference, districts reported the following results from the *Ablaze!* goals of planting and revitalizing 2,000 congregations by the 500th anniversary of the Reformation:

- How many new mission congregations have been planted since 2004? 343
- How many of these are still active in 2011? 295
- How many new mission congregations do you plan to start within the next five years? 337
- How many congregations have participated in a revitalization workshop? 250
- How many congregations will participate in a revitalization workshop within the next five years? 418

ONM believes that revitalization is the key, so much so that it is focusing its revitalization efforts around the other mission priorities, lifting up the mission priorities of the Synod (including the goals and priorities of *Ablaze!*) so that districts and congregations can be supported in spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth:

- Plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches
- Support and expand theological education
- Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries
- Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness
- Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers
- Enhance early childhood, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry

Revitalization brings the mission priorities of the Synod to life in exciting and innovative ways. The faithful confession of Christ crucified is preached and lived in the church. The church loves the neighbor. We partner to expand our work. We love our workers. Our schools thrive. Youth are engaged in the life of the church. Congregations see new opportunities to share the gospel and plant churches. This keeps the goals and priorities of *Ablaze!* at the heart of our work.

Office of International Mission (OIM)

The Office of International Mission (OIM) plans, coordinates, and executes international Lutheran mission and mercy work in order to grow the global confessional Lutheran community.

“Thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd” (SA XII “The Church”). Luther’s explanation of Christ’s Church underscores the core work of the Synod and her international missionary arm, OIM. The Church is Christ’s instrument to repeat His voice to everyone who has ears to hear, for faith in Him is the triune God’s missionary desire. The boundary to be crossed then is the one from unbelief to faith—worked, of course, by the Spirit through the Means of Grace. The mission is His, even as is the Church.

OIM—the workers deployed and onsite, called, appointed, and contracted—works aggressively to let His Word have free course. Fundamentally, the Lutheran Church works to plant Lutheran churches by doing Lutheran missions. His doctrine saves (1 Tim. 4:16). What a privilege to be a part of this!

The Church therefore works with confidence, no matter the contrary voices inside or out. His mission will be accomplished. Therefore, we

- work with absolute confidence, trusting in the real and ongoing presence of the historical and living Lord and God;
- work with absolute confidence that there is only one true religion in the world, which unveils and proclaims the reality of the triune God’s witness in His Son on the cross;
- work with absolute confidence that we have His sure and certain witness, namely, His Holy Scripture, which speaks with thematic unity, both in the Old and New Testaments, of the God who justifies sinners (Rom. 4:5);
- work with absolute confidence that His Word is not ineffective but has an operative power to do as He says;
- work with absolute confidence because we are given the inner testimony of the Spirit, because the divinely and baptismally worked faith trusts alone in God’s Son (“Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself” [1 John 5:10]). This inner testimony by the Spirit is never worked apart but through the hearing and reading of God’s Word;
- work with absolute confidence because God works the mission through His Church. The mission of the Church is nothing but the mission of the triune God, now extended to the world. God is coming to the world through His Church, namely, through His voice repeated with fidelity into the ears of all who have ears to hear, inside and outside the Church. God in sending His Church into the world is sending Christ into the world;
- work with absolute confidence because the Church cannot do otherwise, as in the Spirit she is taken up to do the deeds done through her by Christ Himself;
- work with absolute confidence because Christ’s sacrifice is both intensively and extensively perfect, covering each and every sinner’s sins for all time.

Absolutely needed right now are workers, missionaries, for Christ’s work. We need preachers, and we need laity such as teachers to teach children overseas the Shepherd’s voice! Please consider Matthew 28:16–20; Romans 10:14–17; Titus 1:5; and 1 Peter 3:15. The Lord’s pattern for reaching the lost is the Word proclaimed through preachers and that same Word repeated through the laity in their vocations. In other words, the Church plants churches through the repetition of God’s Voice, His Word, through the vocational calling of His people.

The Office of International Mission divides the world into five regions: Eurasia, Latin America, Southern Asia and Oceania, Africa, and Asia Pacific. Each of these areas has a regional director. Please pray for each of these brothers: Pastors Brent Smith, John Mehl, and

Ted Krey; Dr. Michael Rodewald, and Mr. Darin Storkson. These brothers oversee the triune God’s mission in their region. It’s a big job, but with prayer and God’s Word, they do it faithfully. Each of their areas is divided into area facilitators, including a business manager. The Lord’s mission requires oversight (nurture and admonishment) and support from the Church.

In order to meet funding requirements, the Synod’s missions department created a network-support funding model. In the past, congregations and districts gave direct support for all missionary support. Now the support for most of the missionaries and the laity (GEOs, that is, Globally Engaged for Outreach) is accomplished through networks of donors who generously support our missionaries and GEOs.

This funding model is remarkably successful. Dr. David Birner, who spent 25 years in international missions, shares that the new model has not only saved the mission program from the consequences of decreasing unrestricted funding through the offering plate, but it has also enabled missions to grow to the current deployed numbers of servants in the field: 63 career missionaries and 46 GEOs! The triune God’s mission has not changed. Should we ever doubt that He will supply the mission with the necessary resources to get it done? O, you of little faith, why do you doubt, Missouri!

Enjoy the reports of the five regional directors and the Director of Missionary Services, Dr. Edward Grimenstein, whose work, along with his staff, surrounds the missionary with care and support. Included also are the reports regarding the very important work of mercy.

Africa Region

The emerging Lutheran mission picture in Africa is one of much opportunity tempered by challenge. The number of Lutheran Christians in Africa is fast approaching an estimated 20 million on a continent three and a half times the size of the continental United States. The tremendous growth of the Lutheran Church in Africa is not only the result of faithful proclamation from western Lutheran missionaries from the U.S. and Europe, but increasingly mission efforts from African Lutheran Christians planting churches. In addition, refugees displaced by conflict have come in contact with Lutherans in their places of refuge and returned to their homes with the Gospel and a faith formed in relationship with Lutherans. All the above efforts have resulted in numerous new Lutheran church bodies.

Resolutions on same-sex marriage by Western Lutheran churches have caused these emerging African Lutheran churches to turn to the LCMS, known for its reputation for biblical fidelity and confessional Lutheran integrity. The two needs most often expressed by these emerging churches are (1) help to more fully understand themselves as Lutheran Christians, and (2) assistance with theological education to train pastors where congregations vastly outnumber those ordained for Word and Sacrament ministry. OIM—Africa Region currently supports mission initiatives in varying degrees of cooperation in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda. It has pending requests from Malawi and Zambia, as well as a dormant relationship because of political issues in Eritrea. The challenge remains that of adequate financing and placement of personnel to keep pace with mission opportunities presented by the many existing and potential partners.

Theological Education

OIM supports the training of pastors through grants or scholarships to students for partner-operated seminaries: Neemae Lutheran Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (est. 50

students), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ghana seminary in Accra (8 students), Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary of the Lutheran Church in Nigeria (72 students), the *Centre Luthérien d'Etudes Théologiques* (CLET—Francophone Regional Seminary) in Togo (13 students), Coordinating Center for Theological Studies for Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sierra Leone (9 students), and Lutheran Theological Seminary in South Africa (as of this writing projects 20 pastoral education students and 5 deaconess students). These seminaries, as well as pastoral preparation institutions in Ethiopia, were also supported through short-term visits by LCMS lecturers from the United States. Career missionaries were placed as lecturer and director of deaconess studies at LTS in South Africa. Scholarships to students from Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania were provided for studies at Concordia Seminary and Concordia Theological Seminary in order to prepare professors in African institutions to support the growing confessional Lutheran theological awareness in Africa. The LCMS also supported a capital campaign for the building of a new seminary in Ghana that will increase its capacity to 60 students, the building of a library at Neema Lutheran Seminary in Kenya, and a property purchase to increase capacity in South Africa.

Christian Education

Private Lutheran Christian education is an emerging opportunity in Africa after a historical trend of governments assuming the education role from former mission schools. OIM placed nine teachers and program assistants in primary schools and orphanages in South Africa through the GEO program. The placement of a career volunteer coordinator in Ghana has prepared the way to place teachers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana's schools, also through the GEO program.

Human Care

The LCMS provided disaster relief in Madagascar, Guinea, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Democratic Republic of Congo. In addition, 1001 Orphans and Project 24 in Kenya were supported to meet the needs of orphans in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, and the Shongweni Orphanage project in South Africa was supported with personnel. Other initiatives were also supported: children's education for pastors, cows to supplement pastors' income, and deaconess training. Career missionaries were placed in Guinea for outreach into Muslim-majority communities through community health education. The Lutheran Malaria Initiative was implemented in outreach partnership with Lutheran churches in Africa, both to alleviate the debilitating effects of malaria on populations living in malaria-bearing areas and to provide opportunity for Christian witness in so doing. LMI began pilot operations in Nigeria and Kenya with expansion being explored in Ethiopia and Liberia. Mercy Medical Teams were implemented in Madagascar and Kenya.

Mission Development

Numerous partnership grants for mission development and church planting were partner-implemented. These included support for mission training centers for lay leadership development, continuing pastor education, and land purchases to build churches, as well as matching grants for church buildings and motorcycles and bicycles for evangelists and pastors. Support for a Portuguese-language church-planting and evangelist training effort in Mozambique was implemented in partnership with the FELSiSA (South Africa), the IELB (Brazil), and Kapasseni Project (Canada). Eyeglass clinics for mission outreach were implemented through short-term Congregation Connect partners in Kenya and Guinea.

Missionaries

OIM currently has 16 career missionaries and 8 long-term GEO church workers living and serving in Africa. OIM personnel are located in Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa. Personnel previously serving in Nigeria were relocated to Ghana because of sectarian violence.

Conclusion

We praise God for what He has accomplished and is accomplishing through His people in Africa. Opportunities continue to emerge for increased numbers of LCMS personnel to live and serve in Africa through OIM. There are numerous opportunities for mutual mission partnership presented from African Lutherans whose churches are growing in dramatic fashion. There are multiple opportunities to provide biblical and confessional Lutheran resources to help African Lutherans gain theological astuteness. While these mission opportunities may be more than the resources available can fully meet, it is indeed a privilege for the LCMS to partner with its many African Lutheran brothers and sisters, that the Gospel might go forth in truth and purity and that others hear and understand what Christ has done for them and may also serve as faithful witnesses to the world.

Asia Pacific Region

Education

The LCMS was able to build on a foundation of good Lutheran education ministry for expanded outreach both in cooperation with partner churches and as stand-alone LCMS ministries. The LCMS, together with partner churches, operates 80 Lutheran schools in Asia Pacific that serve approximately 70,000 students in 10 countries.

Concordia International School Hanoi opened in August 2011. There are 135 students enrolled for the 2012–13 school year, including 15 local students.

Buena Vista Concordia International School is a ministry of the Lutheran Church—Hong Kong Synod in China. It opened its doors in August 2011. LCMS teacher Dr. Kevin Brockberg serves as head of school, and most of the teachers are LCMS-trained.

Concordia International School Shanghai celebrates its 15th school year in 2012 with over 1,200 students enrolled in K-12. Mr. Gregg Pinick began serving as head of school in August 2012.

Hong Kong International School now serves over 2,650 students. Mr. Kevin Dunning began serving as head of school in August 2011. Twenty GEO missionaries consistently serve in partner church schools in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Other LCMS missionaries and volunteers serve in Lutheran institutions in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Papua New Guinea.

Church Planting and International Congregations

Partner churches in the Asia Pacific region are very eager to see the expansion of God's kingdom. Steady growth has been seen in Korea, the number of congregations having grown from 36 to 50 in the past five years. The Lutheran Church in the Philippines has added 36 mission congregations in the past three years.

International Lutheran congregations are a growing network in Asia Pacific. Church of All Nations, Lutheran in Hong Kong is an LCMS congregation belonging to the Northwest District. International Lutheran Church in Seoul, South Korea; Hanoi International Church in Hanoi, Vietnam; and Lutheran Church of Guam are being served by or are in the process of calling LCMS pastors.

Theological Education

Training pastors has always been a priority for the LCMS mission effort. Presently there are four LCMS clergy with advanced degrees

serving in partner church seminaries in Japan, Taiwan, and Papua New Guinea. There are seven partner church seminaries in the region.

Training for students in Southeast Asian countries is provided for pastors in cooperation through Luther Institute Southeast Asia (LISA). LCMS missionary Dr. Gerhard Michael serves as the executive director of LISA, which serves students from four countries. LCMS missionaries and partner church leaders serve as country coordinators for the LISA training program.

The LCMS mission effort for Southeast Asian students is being enhanced by cooperation with Concordia Theological Seminary, Hong Kong. This seminary of the Lutheran Church—Hong Kong Synod will help provide a BTh equivalent for students who plan to continue their studies at a master's level.

Human Care Ministries

The people of the LCMS respond generously to the physical needs of people left in difficult and even hopeless situations. The church generously gave over \$2.3 million to help the victims of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. These funds helped to rebuild community centers and give relief to children who live in the Fukushima prefecture and are dosed with high levels of radiation.

In the Philippines, disaster relief has come from the LCMS to help the Lutheran Church in the Philippines as they cope with many of the typhoons that can so quickly ravage their country.

A disaster relief training was sponsored by LCMS Disaster Relief in Hong Kong in 2012 to provide training to partner church leaders with more than 50 participants.

In Papua New Guinea, an airstrip in the Penale region is almost finished. Missionaries working side by side with nationals have provided ample opportunity for building relationships and Gospel witness.

The Gutnius Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea operates Immanuel Lutheran Hospital in Mambisanda, in the Highlands of the country.

In Cambodia, Community Health Education (CHE) provides the opportunity for Lutheran congregations to provide not only best practices for their physical health, but also the opportunity to talk about Jesus.

By the grace of God, an NGO has been registered in China, providing the opportunity for God's service and witness.

Partners

Lutheran partners in mission work together to provide for a unified effort to establish congregations and build up indigenous synods. Some of the partners in the region include the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Lutheran Heritage Foundation, Garuna Foundation, Lutheran Bible Translators (three families), Christian Children's Concern Society, LCMS seminaries, Grace Place Retreats, MOST, Wheat Ridge Ministries, Bethesda Lutheran Communities, members of the Concordia University System, as well as districts, congregations and individuals.

Eurasia Region

Consistent with the stated mission of the LCMS and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the LCMS in Eurasia is engaged in sharing the Good News of Jesus with unreached and uncommitted people, with an emphasis on church planting by reconnecting the people to their Christian heritage as we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

The population of Eurasia has surpassed one billion people. Currently, 40 percent of the population identifies itself as Muslim, with Muslims being the majority in countries such as Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan. The LCMS in Eurasia currently supports mission initiatives in Germany, England, Czech Republic,

Belgium, France, Portugal, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Mongolia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, and Pakistan.

Personnel

The Eurasia missionary team currently has 19 career, 6 contracted, and 4 alliance missionaries; also 12 GEOs and 55 accompanying spouses and children. The team includes 18 clergy, 2 deaconesses, one director of Christian education, and 3 rostered teachers. Of the existing personnel, 7 clergy are focused on church planting and 6 on theological education, with additional personnel such as an agronomist, Lutheran educators, physical therapists, and church musicians serving in roles of witness and mercy. GEOs serving in nine locations raise the Lutheran identity and impact at least 3,000 students on a regular basis. During the triennium, coordinators mobilized over 30 short-term teams into 25 locations across Central Europe and an additional 30 teams in other areas.

Church Planting, Heritage, Renaissance, and Development

This triennium saw The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia celebrate 400 years (in 2011) since its establishment in the Russian Empire. New witness efforts led to the completion of 10 Lutheran church construction or renovation projects such as in Klaipeda, Lithuania; Minusinsk, Russia; and St. Michael Lutheran in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of England celebrated a milestone in 2012 of 50 years of theological education through Westfield House in Cambridge. Expansion of outreach efforts led to the launch of Lutheran Radio UK (lutheranradio.co.uk) by Alliance Missionary Rev. Jaime Kriger of Brazil. Church planting efforts in a number of locations were supported by a host of Lutherans working in various vocations. For example, the agriculture work of Dr. Mike Wade in Central Asia saw an improvement in production on 800 acres of wheat, barley, sunflower, corn, and finally soybean crops. Yields on soybeans hit 55 bushels per acre, and corn hit 115 bushels per acre. Through this community development partnership, seeds of the Gospel were sown among the agriculture administration. The work of Lutheran educators and a physical therapist with retired LCMS pastors led to a Divine Service establishing the International Lutheran Church of Ankara, Turkey. All nations outreach continues in church planting locations such as Brussels, Belgium; Prague, Czech Republic; Dublin, Ireland; and Leipzig, Germany. The first Mandarin Chinese-speaking alliance missionary is scheduled to be ordained and deployed into Europe in 2013.

Theological Education

Theological education trained an average of 250 students in collaboration with seven seminaries in the region: Westfield House in Cambridge, England; The Lutherische Theologische Hochschule in Frankfurt am Main/Oberusel, Germany; The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia Theological Institute near St. Petersburg, Russia; Concordia Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk, Russia; the Central Asia Lutheran Seminary in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and Almaty, Kazakhstan; and The Luther Academy in Riga, Latvia.

Human Care

LCMS continued to partner in a number of initiatives, such as with the Lutheran Church Concordia in Kyrgyzstan to operate a mobile medical van, which treated 36,000 women and children and distributed 7,500 eyeglasses in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry. The programs of Hope Halfway House in Siberia and Hope Center in St. Petersburg expanded prison ministry and pro-life ministries, respectively.

Partners

Some of the partners in the region include the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Lutheran Heritage Foundation, LCMS seminaries, Orphan Grain Train, Grace Place Retreats, Bethesda Lutheran Communities, members of the Concordia University System, as well as districts, congregations, and individuals.

Eurasia has 11 partner Lutheran churches. Altar and pulpit fellowship was established with the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia, and new limited working agreements were signed with the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession and with the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic.

Conclusion

Eurasia has plenty of Christian heritage. It is the place of the missionary journeys of Paul, has over 1,000 years of Orthodox Christianity, and is the birthplace of the Reformation. Yet, mission opportunities abound! Only in this triennium were the first translations of the Bible and of Luther's Small Catechism in the Kazakh language completed. The Gospel needs to be proclaimed to this generation. It's time to join the outreach to all nations in Eurasia.

Latin America Region

The region of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) exists to make known the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through His Word and Sacraments in the planting of churches which are merciful communities and in the promoting of strong theological education for the formation of pastors, deaconesses, and deacons, who in turn faithfully give witness to the next generation.

In August 2010, at the ILC Regional in Chile, Bible institute directors met to discuss theological education in their respective church bodies. It was reported by Rev. Carlos Schuman of Chile that five Bible Institutes had closed down. This left only two seminaries in South America that belong to sister churches and no route to ordination for some 15 sister churches.

As a response to this crisis, LCMS International Mission of LAC partnered with Concordia Seminary of Buenos Aires, Argentina, to offer 10 scholarships to men of any of these countries to pursue pastoral formation. In March 2013, 11 men from surrounding countries are in residence studying in their six-year program. Additionally, LCMS International LAC has partnered with Concordia Seminary to be able to offer courses online. As of this date, some 23 men from 12 countries in Latin America are now enrolled in a four-year online program. Total enrollment in the seminary has grown from 21 students to 55 students, and it is projected that this will grow to 70 over the next three years. An initiative to build an extra dorm for 30 married and single students for \$1 million is underway.

LCMS International Mission LAC has also partnered with Concordia Seminary and the Luther Academy to offer 10 pastoral education courses to 5 countries that have had no access to Lutheran courses for several years. Courses began in 2012, and by God's grace will continue through 2017 to strengthen the ministerium in these sister churches. A secondary component of theological education is to continue to hold theological conferences in the southern cone of South America and Central America so as to teach excellent orthodox Lutheran theology and foster the mutual consolation of the brethren.

By our Lord's grace, a five-year goal is to have a total of 50 church plants by 2018. Now that access to pastoral formation is in place, holistic church planting efforts are being expanded, knowing that new men will have access to Lutheran theological formation in becoming pastors. Currently LCMS International LAC is directly supporting a total of 22 church plants in Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Grand Caymans, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, and Spain. Some of these church

plants are directly pastored by LCMS and others indirectly in partnership with sister churches. Pastors are being sought to strengthen efforts in all countries, but adding Belize, Puerto Rico and Spain for 2013. The Lord willing, Honduras will be opened in 2014 working in partnership and following the lead of the Nicaraguan Lutheran church and Lutheran Church—Canada.

In each church plant, deaconesses are being sought to found mercy work in each community alongside our Word and Sacrament communities. In order to prepare the next generation of mercy workers for Latin America, the Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission dedicated its seminary on March 10, 2013, to foster and spread the preparation of deaconesses throughout Latin America. A faculty of three deaconesses is being sought to teach two courses each year in five countries for five years for a total of 10 courses. In addition to these courses, human care courses, which will vary from country to country, will complement the theological component of each program. For example, human care courses in the Dominican Republic will prepare women to work with people with disabilities to accompany the theology.

These plans call for some 70 new church workers in Latin America over the next five years to work together with sister church workers in international teams. Twenty-five LCMS pastors are being sought for church planting. An additional 10 Brazilian pastors are also being sought to work alongside our missionary pastors. In addition, some 10 deaconesses are needed. An additional 15 vicars, deaconess interns, DCEs, and Lutheran school teachers are needed as well. The remaining 10 workers are a mix of medical and volunteer coordinator personnel, short-term team visits from partner congregations whose visits are committed to long-term support of church planting efforts in each place.

Forums have been created which form circles of support in bringing human and financial resources to these church plants. Challenges exist to continue to have more forums which bring others to the same table to work together. The forums are like a power bar of sorts, which invite sister churches, districts, RSOs, and congregations to plug into a unified effort of aiding our international mission teams of confessional Lutherans to plant Lutheran churches with mercy centers alongside them—this so that our dear Lord Jesus Christ might be present with His gifts to bring people to repentance, receive faith, and be called His own through the waters of Baptism.

Would to God that He would grant this Epiphany light of His Son to be revealed through His Word to those who do not yet know Him in Latin America and the Caribbean!

Southern Asia and Oceania (SAO)

SAO is the newest OIM region. It was carved out of the mammoth "Asia" region for several reasons: (1) to facilitate an expansion of the Synod's foreign mission work; (2) to divide what was previously an unmanageably large region; (3) to capitalize on some emerging opportunities for church planting and partnership in some strategic "new" countries; and (4) to facilitate greater attention to some crises and opportunities in some "old" countries.

As a region, SAO itself represents some 1.5 billion souls and includes the world's second and fourth largest countries, the world's two largest Muslim countries, the world's largest Hindu country, and some of the world's poorest and most disaster-prone countries.

To date, work has centered on the administrative preparations necessary to open and staff a new region while working to capitalize on emerging opportunities and to improve theological and financial integrity across the region. A business manager was recruited in 2012, deploying to Singapore with his family in January 2013. Missionaries to Singapore and Sri Lanka recruited in 2012 are currently working to meet their Network Supported Missionary (NSM) obligations.

Administrative groundwork is underway for the opening of a new LCMS office in Singapore.

Other highlights include the ongoing fellowship talks with the Indonesian Lutheran Christian Church (GKLI), which formally requested fellowship in January 2012. Numerous engagements with the GKLI resulted in their renouncing women's ordination and their preparing several amendments to their constitution in preparation for their general convention in late 2013, at which time they expect to formally endorse fellowship with LCMS.

We have also experienced a resurgence of contact and interest between the LCMS and the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), with whom we are now communicating and coordinating more than ever. LCA leaders seem very interested in developing improved collaboration with the LCMS.

In Sri Lanka, we have also managed to put an end to the long-standing corruption that had been afflicting the now-defunct partner church there. Remaining pastors and vicars are now being reorganized into a new church body.

Opportunities

In Sri Lanka, opportunity exists to reorganize the remnants of our defunct partner church into a new church body with better administration and accountability. Although the Sri Lankan government is not allowing any new churches to be formed at this time, we are exploiting a legal loophole that should allow us to reorganize the church legally. Our deployment of one or two missionary families to Sri Lanka is integral to teaching, encouraging, and leading our dear Lutheran brothers and sisters there to better management and accountability.

In India, likewise, we have the opportunity to help the partner India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC) emerge from its decades of corruption and theological drift, though we will need to deploy one or more career missionaries to India to capitalize on this opportunity.

In Indonesia, we have the opportunity to negotiate fellowship with the GKLI and then partner with them in the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the country.

In Malaysia, we have the opportunity to deploy a long-term theological educator to the seminary there, enhancing Lutheran theological education and building a closer relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM), a non-partner church body.

In Singapore, we have the opportunity to develop a new regional office and plant a new LCMS mission in a new country.

In Australia, we have opportunity to renew relations with the LCA and to collaborate and synergize with respect to Lutheran activity in the region.

In Bangladesh and Burma, we have emerging opportunities to partner with various Lutheran groups that have been long isolated, though any significant partnership will require the deployment of career missionaries.

Challenges

As Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:37–38). The single biggest challenge facing global mission in general and in this young region in particular is recruitment. This is part of life in the Church under the cross. The Lord has opened many doors and presented many opportunities. A challenge is how to meet the opportunities and the doors that the Lord has opened to proclaim the Gospel. The apostles, the disciples, and the church through history have been confronted with the challenge of finding laborers. The Lord allows this challenge to help us see that everything comes by grace through faith. We find ourselves unable to meet the opportunities presented, so the Lord teaches us to pray to Him in faith, expecting that He will be faithful to His promise that He desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the

truth. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers. Pray that He give the missionaries, field staff, and staff at the International Center both courage and wisdom to seek to proclaim that Gospel where our Lord Jesus has opened doors, in particular for SAO. Perhaps in your prayer for laborers, the Lord may even send you.

Another challenge is the weakness that youth and the lack of resources have presented to some of our partners. This is an area to which the Lord has called the Missouri Synod at this moment—to walk beside our partners, encourage them, help to strengthen them where we have been given strength as a gift from our gracious Lord, and to help them build capacity so that they may also strengthen us in the weaknesses we have. It is a challenge of our life together as the Body of Christ to be true partners that mutually encourage and support one another. Areas where the Missouri Synod has strengths for this moment are in theological education and in resources to help build capacity in our partners for the future.

In summary, then, the story of this new SAO region so far is one of great opportunities along with many challenges. Pray to the Lord of the harvest for His blessing as we go forth, boldly seeking to proclaim the Gospel to a people who have not yet heard the precious name of Jesus.

Missionary Services

The goal of Missionary Services is to provide care to our missionaries before, during, and after a missionary's service. This care also extends to a missionary's immediate family. Below are several items to better understand those goals, including areas for improvement in the coming year.

1. Career Process Flowchart

Based upon the requests from regional directors and missionary candidates, Missionary Services has created a visual flowchart highlighting the process for career missionary applications (although very similar, a chart will be created for GEOs as well). The intent is to provide transparency for the application process as well as to inform all parties of their particular roles in the application process. The chart will cover the following phases: (1) Application; (2) Assessment; (3) Calling; (4) Mission Preparation.

During the **application phase**, candidates will pursue the following steps: submit formal application, three references, and the applicant's résumé. One of the references would be from an applicant's pastor, determining an applicant's ability to serve as a missionary.

During the **assessment phase**, candidates would begin with a *theological interview* with the Director, Missionary Services. This interview is determined to ascertain the ability of candidates to express the central tenets of the Lutheran faith (justification by grace through faith).

The **calling phase** would begin with a face-to-face interview with the regional director, who would have in his hands the results of a CMA (behavioral vocation index) and other portions of the candidate's application (formal application, résumé, theological interview results, vocational interview results, etc.).

During the **mission preparation phase**, a candidate would attend the appropriate orientation training in St. Louis. Candidates would not only learn about the particulars of communicating and fund-raising for their work, but they would also be engaged in a theological discussion of missiology from a Lutheran perspective. Upon completion, the missionary would be deployed to the field.

2. Recruitment Needs / Plans

A constant challenge for the mission field is to find not only an adequate number of new missionaries to fill positions in the mission field, but to also be prepared to replace those who are retiring

or otherwise leaving the field. It is the opinion of the OIM Executive Director that it will take a church-wide, collaborative effort to fill satisfactorily positions in the field. It will take the *entire church* to complete the missiological goals of *the church*.

To accomplish these recruiting goals, it is being proposed by the OIM Executive Director to rely on a network to collect candidates for missionary work. This network would include colleges, seminaries, districts, district presidents, circuits, congregations, regional directors, other missionaries, OIM staff, and others. The goal is to form a far-reaching network to supply not only the right number of missionaries but also those who are aptly qualified.

3. Meeting the Pastoral Needs of Missionaries and Their Families

Far too often the church can forget to care for her caregivers. Over the years, much discussion has come about regarding the need for the LCMS to provide pastoral support to her own missionaries and their families. Caring for missionaries and their families has already begun to be intentionally addressed within the LCMS, and this effort will hopefully continue to grow in years to come. Some of the intentional efforts currently in place and being worked upon are the following.

Self-Evaluation Tool. This was created for and is currently being implemented when missionaries return for a “reconnect.” It is a self-evaluation tool in which missionaries rank the following on a scale of 1–10 (weak to strong) for the following topics as seen through the lens of “Lutheran Worship”: vocation, theological education, physical well-being, financial management, self and family care, crisis management, communications, and mission advancement (donor support).

These evaluations are posed to missionaries during reconnects and debriefs with the Director, Missionary Services. They provide a background for which positive discussions can then follow, not only while at home but hopefully also while in the field. This tool (in visual format) can also be used as a self-assessment tool while in the field to see how well a missionary and family are adapting to missionary life.

Pastoral Care Pool. Regional directors do an excellent job providing care to their missionaries, and ensuring care is occurring. It is the hope of Missionary Services that we might pull alongside these efforts of the regional directors and support them in their care of their region’s missionaries. This could include helping to send qualified pastoral caregivers to a particular region to provide pastoral counsel to a couple having marital problems as well as to provide Lutheran Worship (the Lord’s Supper on a regular basis as well as any other pastoral needs of the missionary).

Conclusion

Missionary Services is comprised of a very dedicated group of individuals who desire to see missionaries recruited, trained, deployed to the field, cared for while serving in the field, and also re-deployed in such a way that they might successfully return. Perhaps a missionary is no longer serving in the field, but he or she will always be someone who is representing the work of Christ’s church to new fields, venues, and peoples. Working alongside regional directors and in conjunction with LCMS staff, Missionary Services hopes to make this mandate of Christ and goal of our Synod a reality.

Deaconess Ministry

Under the umbrella of the LCMS, OIM Mercy Operations encourages and supports the deaconess ministry. The key role of the Director, Deaconess Ministry is to serve as a catalyst nurturing and strengthening the Synod to identify, plan, encourage, support, and enhance the educational and diaconal needs with partner and non-partner churches worldwide.

Over the past decade and a half, Mercy Operations has awarded \$200,000 in grants for developing capacity and strengthening internal resources to meet human care needs in proximity to Word and

Sacrament ministries. Today, with OIM and Mercy Operations and with strong support from the leadership of the LCMS, deaconess programs have been begun in Dominican Republic, Indonesia, and Malaysia (non-partner), India, Latvia, Liberia, Philippines, and South Africa. These new deaconess programs, as they encourage the women of the church who are eager to learn the Word of God to serve Him in various vocations, especially highlight service as a deaconess.

Currently, there are six LCMS deaconess missionaries serving in Dominican Republic, Germany, Honk Kong, Prague, and South Africa, and three deaconess intern missionaries serving in Latin America.

Another area the ministry focuses on evaluating, assisting, and expanding the existing diaconal projects or developing new programs. Future goals will focus on continuing to assist with educational and diaconal needs, coordinating with the regional directors in building new programs.

Church and Community Engagement

The goal of this OIM initiative is to assist OIM directors and regional directors to connect with community agencies and residents through intensive one-on-one interviews in planned new starts or to capitalize on opportunities for a new start in a setting where significant mercy ministries have developed contacts or prospects.

Efforts to maximize the witness potential of mercy-focused ministries were conducted in the following countries in the last triennium: Chile, Guatemala, Cuba, Haiti, Peru, and Hong Kong.

In Chile, two congregations were planted to witness to the Gospel as a result of disaster response mercy ministries in a team partnership with the Director of Disaster Relief, Rev. Glenn Merritt, and missionaries Rev. Carlos Schumann, Cristian Rauthenberg, and Omar Kinan.

In Haiti, Guatemala, and Cuba, missionaries reported an increased interest in hearing the Gospel witness from recipients and participants in ministries of mercy.

In Peru (Lima), seminarians were trained in “the Gospel seeds” approach of conducting agency and residential interviews, with staff actually conducting (practicing in real-life settings) these relationship-development activities.

Life and Health Ministries—International

Blessings of the Triennium

LCMS Life Ministries will continue to serve as a resource to our LCMS mission projects and international partners as we uphold the sanctity of human life in all we do or say and use life-affirming mercy work as a complement to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Understanding that all human life is sacred, LCMS Life Ministries provided staff and volunteer training, ongoing mentoring, and complete funding for the Lutheran Church of Malaysia to open a Lutheran crisis pregnancy center in an urban area known for “baby dumping.”

LCMS Life Ministries continues to fund the operations and provide oversight to the Nadezshda (Hope) Lutheran crisis pregnancy center and family counseling service in St. Petersburg, Russia, under the auspices of the Lutheran Church of Ingria. This center also provides job training, computer certification classes, and parenting classes, in addition to Bible studies and Christian fellowship opportunities for single mothers.

LCMS Life Ministries resources, such as *A Small Catechism on Human Life* by Rev. John Pless, have been translated into Spanish, Russian, and Tamil and utilized on the international field.

Opportunities for the Future

LCMS Life Ministries will serve as a resource to the Malagasy Lutheran Church Regional Synod in Avaratrimania for the development of the educational curriculum utilized in their HIV-AIDS

education and training program to encourage the Christian teaching of healthy sexuality within marriage between one man and one woman and chastity outside of marriage.

Health Ministries—International Work

Blessings of the Triennium

LCMS Health Ministries served as a resource to our LCMS mission projects and international partners as we care for both body and soul of people around the world, using acts of mercy as a complement to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Health Ministries served the international mission field by providing on-site project mentoring, assessment, strategy development, and viability reporting for upcoming health mercy projects in Chile, Kyrgyzstan, and Madagascar, and for Lutheran Malaria Initiative work in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. In addition, LCMS Health Ministries developed and provided ongoing staffing, management, and oversight for the operations of two primary care clinics in Haiti.

Medical teams provided primary care and community health education to over 20,000 patients in underserved areas of Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, and Kyrgyzstan.

Health Ministries executed grants and assisted in development of an HIV/AIDS education and testing program in Madagascar with the Regional Synod in Avaratrimania. The program will include 37 districts and will train trainers for 788 churches while developing an action plan to prevent the disease and address mobilization for the future.

Health Ministries is fostering the parish nursing vocation internationally through the development of an international parish nursing training curriculum, piloted with nurses in the Indian Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC).

Opportunities for the Future

Health Ministries oversees programmatic work for the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. Strategy includes programmatic efforts with church partners in Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and smaller start-up efforts as possible in Liberia and Guinea.

Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI—International Programming Report

Blessings of the Triennium

Partnership Work with Lutheran World Relief. Since 2007, Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI) has reached more than 1.7 million people across 13 dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania with critical information about prevention and treatment of malaria. This has been achieved by training volunteers to engage their communities, educate those at risk, and direct them to free nets and services provided by government programs.

In Kenya during the last few years, Lutheran congregations have distributed 77,000 bed nets in targeted “gap communities” through the LMI support.

LCMS-Specific LMI Work. Last year 8,000 bed nets were distributed in Kenya through a partnership between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) and a team of LCMS volunteers from Texas and Wisconsin. Along with providing bed nets, ELCK-sponsored volunteers taught families how to use them, how to recognize the symptoms of malaria, and where to seek treatment.

Last year the Lutheran Church of Nigeria hosted LMI clinics at four of their zonal conventions. The main focus was to provide convention attendees with malaria education, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Thousands of participants received free malaria tests, and those infected received treatment. Messages of malaria prevention were delivered to all attendees at the convention.

Opportunities for the Future

In 2013, the Lutheran Church in Nigeria will host LMI clinics in 9 of their 14 zonal conventions and will host training and awareness workshops for church leaders.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya will continue to work with the Kenyan Ministry of Health to engage local communities to insure thousands are equipped with nets and the knowledge to prevent and seek treatment for malaria.

LCMS strategy includes ongoing and development of programmatic efforts with church partners in Kenya, Nigeria, and Ethiopia, with smaller start-up efforts possible in Liberia and Guinea.

Armed Forces Ministry Report

Operation Barnabas Ministry

One key highlight for Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF) centers on care for Veterans. Operation Barnabas, organized in 2007, not only supports our pastors who are also Reserve chaplains but also our Lutheran Veterans in the pew and the millions of Veterans who live in the shadow of our churches but never attend any church. It is estimated that there are currently over 30 million Veterans alive today from all wars. This is an unprecedented mission field and opportunity for the church. MAF is leading the way to reach the Veteran and draw him back to the cross of Christ by the grace of God. Under Chaplain Mike Moreno, now a mobilized Navy Reservist, our church body has 18 local chapters up and running in LCMS congregations from California to Florida. Our goal is to establish 50 chapters by the end of 2013 and 100 by the end of 2014. We are planning a second Operation Barnabas Training Conference in the coming year. While Chaplain Moreno is on active duty, two retired chaplains, Rev. Dr. Gary Danielson, of Atlanta, Georgia, and Rev. Bill Brunold, of Whittier, California, have been brought on board to fill the gap and will be managing visitation, program events, and training. Chaplain Moreno was mobilized in January 2013 and will complete his tour in September 2013.

Armed Forces Sunday

Chaplains Mark Schreiber, Eric Erkkinen, and Mike Moreno have continued to engage in numerous visits coast to coast to preach at our LCMS congregations around the country, leading the worshiping community of saints in Armed Forces Sunday celebrations and remembrances. These visits to congregations have produced high visibility for military ministry and tremendous financial support for Chaplain Corps ministry from our LCMS saints in the pew, enabling us to fund and support new ministries for our returning veterans who are members of our churches and for those outside our churches. The Armed Forces Sunday events also expand our Ministry-by-Mail program as we receive names and addresses of military members and provide to them a quarterly newsletter and copies of *Portals of Prayer*.

Recruitment

MAF continues to recruit at both seminaries with periodic regular visits during the academic year, to create and sustain interest via the Chaplain Candidate program and Chaplain Corps ministry. Currently there are about 20 chaplain candidates at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and 10–12 at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Eric Erkkinen leads the charge on this ministry.

DMin Military Chaplain Program

The DMin Military Chaplain Program initiated by the director in 2005 is designed exclusively for our military chaplains to enable them to complete a doctoral degree while remaining on active duty. The DMin program can be successfully completed within a four-to-five-year time frame by completing in-residence intensive courses

offered at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, during January and in the summer. Students in the DMin program may receive credits from the Command and Staff College of the military that contribute to the 54 credit hours required for the degree. Our first graduate, Chaplain Mark Moreno, USNR (brother to Mike Moreno) graduated in May 2011. Our second graduate, Ryan Rupe, USN, is due to graduate in May 2012. The director teaches the core course in the program (6 hours credit) every other summer. The DMin program is supported by a Military Chaplain Endowment Fund created by MAF, which holds a current balance of around \$65,000. Currently, there are 10 chaplain/students active in the degree program, with six or more candidates in process of matriculation.

Fidelity to Scripture and Ordination Vows

MAF has worked diligently in the public arena through the director and assistant director, with numerous other endorsers seeking to influence committees in Congress regarding the negative impact if “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) is repealed and the constitutional rights of all chaplains to preach and teach—as military chaplains representing their denomination—in the military milieu. DADT was repealed in September 2011 against the wisdom and counsel of the majority of endorsers and chaplains. So far the chaplain’s constitutional right to free speech and his religious rights have been protected. The “Defense of Marriage Act” (DOMA) still stands, but the director predicts that if it falls, the action of those seeking full recognition of marriage, health care, and other benefits will dramatically increase, causing ever greater difficulty to our chaplains who desire to remain faithful to the Lord and the Word of God. MAF fully supports our chaplains and their right to minister according to the Lutheran Confessions, Holy Scripture, and their ordination vows. MAF has been very proactive in this arena and will continue to be so. We are proud that our chaplains remain faithful to the Word of God in ministry to our brave servicemen and women in the armed forces. Our chaplains, among the many denominations that serve, are still recognized for their stellar reputation, commitment to duty, and distinguished service record.

Theological Education Report

OIM’s Director of Theological Education works across all five regions in the area of theological education. Number two on the list of the Synod’s Six Mission Priorities is to “Support and Expand Theological Education. This includes the support of foreign and domestic seminaries, providing regional conferences, short-term training, pastoral continuing education, and the recruiting and training of pastors, teachers . . .”

The goal of theological education within the OIM is to strengthen newly established Lutheran Churches and Lutheran Churches resulting from the worldwide Lutheran mission movement during the past century—confessional Lutheran Church bodies that are able to confess the pure Gospel within an increasingly hostile environment.

Carrying out these goals and priorities requires well-educated missionaries and indigenous clergy who are able to build up the churches and to protect them from theological and cultural threats. It is an exciting enterprise and cause for great joy and thanksgiving. It also includes many challenges.

Liberalism, Secularism, and Non-Dogmatic Ecumenical Challenges

A major challenge for Lutheran missions comes from the powerful influence of the North American and European Lutheran churches that are promoting vigorously an agenda that is more sociological than theological: ordination of women and practicing homosexuals, same sex marriage, confession-less ecumenism, a variety of political and liberation ideologies, and so forth. Lutheran Missions must establish and support vigorously both partner and non-partner Lutheran Churches around the world and, where possible, protect them from

liberal intolerance. Career missionaries and short-term professors must be knowledgeable of and sensitive to church relations ramifications. In today’s world, mission work and church relations overlap. Thus OIM must work very closely with the President of the Synod and the Director of Church Relations.

Islam

We are living in a time of shrinking economic capacity, which will diminish the ability of Christian churches in the West, including the LCMS, to carry out vigorous mission work around the world. At the same time Islam has increasing wealth at its disposal and is using it to project its power around the world.

Relapse into Paganism

The temptation to relapse into paganism, whether through the complete renunciation of the Christian faith or by a partial selective return to syncretistic rites and lifestyle, is an ongoing problem which requires vigilant preaching, catechesis, and pastoral care. It can be seen by the attraction of voodoo in Haiti, juju in West Africa, fertility festivals in Madagascar, and polygamy and libations in general. This phenomenon is also growing in Europe and America as people are dabbling with pagan religions and spirituality both within and outside the church.

Pentecostalism

The revivalist/Pentecostal movement’s divisive anti-liturgical and anti-sacrament worship and its miracle, health, and wealth teachings have been troubling Lutheran mission churches around the world for decades and continue to do so. Combating these threats requires pastors who are trained to preach and teach Lutheran doctrine clearly and to faithfully lead their congregations in the Divine Service.

Lutheran Churches and Lutheran Mission Use the Lutheran Liturgy

Lutheran mission should lead to Lutheran churches with Lutheran liturgies. Witness leads to catechesis. Catechesis leads to Baptism, which leads to the Liturgy. The Lutheran order of service (Invocation, Confession/Absolution, Word, Sacrament) makes people Lutheran and keeps them Lutheran.

The challenge for all those involved in mission work is to train indigenous pastors in both theology and prayer. This means planting the liturgy in the local language and culture. This is no small task. It requires the translation and composition of liturgical texts that are biblically faithful and theological correct and clear. It requires liturgical texts and hymnody that are linguistically sound, poetic, and beautiful. It requires thoughtful attention to music, rite, and ceremony. It also requires pastors and church musicians trained in the theology and practice of worship. LCMS missionaries involved in theological education are often called upon to assist by teaching Lutheran liturgy and practice at partner seminaries and to assist with the development of liturgy and hymnody.

In 2008, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK) Archbishop Walter Obare approached the LCMS to assist with the development of a Swahili hymnal. In its 55-year history, the ELCK had never had its own liturgy and hymnal. With the help of liturgical scholars at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and support from the office of the LCMS President, the book was published in January 2009 and dedicated in Nairobi on Feb. 17, 2009. The Southern Asia and Oceania Region is also in the process of developing Bahasa language liturgy and hymnody in Indonesia. Mission work in Eurasia is in the process of liturgical translation work in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey.

Seminary Development

Pastoral formation has historically taken place in residential seminaries. This model was replicated on the foreign mission field on seminary campuses built and sustained by mission funding from America. OIM will continue to support foreign seminaries with special attention given to regional seminaries that serve both the local church and international students from other Lutheran churches. For example, The Lutheran Seminary in Togo (CLET) serves French-speaking students from Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Cote D'Ivoire; the Lutheran Seminary in Matongo, Kenya (NEEMA) draws students from Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, etc.; Seminario Concordia in Argentina serves Spanish-speaking students from 12 Latin American countries. Pastoral formation also encompasses a variety of distance and alternative educational programs.

Continuing Education

In many mission fields, “necessity” has led to pastors with inadequate theological education being prematurely ordained. As a result, there is a crucial need for continuing education. There is a great desire among most indigenous pastors for ongoing education, best organized through the local seminary.

Seminary Libraries

Building a good theological library is essential to creating a good seminary. Over the years many libraries have been built. This has required a great investment of time and money. Where English is the language of instruction, the task is easier. Where instruction is only in the indigenous language, the challenges are magnified, particularly where the local language lacks a sophisticated scientific or theological capacity. Over the past 12 months, the Director of Theological Education has worked closely with the Director of Library Services at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, to assess the conditions and needs of Lutheran libraries. The result is the creation of the Chemnitz Library Initiative (CLI), a partnership of CTS, the Office of the President, and the International Lutheran Council. The purpose of the CLI is to strengthen confessional Lutheran seminaries by providing materials, expertise, and training in theological librarianship. Textbook and electronic/online resources are being developed to support the curriculum, students, professors, and church at large.

Fiscal Challenges

Maintaining quality residential seminaries is a costly endeavor. Building the campus is the easiest part of establishing a residential seminary. It is more difficult to provide ongoing support for maintenance, utilities, salaries for professors and staff, and tuition and living expenses for students—many of whom are married students with families. It often takes generations for new churches in developing countries to take full financial ownership.

International Studies in LCMS Seminaries

Faculty development at Lutheran seminaries around the world requires bringing the brightest and best for graduate studies at the Synod's seminaries, costing approximately \$30–35,000 per year for each student. To support this crucial enterprise, President Matthew Harrison has established the Global Seminary Initiative (GSI) to raise funds that will enable our seminaries to provide scholarships to international students. A portion of the GSI budget is also used to send LCMS professors for short-term teaching assignments at Lutheran seminaries around the world.

LCMS Disaster Response

LCMS Disaster Response is focused on sharing moments of mercy that change lives for an eternity through mercy ministry done in close proximity to Word and Sacrament. Congregation-based disaster

response and relief involves working in a collaborative, cooperative, and coordinated manner with LCMS districts, congregations, worldwide partner churches and other faith-based groups, as well as governmental and nongovernmental agencies—all to meet the relief and recovery needs of local communities affected by disasters and tragedy.

Over the past triennium, LCMS Disaster Response was actively engaged nationally in response to the massive flooding and/or tornados in South Dakota, North Dakota, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Indiana, and Missouri, as well as an extensive ongoing response to the widespread destruction caused by Superstorm Sandy along the entire Eastern seaboard of the U.S. LCMS Disaster Response staff was also on scene offering assistance and pastoral care following the tragic events in Newtown, Connecticut.

Internationally, LCMS Disaster Response has engaged in numerous disaster relief and recovery efforts worldwide, with five major emphases providing aid and assistance in the Philippines, Japan, Haiti, Chile, and New Zealand. Other regions around the world also received financial or technical assistance (Thailand, Cambodia, Kenya, DR Congo, Liberia, India, Guatemala, Cuba, Panama, and Mexico).

In support of these efforts, LCMS Disaster Response provides appropriate training in disaster preparedness and volunteering to congregations, districts, regional areas, and partner churches. Backed by donors from the LCMS, over \$20 million in aid and assistance were provided to those in need during this triennium.

Message from Executive Director Randall Golter Office of International Missions

The Church exists to receive and distribute the Lord's gifts to the world. Right now, Missouri is engaged in 33 countries (this does count short-term mission teams). May it be each and every country! Thirty-three is too low! The Lord has given to the LCMS the pure doctrine. He has given His doctrine not only to the LCMS but to many confessional Lutheran churches around the world. We should not be arrogant but with all boldness “speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:26). It's really not about us; we're big sinners, really big sinners. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has many weaknesses.

But, the Lord has given us His Word. Dare we hide or keep it under a basket? May it never be! Churches around the world are looking to Missouri for confessional strength and training. This is a privilege and a great responsibility! We *must* speak, train, and send missionaries. It's not about us but about the Lord and His tender mercies to us and to all.

Closing thought: Only one thing is needed in the Church, and that is the very life-giving evangelical truth alone! Therefore, the Church must not let bureaucracy or aberrant teaching or sluggishness or anything get in the way of His Word proclaimed, applied, washed, and distributed to hungry souls, bodies, and mouths.

Come with us to preach Christ to your region and to the world!

Frankly, the healthiest Church is one which is continually looking out to the salvation and welfare of the lost!

“What can we do to preserve the Gospel? This treasure grows while it is spent. It becomes our most cherished possession if we give it away” (Herman Sasse, “Church Government and Theology,” *Lutheran Theological Journal*, August 1972, 37–44).

Pastoral Education

The area of Pastoral Education plans, promotes, and coordinates pastoral education in order to provide healthy, well-trained clergy for the LCMS.

Significant Office of Pastoral Education Activities (2010–2013)

- Since November 2010, administered the Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) initiative, assisting pastors and their wives in the first three years of post-seminary parish life.
- Chaired meetings of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Committee and conference calls of the SMP working groups at both seminaries to facilitate implementation of the SMP program (see 2007 Res. 5-01). A “White Paper” report to the Synod concerning the SMP program is available at <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1165>.
- Chaired a task force comprised of district presidents and seminary representatives to examine seminary admission requirements and processes, suggesting improvements.
- Chaired a committee to begin an annual process of receiving assessment of seminary graduates two and five years after seminary graduation by lay leaders in their congregations (Pastoral Growth and Support Project).
- Chaired three task forces which provided new entry-level competence examinations for the seminaries.
- Worked in partnership with the LCMS Joint Seminary Fund to encourage and facilitate monetary support of the seminaries and seminary students.
- Provided for the distribution of grants from the Synod (unrestricted and restricted) to the seminaries.
- Convened annual (or twice-annual) meetings of the seminary presidents, academic deans, deans of students, admission directors, assessment officers, and others to discuss items of mutual interest and foster collegial cooperation between the two seminaries.
- Continued publication of a quarterly *Pastoral Education* insert for the *Reporter*.
- Arranged an LCMS Theology Professors Convocation (June 2012) comprised of all Concordia University System professors who teach theology and all seminary professors for the purpose of theological discussion and joint work on theological issues for the benefit of the church.
- Convened three meetings of the Concordia University System school pre-seminary program directors to discuss matters of mutual concern and interest, including discussions with appropriate seminary faculty and staff members.
- Collaborated with the Office of National Mission to convene a “think tank” of respected individuals in the LCMS to address the need to identify, inform, and encourage more young men toward pastoral ministry.

Seminary Data

While a complete “State of Seminary Education” report is posted at www.lcms.org/pastoraleducation, the following data provide a review of seminary enrollment over the previous triennium:

**LCMS Seminary Enrollment
(headcount, both seminaries combined)**

Program Description	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Residential Programs Leading to Ordination			
Master of Divinity	524	470	462
Alternate Route	21	21	27
TOTAL: ALL RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS LEADING TO ORDINATION	545	491	489
Contextual Programs Leading to Ordination			
Center for Hispanic Studies	12	17	18
Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP)	127	157	143

Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO)	26	24	0
Ethnic Immigrant Institute	30	25	26
Cross-Cultural Ministry Program (Irvine)	26	25	23
Deaf Institute	1	1	0
TOTAL: ALL CONTEXTUAL PROGRAMS LEADING TO ORDINATION	222	249	210
TOTAL: ALL PROGRAMS LEADING TO ORDINATION	767	740	699
Deaconess (non-Master of Arts)	23	18	15
Advanced Degree Programs			
Master of Arts	8	10	13
Master of Arts—Deaconess	44	46	35
Master of Sacred Theology	35	34	32
Doctor of Ministry	10	14	11
Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Missiology	70	71	79
TOTAL: ALL ADVANCED DEGREE PROGRAMS	167	175	170
Special/Other Students	7	18	13
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	964	951	897

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana (2010–2013):

Concordia Theological Seminary exists to from servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all. God continues to bless the seminary richly as it carries out this mission under Christ’s leadership for the sake of the church and the world. Among the many blessings your seminary has experienced over the past three years:

- An orderly presidential transition, as Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. succeeded Dr. Dean O. Wenthe in June 2011. Strong leadership has continued to characterize the president’s office.
- Ten-year (the longest possible) continuance of accreditation by the Association of Theological Schools and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools for all academic programs of the seminary.
- Increasingly strong recruiting of students and solid finances.
- Successful completion of the first four-year cycle of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program.
- Celebration of 10 years of deaconess training, including a hybrid online-residential MA in Deaconess Studies in recent years.
- Implementation of a revised Doctor of Ministry program that combines academic and pastoral excellence, distance and residential learning components, yet is very affordable.
- Reception of a \$250,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment to fund research and education for students, congregations, districts, and Synod on the issue of overcoming the burden of student indebtedness.
- Approval by the Association of Theological Schools of a Comprehensive Program for distance education.
- An outstanding faculty with rich pastoral ministry experience as well as the highest academic credentials from such outstanding universities as Harvard, Yale, Michigan, Vanderbilt, Notre Dame, Wisconsin, Durham, Oxford, Drew, Marquette, Princeton, and Basel.
- Expanded missional formation through both domestic programs in Baltimore, Chicago, and New Jersey, and internationally through study abroad programs in Madagascar, Russia, South Africa, Kenya, and India.

- Occupation of Phase A of the Library Expansion Project and landing a significant challenge gift that promises to help complete the entire expansion and renovation project within the next triennium.
- Outstanding contextual learning opportunities for students through fieldwork, summer vicarages, vicarages, and targeted module learning experiences.
- Significant leadership on the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (the president chairing the CTCR and two faculty serving as Committee chairs).
- Completion, in collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK), of *Ibada Takatifu*, Kenya's first Lutheran hymnal in the Swahili language (<http://www.ctsfw.edu/page.aspx?pid=939>).
- Collaboration with the Office of the President of the LCMS, the Office of Church Relations, and the Office of International Mission toward the development and implementation of the LCMS's Global Seminary Initiative.
- Hosting the International Lutheran Council's Fourth World Seminaries Conference (June 3–6, 2010) under the theme of "Confessional Lutheran Identity in Light of Changing Christian Demographics" (<http://ctsfw.edu/Page.aspx?pid=781>).
- Addition of the full-text articles from *Concordia Theological Quarterly* to the American Theological Library Association's full-text serials database, *ATLAS*.
- Faithful, caring, missional students from all areas of the United States and around the world.

Concordia Theological Seminary continues to be recognized as one of the leading confessional Lutheran seminaries in the world, called by some the "Wittenberg of the 21st century." The seminary is deeply grateful for God's abundant blessings of increasing enrollment and the generous support through His people. The seminary will, under God's grace, continue to faithfully fulfill its mission.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri (2010–2013)

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, first and foremost thanks God for the people and pastors who have faithfully and generously enabled the Seminary to advance our Lord's mission during the last triennium. Thousands and thousands of individuals in congregations continue to fulfill a key objective for which The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was founded, to "recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing education."

- While many American seminaries serve the ministry needs of multiple denominations, Concordia Seminary is blessed to prepare pastors and deaconesses only for ministries within the LCMS. This singular service gives clear focus to our Seminary's formation efforts and bonds Seminary and congregations together in doing our Savior's mission.
- In the past triennium 359 candidates were presented to the Board of Assignments to be placed in service. These candidates come from formation programs carefully designed to serve the special needs of ministry and mission in the new challenges of global and American culture.
- Numbers in parentheses indicate candidates presented for service in the past triennium: Center for Hispanic Studies (8), Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (13), Specific Ministry Pastor program (83), DELTO (24; now merged into SMP), Deaf Institute of Theology (1), and Cross Cultural Ministry Center in partnership with Concordia University, Irvine (10). Through on-site instruction, real time Internet classes, intensive weeks in St. Louis, with approved pastor/professor mentors, these programs serve seminarians unable to move to St. Louis.
- The Master of Divinity and Alternate Route are traditional residential programs on campus in St. Louis, the M.Div. by far the largest source of candidates to the church (235 candidates presented; 13 from the Alternate Route).
- A most significant innovation was establishing a school for urban ministry, the MissionShift Institute, in which seminarians and urban laity

learn best practices for ministry in metropolitan areas. MissionShift exemplifies the premium Concordia Seminary places on providing cross-cultural, immersion experiences for students.

- The Deaconess Program is experiencing growth, in part because of a partnership with St. Louis University by which a deaconess candidate can graduate with both a Masters in Deaconess Studies and a Master of Social Work (16 candidates presented).
- The Seminary's strategic plans call for regular reviews of all curricula.
- While serving ministerial needs within the LCMS, the faculty (35 members; 31 with terminal degrees) zealously offers theological education to those interested in quality Lutheran theology from any denomination, domestic or international. This happens through formal advanced studies and from non-degree continuing education offerings.
- A total of 317 academic degrees were awarded from 2010 to 2012, including PhD, DMin, STM, and Master of Arts degrees, along with Master of Divinity degrees.
- Two significant innovations are a Masters degree taught in Spanish and a modular PhD that does not require full-time residency.
- Continuing education happens through offerings at various sites throughout the country and world-wide through various offerings on iTunesU. In the last triennium about 3.3 million classes, presentations, and other offerings were downloaded from the Seminary's Web site. 3.3 million!
- Concordia Seminary has established the Center for the Study of Early Christian Texts, the Center for the Care of Creation, and the Institute for Stewardship Studies.
- Since no seminary can graduate "finished products," especially amidst the cultural changes of the 21st century, continuing education assumes increasing importance, and Concordia Seminary has the faculty and technical capacity to help meet the need.
- Concordia Seminary is responding to the decades-long change in the funding of theological education. In the past triennium the Seminary eliminated its debt completely, the first time since 1987 that the Seminary has been debt-free.
- Acknowledging that subsidy from the national budget of the LCMS is not likely to return, the Board of Regents and administration are actively working to secure long-term economic viability for the school, gradually implementing 2007 Res. 4-09A. By their sacrificial gifts to operations, student aid, and endowments, the people of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are generously supporting Concordia Seminary. We are truly thankful.

Healthy, thriving congregations will come in all shapes and sizes, an array of ethnicities and set in contexts from urban to rural. The Board of Regents, faculty, and administration are committed to providing pastors and deaconesses who are theologically sound, who know they are called to community and not just congregation, servants who work cooperatively with the laity, and show themselves persuasive leaders for God's mission to His world. Of more than 260 accredited seminaries in North America, Concordia Seminary is about the 20th largest and pledges to use its significant capacity to provide theological leadership and resources for the congregations and pastors who have so sacrificially blessed us. September begins the 175th anniversary year of Concordia Seminary, and we pray an energizing new era of service with the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Mission Advancement

LCMS Mission Advancement plans, executes, and coordinates synodwide fund-raising activities in order to maximize charitable gifts in support of Synod's mission and ministry.

Genesis of Mission Advancement: 2010–2013

Prior to July 1, 2011, the work of encouraging and securing donations in support of LCMS ministries, primarily LCMS World Mission and LCMS World Relief/Human Care, was divided between the

program areas themselves and the LCMS Foundation. Staff responsible for maintaining direct contact with contributors was embedded within the ministry staff and program budgets of each ministry. The LCMS Foundation provided services such as direct mail production, telephone solicitation services, data entry, research and marketing. With the restructuring, fund development staff previously embedded in the program areas were merged into a single unit initially named "Fund Development." The executive director of Fund Development would report to the newly created position of Chief Mission Officer, who supervises four additional executives: international mission, national mission, pastoral education, and communications. Mark D. Hofman, CFRE, began serving as the first executive director of Fund Development on Oct. 31, 2011. He had previously served 17 years in the development and advancement offices at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

The unit was renamed Mission Advancement in January 2012, a change designed to communicate the unit's purpose of advancing Synod's national and international mission efforts, as well as other special initiatives and projects. Equally important, the name change reflected a shift to a symmetrical fund-raising paradigm where staff matches the interests of each donor with appropriate ministry opportunities designed to help the donor accomplish his or her own charitable goals and objectives.

Fund-raising after Restructuring

As of July 2013, Mission Advancement comprises four functional areas: major donor and district relationships, direct response (mail, telephone, e-mail, and Web giving), campaigns and special projects, and missionary support (including Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa). The LCMS Foundation continues to provide critical support services in the areas of direct marketing (including gifts by phone), data/gift processing, record keeping, research, and planned giving services. Mission Advancement collaborates closely with the LCMS Communications in areas such as social media, Web presence, branding, and donor communications. Fund-raising by Mission Advancement comprises approximately 8 percent of Synod's annual expenditures.

LCMS Mission Advancement plans, executes, and coordinates Synod's fund-raising activities in order to maximize charitable gifts in support of Synod's mission and ministry. It exists to encourage and assist the people of the LCMS in vigorously making known the love of Christ at home and abroad through their charitable gifts by offering appropriate and prioritized (strategic) charitable opportunities. Advancement personnel pledge to deliver unquestionable transparency and accountability to donors for the gifts they have offered up for the Lord's work and to maximize the amount of every dollar deployed to the Lord's harvest fields through the judicious use of budgeted resources.

Support and Advocacy

Mission Advancement administers fund-raising in support of and on behalf of a number of internal stakeholders, including the Office of International Mission, the Office of National Mission, the Office of the President (for special projects and initiatives), and the will of the Synod as expressed in convention (special campaigns).

International Mission

For the Office of International Mission, Advancement supports and coordinates fund-raising by network-supported career and mid-term missionaries. Rooted in the recall of multiple missionaries from the field in 2003, the network-supported model of missionary funding seeks to determine, through direct contact with and exploration by individual missionaries, whether sufficient financial excess capacity exists in the LCMS to deploy and sustain additional missionaries

to the field. The NSM model is also a response to donors who wish to be assured that their offerings are supporting missionaries in the field by linking their gifts to a specific missionary's ongoing expenses. Mission Advancement also solicits and coordinates the solicitation of gifts in support of project and programs, beyond the direct salary and benefits paid to missionaries, which are administered by missionaries and their supervisors, and gifts which build overseas capacity among partner churches for proclaiming the Gospel to indigenous peoples. International Mission draws on donations restricted to supporting disaster relief work and other mercy-oriented programs and projects.

National Mission

Mission Advancement advocates gifts and offerings on behalf of the Office of National Mission, and from donors who have a passion for supporting domestic witness and mercy work. Over the past triennium, the Office of National Mission has consolidated and coordinated a number of emphasis areas into a cohesive and synchronized unit which serves the domestic needs of districts, congregations, and RSOs to share Christ's love in the realms of witness and mercy, and strengthens the LCMS at the local and regional level via several *Life Together* emphasis areas such as stewardship, campus ministry, and congregation revitalization. Through Mission Advancement, donors may target giving in ways that support the needs of rural/small town, suburban, or urban congregations and organizations.

Office of the President

Under directives from the Office of the President, Mission Advancement advocates for programs, projects, and initiatives that extend beyond the distinct roles of the Offices of International and National Mission. These initiatives, deemed to be of strategic value to the global confessional Lutheran community, draw on the marketing and communications capabilities of the national office as well as the fund-raising and reporting capabilities of Mission Advancement. One example is Project Wittenberg, an effort to provide a clearly Lutheran voice to the world as it approaches the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and turns its attention to the cradle of the Reformation: Wittenberg, Germany. Mission Advancement is and will be increasingly involved in raising dollars to renovate the Old Latin School in Wittenberg, as well as securing operating capital to initiate operations once the facility is ready for use.

Mission Advancement is also working with a strategy team from Synod's Concordia Historical Institute (CHI), located on the campus of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, to develop a sustainable funding plan and base of financial support for Synod's official archives. Over the past triennium, CHI has received funding from Synod's unrestricted budget to subsidize annual operations; however, a continuing decline in unrestricted dollars flowing into the Board of Directors' hands is forcing the examination of alternate funding strategies which include dedicated fund-raising for CHI. The board is currently providing matching funds to assist the team in raising sufficient resources to employ a new executive director at CHI.

Synod in Convention

Mission Advancement also supports and advocates on behalf of Synod actions taken by its conventions, which at times direct denomination-wide special campaigns.

Fan into Flame Report

As of July 2013, Mission Advancement is coordinating the fulfillment phase of Synod's *Ablaze! Fan into Flame* campaign, supporting districts and other stakeholders as they fulfill pledges made during the active fund-raising phase which concluded Oct. 31, 2011. [*Note: A more detailed Fan into Flame Report may be found in this Convention Workbook under the report of the Board of Directors.*]

Through Dec. 31, 2012, the status of *Fan into Flame* was as follows:

Total Gifts and Pledges to <i>Fan into Flame</i> :		\$69,311,720.94
Cash Received/Disbursed:	LESS:	(\$55,108,669.66)
Uncollectable Pledges:	LESS:	(\$ 5,290,465.41)
Balance of Outstanding Pledges		\$ 8,912,585.87

Figures include special gifts made as part of *Fan into Flame* to deploy new *Ablaze!* Network Supported Missionaries (Total Pledges and Cash Received/Disbursed of \$8,926,184.06), and gifts made to LCMS districts and congregations that conducted their own variation of the campaign (Total Pledges of \$8,158,748.71; Cash Received/Disbursed of \$5,753,987.71 and an Outstanding Pledge Balance of \$2,404,761.00).

A special report prepared at the conclusion of the active fund-raising phase of the campaign was provided to LCMS stakeholders in November 2011. A digital version of the document, which reported gifts and pledges from the campaign's inception through Oct. 31, 2011, is available online from the Synod's Web site.

Through Dec. 31, 2012, the status of *Fan into Flame* gifts and pledges is as follows (unaudited):

Cash Disbursed as of December 31, 2012		
Jerusalem (Local/Congregation Outreach)—15%		\$ 2,317,318.67
Judea (District Outreach)—15%		\$ 7,302,595.23
Samaria (National Outreach)—20%		\$ 3,321,057.23
Ends of the Earth (International)—50%		\$ 8,054,097.29
<i>Fan into Flame</i> direct missionary support		\$ 8,926,184.06
Campaign expenses funded by cash received		\$18,186,602.03
Cash on deposit for <i>Fan into Flame</i> projects/personnel		\$ 1,246,827.44
District/Congregation sub-campaigns cash		<u>\$ 5,753,987.71</u>
Subtotal of campaign cash received/dispensed		\$55,108,669.66
Pledge Status as of Dec. 31, 2012		
Uncollectable pledges as of Dec. 31, 2012		\$5,290,465.41
Balance of outstanding pledges		<u>\$ 8,912,585.87</u>
Subtotal of campaign pledges		<u>\$14,203,051.28</u>
<i>Fan into Flame</i> Campaign Total		<u>\$69,311,720.94</u>
Campaign Expense Deficit borne by Synod**		(\$1,981,994.32)

** To be recovered as outstanding pledges are fulfilled (10% cost ceiling) and other unrestricted gifts for *Fan into Flame* are received.

Total campaign expenses of \$20,168,596.35 represented 29.1% of the campaign's total terms of all gifts and pledges, or 31.5% of cash and collectable pledges (\$64,021,255.53). A sizable portion of the campaign's expense was the cost of utilizing an external campaign consultant. The total cost ratio, while approaching the limit of what is considered acceptable in terms of administration overhead (33% according to the Better Business Bureau), is indicative of both internal and external challenges the Synod faced when it chose to mount a significant denomination-wide fund-raising effort. Beginning in mid-2007, the impact of the nation's "Great Recession" on the ability of LCMS households, congregations, and districts to participate in the campaign and fulfill pledges was a noteworthy external challenge. Recessionary economic realities such as unemployment and the mortgage crisis likely limited the maximum potential revenue for *Fan into Flame* below the established goal of \$100 million, and demanded higher-than-normal fund-raising effort to be expended.

Mission Advancement has assumed responsibility for encouraging *Fan into Flame* donors to fulfill outstanding pledges and for monitoring the campaign's financial performance through the fulfillment phase, which will end in October 2017. The number of fund-raising staff dedicated to servicing *Fan into Flame* has been reduced to one non-traveling full-time staff member and part of a second full-time staff member.

Lutheran Malaria Initiative Update

Following overwhelming approval by delegates to the 2010 convention, the LCMS entered into a partnership with Lutheran World Relief (LWR) of Baltimore, Maryland, in the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI), a collaborative effort to help end malaria-related deaths in Africa by 2015. Underwritten by a grant from the United Nations Foundation (unconnected to the United Nations), LMI set an initial fund-raising goal of \$45 million, with the LCMS seeking to secure 55% of that amount (or \$25 million) over a four-year time frame. The Initiative's fund-raising effort was designed to focus energy on two distinctly separate strategies: outreach via congregations and the 35 districts of the LCMS, and a robust major gifts effort.

The outreach component has been immensely successful. All 35 districts formally agreed to conduct LMI fund-raising efforts at the congregation and organization level. In addition, three of our Concordia universities (Irvine, Nebraska, and Portland) recruited captains with fund-raising goals, who then engaged staff and faculty in financially supporting the Initiative. The outreach component of LMI has also been heavily involved in using social media to engage LCMS households in both giving and advocacy. By God's grace, hundreds of Lutheran congregations, elementary and high schools, Sunday Schools, Bible classes, and congregation-based groups have generously provided \$934,593 in gifts and another \$950,128 in documented or verbal pledges toward the effort.

Despite the best efforts of LCMS major gifts staff members, the second strategy has not met expectations. While a number of very significant and generous gifts and pledges for LMI were secured between July 2010 and December 2012, progress did not meet approved performance benchmarks negotiated with the United Nations Foundation. As a result, the opportunity to apply for a second, supplemental grant was withdrawn from consideration. Campaign leaders are working to reconfigure the fund-raising component toward more realistic goals based on performance data gathered thus far. Through Dec. 31, cash gifts from LCMS households totaled \$956,500. Documented and verbal pledges added another \$763,980.

As of Dec. 31, 2012, LCMS fund-raising efforts for LMI have resulted in combined cash/pledges totaling \$3,605,201 out of a total amount raised by the LCMS/LWR partnership of just over \$5,059,000. By design, the LCMS LMI programmatic efforts in Africa work from a cash-only basis, and the Initiative has not financially over-extended itself as malaria-related mercy work is carried out in the field. In November 2012, LCMS staffers, LCMS partner church leaders, and President Matthew Harrison participated in a dedicated advocacy event on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. Visiting with Senate and House members and Congressional staff, the team encouraged ongoing investment in the fight against malaria by the U.S. federal government. The event was considered successful both by Synod personnel and congressional participants.

Communications and Accountability

In September 2012, Mission Advancement and the Communications departments launched a new bi-monthly donor/stakeholder relations publication titled *Lutherans Engage the World*. The publication replaced three former newsletters produced by LCMS World Missions or LCMS World Relief and Human Care. The single publication is mailed to approximately 80,000 donor households as well as rostered church workers, every congregation, and the libraries of the 10 universities and two seminaries. Primarily an accountability instrument, *Lutherans Engage the World* is designed to demonstrate how the Synod utilizes the gifts and offerings of LCMS members to carry out witness, mercy, and life together efforts domestically and internationally. The magazine is also a part of a commitment to lower the cost of raising direct gifts and deploy more of every donated dollar

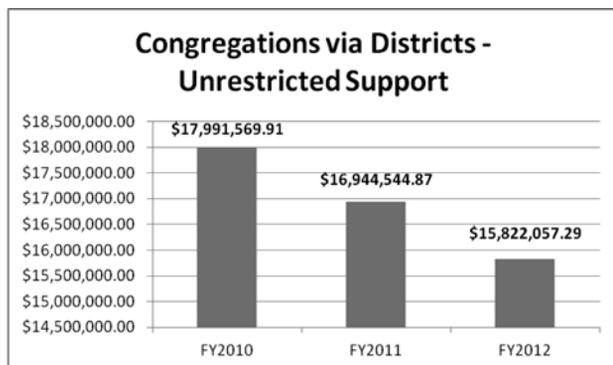
to the field. Similar stewardship measures are being taken in how Synod's national office carries out its fund-raising.

Trends in Giving—Fiscal Year 2010 through Fiscal Year 2012

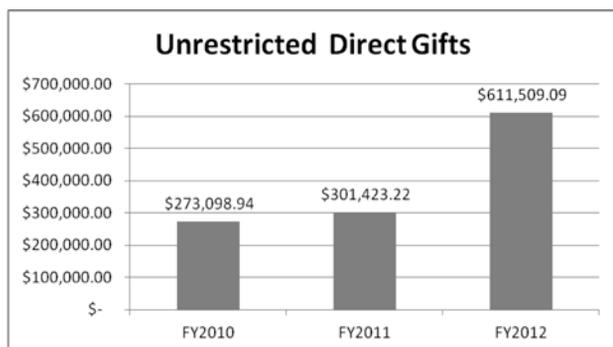
The following charts (tables) are provided to show giving trends in support of the LCMS and its various ministries carried out on behalf of LCMS congregations and households.

Unrestricted Support

This chart reflects gifts and offerings, collected by LCMS congregations and forwarded to their respective districts, who pledge unrestricted support for the national office and our work as a denomination:

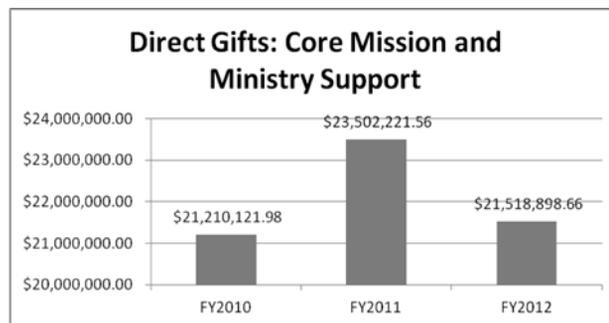


This chart reflects gifts and grants made by households, congregations, and organizations directly to the Synod's national office over the past triennium, which were unrestricted and utilized where needed most as determined by Synod's Board of Directors through the annual operating budget. This is the same category where the 2013 National Offering's *Together As Synod* gifts will be applied.

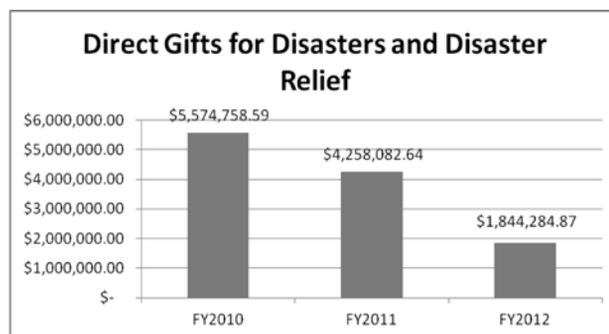


Restricted Support

The following chart reflects direct gifts received from households, congregations, and organizations to support Synod's work at the national and international level. Included are gifts to LCMS World Mission and LCMC World Relief and Human Care (under the old structure), and gifts to the Office of International Mission and Office of National Mission (under the new structure), including funds shared by both offices for non-disaster, mercy-related work.

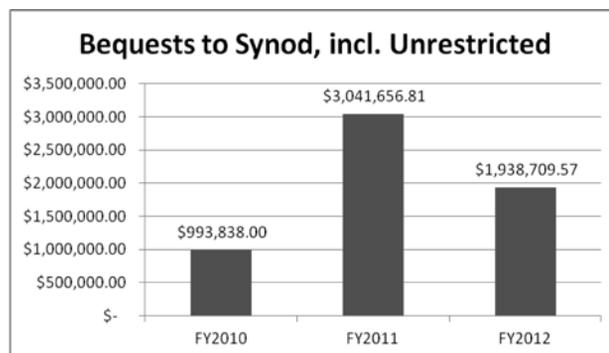


This chart represents gifts made in response to disasters that occurred over the past triennium. Not included in this report are donations made in response to Hurricane Isaac and Superstorm Sandy, which occurred during the 2013 fiscal year.

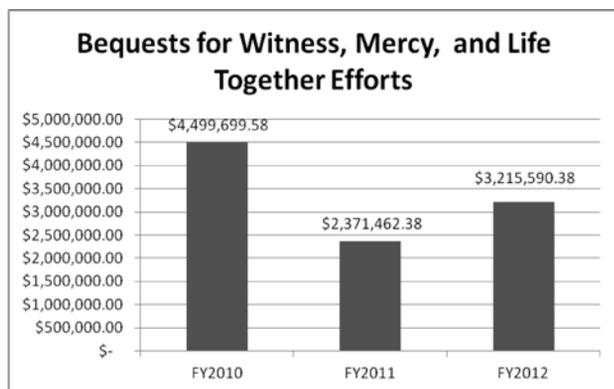


Bequests

The following charts report bequests received from donors who were called to their Lord over the past triennium. The first reports on bequests given to the Synod without restriction and bequests that directly supported the LCMS International Center.



This chart reports on bequests that were restricted by donors for the support of Synod's witness work (including work carried out by LCMS World Mission ahead of the restructuring and now by the Office of International Mission and Office of National Mission), mercy work (including the efforts of LCMS World Relief and Human care prior to restructuring, and now the Office of National Mission and Office of International Mission), and life together work carried out through the various department and ministries, now administered through the Office of National Mission.



The figures reported in these charts reflect only the support provided for the benefit of the following:

- The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Inc.
- Office of the President
- Office of International Mission (new structure)
- LCMS World Mission (old structure)
- LCMS World Relief and Human Care
- Office of National Mission (new structure)
- Various old structure departments (Youth, Stewardship, The 72, etc.)
- Pastoral Education (excluding Joint Seminary Fund)
- LCMS Communications
- LCMS Mission Advancement

Excluded from these figures are gifts in support of the LCMS Foundation, KFYO Radio, Concordia University System, Lutheran Housing Support Corporation, and the Joint Seminary Fund (managed by the LCMS Foundation).

Communications

The LCMS Communications Department develops and executes the synodwide strategic communications plan to include news, public relations, and other forms of information in order to engage the Synod's members in local, regional, national, and global mission and ministry.

Introduction

One of the fruits of restructuring at the LCMS International Center was the consolidation of the building's various communication staffs into one. Communication personnel from the former LCMS World Mission and LCMS World Relief and Human Care joined their peers in the former Board for Communication Services to become, simply, "LCMS Communications."

Today, our combined staff constitutes four divisions:

- **News and Information**, comprising the Synod's official periodicals (*The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter*); the online counterparts of those publications; our news bureau and e-news delivery systems; graphic design and layout; an array of other print material; and our newest publication, produced in concert with LCMS Mission Advancement, *Lutherans Engage the World*.
- **Integrated Communications**, comprising public and media relations, social media, advertising and marketing, business plans and rollouts, ministry promotion, special events, and the Church Information Center.
- **Internet**, comprising the look, feel, content, and functionality of the LCMS Web site and many other sites and blogs within the Synod.
- **Digital Media**, comprising video and photography.

All of our staffers, in all of our divisions, serve the common purpose of the LCMS.

Witness, Mercy, Life Together

At the dawn of this now-closing triennium, the newly elected President Harrison pondered his new role and the task of restructuring the national office—the latter in response to the adoption of Res. 8-08A at the July 2010 convention. In doing so, he focused on the foundational principles that define and direct the work of the church. Along with members of his leadership team, he conceived of a new expression and visual representation of the concept of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*, which would guide the work of the ministries of the LCMS corporate entity headquartered at the International Center.

This phrase—*Witness, Mercy, Life Together*—illustrates how the church lives and works together to proclaim the Gospel and provide for our brothers and sisters in Christ in our congregations, communities, and throughout the world. In all we do, Christ is at the center, leading us, sustaining us, keeping us focused on our mission. This will never change. However, the manner in which this message is expressed has changed.

It has become simpler, clearer. In marketing terminology, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has refreshed its brand. Much of our brand image—the shape of the LCMS cross, our church body's name—has stayed the same. But today we are using new communication strategies to help draw members closer to—give them a clearer picture of—our mission.

We have changed the official color of the Synod's tripartite logo cross from burgundy to blue (though burgundy still is entirely appropriate). We have given our major groupings of ministries, under the headings *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*, their own identifying "palettes," complementary cross logos, and options for applying the church body's signature in association with their ministries. We have cut down on the forest of logos, taglines, and trademarks that proved so confusing over the years. In a word, thanks to the work of many—not least the President's Office, the restructuring-related committees appointed by that office, and the collegial spirit of all concerned—we have greater *unification* today than three years ago. And yet, amid this closer integration, we have not sacrificed the distinctiveness or potential for creativity of our various ministries. To the contrary, we think those qualities have been sharpened.

For its part, LCMS Communications is considered a "green" department (as opposed to a "red" one associated with *Witness* or a "purple" one under *Mercy*). We are part of the family of ministries at the International Center under the collective heading of *Life Together*.

But we serve everyone—this being more in the nature of a service unit than a programmatic one. We even serve among ourselves. While every member of the staff has his niche, his specialty, occasions are common—particularly in times of natural disasters and other major events—when it's "all hands on deck," when everyone must work together on the interwoven facets of a common goal, and when versatility and "cross-training" of staff come in most handy.

This dynamic of a staff working in sync—not just among themselves but with other offices at the International Center and indeed with people all across America and the world—came into play, to one degree or another, in a number of the highlights following.

Highlights of the Past Triennium

News and Information

- Launched a redesigned *Lutheran Witness* (January 2011)—unabashedly Lutheran, genuinely helpful and informative for readers, and visually appealing.
- Improved on the rate of annual "falloff" of *Witness* circulation, thanks mainly to increases in individual subscriptions. Current circulation (as

of January 2013) stands at 138,000. Also, thanks to an app developed by Concordia Publishing House (CPH), the *Witness* became available via digital subscription in 2012.

- The digital edition provides readers with many new features and benefits. Its format functions on most devices, including smart phones, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers.
- The *Witness* team plans to further enhance the digital format by adding bonus content such as videos and motion graphics. The digital version is available as an add-on to a current print subscription or as a stand-alone product.
- Published several special issues of the *Witness*, most of them made possible by financial assistance from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans: Synod's "Blessings, Gifts, and Challenges" (May 2011); "C. F. W. Walther: A Man for the Ages" (October 2011); "The Blessings of Children" (and the many opportunities for serving as foster or adoptive parents; November 2011); "Our Vocation as Citizens" (and our life, duties, and rights as Lutheran Christians in the public square; April 2012); "Standing Ready" (the church's service to the Armed Forces as well as the chaplains and congregations that make our efforts possible; August, 2012); and "The State of the Synod" (the Synod's financial status; September 2012).
- Won 27 national awards from the Associated Church Press and the Evangelical Press Association for excellence in *The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter*.
- Continued partnering with and supporting CPH's efforts to market and promote the *Witness*, including *Lutheran Witness/Portals of Prayer* combination offers.
- Unveiled, in conjunction with LCMS Mission Advancement, a new donor-focused magazine called *Lutherans Engage the World*. The maiden issue (September 2012) of this bi-monthly was sent to some 98,000 LCMS donors, rostered members, and missionaries past and present.
- *Lutherans Engage the World* combines the content of three former newsletters—*Sharing*, *Caring*, and *Harvest News*—into one informative and inspiring magazine for LCMS supporters and stakeholders. It provides a detailed picture of how gifts and offerings to the LCMS, through its varied ministries, are being used to reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through works of witness and mercy.
- In another partnership with CPH, *Engage* soon will be available as a newsstand-style mobile app for iPhones, iPod Touch, and iPads. Additional digital versions of each issue can be found at www.lcms.org/lutheransengage.
- Strengthened the cooperative relationship (a key goal of restructuring) between LCMS Communications and LCMS Mission Advancement (formerly Fund Development). Prominent examples of this are the case-document prepared for the Office of National Mission, the "Together as Synod" and "Global Seminary Initiative" case documents, and "The Wittenberg Project" materials.
- Increasingly, going forward, major donors who want to change a life or help to change the world will have attractively designed case documents to help them review the facts, goals, and opportunities for supporting various aspects of LCMS work throughout America and the world.
- Information to the church on the refreshed-branding effort would come in the form of a brand manual, reference guide, brochures, and FAQs; a video, articles and advertisements; internal and external e-blasts, social-media messaging, a refitted Web site; presentations to the LCMS Board of Directors and Council of Presidents; a rollout (using retrofitted exhibit displays) at district conventions; and sundry other means.
- Served as a vital partner in providing communication-leadership skills to new missionaries at the annual new-missionary orientations. "Tech tips" involved branding, navigation of the Synod's Web site, LCMS publications, corporate and personal social media, communication security, using technology effectively to connect with supporters, and providing newsletter and PowerPoint templates.
- A helpful accomplishment prior to the most recent missionary orientation was the preparation and launch of the new LCMS International Google Apps/Intranet site—a central place for overseas missionaries to find resources, receive messages, and share information.
- Worked continually (and the work goes on) with Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and the United Nations Foundation on the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI). The public launch of this \$45 million campaign came in June 2011. Congregations and schools across the country, using starter kits, hosted special offerings, recognitions, and other activities. District campaigns followed, as did major-donor events. Ongoing publicity stoked awareness of LMI and drove traffic to the LMI Web site and social-media channels.
- LCMS Communications helped promote "World Malaria Day" through the use of strategic messaging and publicizing CPH's efforts benefiting LMI. We created social media, video, employee messages, Web updates, e-blasts, and press releases on the day's special events, including a chapel service at the International Center.
- Last, we helped organize (1) a visit to Tanzania, where U.S. Congressional staff took part in a bed-net distribution, and (2) a day of appointments on Capitol Hill, where LWR, LCMS, and LCMS partner-church officials advocated for LMI and the ongoing funding of anti-malaria programming in Africa.
- Helped create, in concert with the Office of the President, Concordia Plan Services, and others, the Synod's "Free to Be Faithful" campaign, an effort to educate and inspire LCMS constituents to take informed action to safeguard religious freedoms. Two major factors spurring this effort were President Harrison's appearance on Capitol Hill testifying before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's hearings on the so-called HHS contraceptive mandate, and later, President Harrison's (and the Synod's) reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
- Managed the logistics (and handled the accompanying media relations and social media duties) for LCMS appointments with members of Congress on "Lutheran Services in America Day" at the White House (October 2011).
- Played a major role in the C. F. W. Walther bicentennial celebration: special Web site, logo, and Web buttons; tours of historic sites in St. Louis and Perry County, Mo.; e-blasts and social media posts; releases and print ads; and securing St. Louis County and State of Missouri proclamations recognizing Walther's contributions.
- Sent out 142 press releases (July 2010 through September 2012) garnering some 580 confirmed media placements. On the very day this report was drafted, Integrated Communications secured an interview between LCMS Life Ministries Director Maggie Karner and *The New York Times* on the subject of the "March for Life" in Washington DC, Jan. 25, 2013.
- Grew our social media tallies to 39,000 LCMS Facebook and 6,300 LCMS Twitter followers.
- Handled, via the LCMS Church Information Center, 31,000 phone and email inquiries.

Integrated Communications

- Worked with the Office of the President's leadership team to develop the *Witness*, *Mercy*, *Life Together* logo, design the emphasis's Web pages, produce collateral materials, and develop a communications plan for rolling out the emphasis to key church audiences.
- Launched a "refreshed brand" for the Synod in April 2012. Again, the rebranding stemmed from the restructuring mandated by the 2010 convention to reorganize, consolidate, and streamline the ministries of the LCMS home office. The Communications Department worked with the Office of the President, consultants, and an array of LCMS leaders to outline the goals for rebranding and settle on a comprehensive strategy for reaching those goals.

Internet

- Launched, after more than two-and-a-half years of conceptualization, design, and development, the new lcms.org Web site (April 2011). The

work involved a great many people (LCMS Communications, General Services, Information Technology, the then LCMS World Mission and LCMS World Relief and Human Care, and the LCMS Foundation).

- The new site, better organized and more intuitive, offers streamlined topical navigation; a MegaMenu for at-a-glance viewing of items; and “MyLCMS” account creation to manage contact information, electronic newsletters, and people’s personal interests and giving histories.
- Further, it offers enhanced search capabilities and improved and consolidated online directories (locators) for churches, schools, church workers, Recognized Service Organizations, and others. Moreover, it maintains a library for direct access to a host of documents, forms, and newsletters and features an improved online-giving catalogue and electronic receipting for online giving.
- Monitored continually the feedback of site visitors, making tweaks to improve content and functionality. Researched, developed, and configured system features as needed.
- Redesigned the KFUE-AM and Classic99.com Web sites.
- Gave a major facelift to the *Christian Cyclopaedia* on lcms.org and made enhancements to the “Make-a-Gift” section.
- Designed and implemented, in response to the Synod’s refreshed branding, the graphical and e-mail template changes on lcms.org as well as on our blogs and online video and photo galleries.
- Worked with Blackbaud to finalize our online event registration process.

Digital Media

The advent, as a result of restructuring, of the Synod’s first unit devoted exclusively to video, digital photography, and imagery archiving (Digital Media) gives the national office more powerful visual components within many of its communication pieces, including online, electronic messaging, print, and produced video deliverables. It offers improved efficiencies in the production of video products and in the maintenance of archived assets, yielding better stewardship of resources. Finally, particularly in terms of video, it heightens awareness of LCMS programs and ministries both in the church at large and in the secular world.

High spots of this newly organized division in the past triennium (as of January 2013) include the following:

- Provided complete photo and video coverage of the LCMS theological conference in Prague, Czech Republic.
- Supplied first-ever digital-media coverage of the LCMS International Disaster-Relief Conference in St. Louis.
- Produced monthly video messages, along with a number of other special messages, from President Harrison.
- Produced the district convention video “*Witness, Mercy, Life Together: Blessings—Challenges—Opportunities.*”
- Attained nearly 83,000 YouTube “views” (a record for us) with five video messages on the topic of the Health and Human Services contraceptive mandate and religious freedom: “Harrison Speaks before House Committee,” “LCMS President Comments on Birth Control Mandate,” “Harrison Answers House Committee Questions,” “Karner Speaks on Heritage Foundation Panel,” and “LCMS Issues Open Letter on Religious Freedom.”
- Archived thousands of slides from the 1960s to the 1980s; identified and shipped them to Concordia Historical Institute.
- Produced the video project—in concert with a special issue of *The Lutheran Witness*—on LCMS military chaplaincy: “Those Who Serve.”
- Produced a number of other significant videos, including but not limited to pieces on the Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission; the Lutheran Malaria Initiative and World Malaria Day; the *Lutherans Engage the World* magazine presentation; missionary “Reconnects”; Haiti Lutheran village, clinic, church, and seminary dedications; the Washington D C “March for Life”; “The Other Rosa” (LCMS educator Dr. Rosa Young, filmed on location in Selma and Rosebud, Alabama); and the “Free to Be Faithful” campaign.

It should be noted that Digital Media plays a major role in all of our department’s common efforts during times of disaster. Natural and man-made disasters were legion in the past triennium, including such events as the following:

- Japan earthquake and tsunami
- Joplin, Missouri, tornado
- Alabama storms (five other states affected)
- Colorado and Texas wildfires
- Minot, North Dakota, floods
- Hurricane Irene
- Drought and famine in east Africa
- Indiana tornadoes
- Colorado movie theater shootings
- Midwest drought
- Hurricane Isaac
- Philippines earthquake
- Selma, Alabama, flooding
- Super-storm Sandy
- Newtown, Connecticut, shootings

Catastrophes prompt a wide-ranging and sustained response from LCMS Communications, including Digital Media. Typical efforts include news stories with daily updates; consolidated news summary pages for lcms.org; photo galleries; videos; audio clips; presidential statements and video messages; rotating Web site content; congregational resources; giving opportunities; e-blasts; social media messaging; interviews with in-country missionaries and other personnel; and coordinated media relations, including distribution of news releases and scheduling interviews for KFUE Radio and secular radio and TV outlets.

When the situation merits it, which is often, Digital Media goes on location with LCMS disaster-relief assessment teams to capture news, interviews, photos, and video—often making return trips for follow-up coverage, an example of this being the video “Chile Two Years Later—From Despair to Hope.”

Digital Media is a key part of disaster-related communications in particular and of overall LCMS Communications in general.

The Future

Looking toward the new triennium, we intend to continue the trend of making our synodwide communications more *coordinated*.

We want to be more globally engaged, more in a network, with our 34 partner churches. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is not the “big brother” of our partner churches; rather, as the word implies, we are their equal *partners*. We don’t just tell our partners *our* news; we tell our people *their* news. To help bring this about, we need to continue fostering closer, more-regular contact with the Office of International Mission’s deployed regional directors and communication specialists, determining the best common platform for their communication portals. (It will be a blessing when all five of our worldwide regions have their own communication specialists.)

As of January 2013, we were in the midst of constructing a so-called global blog—an aggregate of all of our individual ministry blogs—putting all of our blogs into a better organized, single place, under one main address, enabling people quickly to find and channel into what they want.

This new system will be coupled with a more integrated and efficient method of posting and sharing news stories, press releases, and the like. It will offer a more comprehensive, one-stop shop, with RSS (Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication) feeds picking, pulling, and pushing information to wherever it is desired. Anyone with a Web site or e-mail can receive whatever stories and information

he wants. He just sets up his preferences, and the information will keep coming automatically.

Also as of January we were far along in developing an LCMS mobile strategy/mobile Web content flow that will lead to the launch of a mobile-friendly lcms.org.

Meanwhile, we remain keen on driving more traffic to the Synod's full Web site. One way of doing this, besides making the day-to-day improvements that come from our own ideas or from the feedback of site visitors, is to offer at least certain parts of the Web site in multiple languages. As of this writing, we are nearly ready to offer a Spanish-language landing page (along with Spanish-language locator tools), with the hope of adding similar resources in Mandarin, Arabic, and other languages down the line.

The Synod currently is the dominant Lutheran denominational presence on social media, and we aim to grow our numbers. Through our social communications, our followers learn about everything from our disaster-relief efforts to missionary sending, from the significance of holidays and festivals to the day-to-day celebration of opportunities that our members have to be a blessing to others. Our posts engender lively and informative discussion of theology, mercy works, church music, and the definition of marriage, among many other topics.

Through such vehicles as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, we will continue to create awareness about the LCMS, its beliefs, practices and activities, building online communities for LCMS members and others to learn more about the Synod and to share their spiritual experiences with one another.

We have been and will continue to forge closer bonds with our corporate partners: the LCMS Foundation, Concordia Plan Services, Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Concordia Publishing House, Concordia University System, and Concordia Historical Institute.

These corporations are in some ways siloed by our structure because they are separate legal entities with different core missions. We are brought together in the Synod *Handbook* with a common mission, but that doesn't change the fact that they have their own things to do and their own ways of communicating those things to their own constituents.

Still, in many cases, those constituents, those audiences, are our audiences too. We are swimming in the same pool. Yet, we don't always know what the others are doing. While we help one another from time to time—and increasingly so of late—there are ways for us to coordinate our communications better.

The same can be said about our relationship with our Recognized Service Organizations, the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, and the Lutheran Laymen's League (Lutheran Hour Ministries). Regarding the latter, certainly there is potential for more cooperative ventures in light of the League's presence on some 1,400 radio stations in the United States and Canada and its network of ministry centers and broadcast outlets in 30 countries.

We want to work with our districts in strengthening the communications output of their congregations. To that end, we are in the midst of a pilot project with four districts seeking ways to enhance congregational communications in their communities across all communication domains: print, Web, social media, public and media relations, crisis management, and so on.

Notably, Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) for years offered Parish Media Teams, helping congregations strengthen their communication outreach. While LHM no longer is doing this, they still have expertise in this regard, and we would benefit by working with them in coming up with our own approaches and resources.

We will continue to intensify our work with LCMS Mission Advancement. There are things we can do (we are doing a number of

them now) to take better care both of our donors and of our Principal Gift Officers. We want to help Mission Advancement increase unrestricted giving to the Synod. We want to help deepen donor trust in the church's stewardship of their funds and show them the great sense of applying ample resources to "where needed most."

As for our publications, it is our perennial goal, shared by our publishing partner, CPH, to increase subscriptions to *The Lutheran Witness*. Given the sinking trends of denominational magazines over the years, this is a daunting task. But we will keep trying, not least through the aforementioned digital *Witness* and *Witness* app, brought to us courtesy of CPH.

Reporter is mailed, free of charge, to rostered church workers, congregational lay leaders, and current convention delegates. Happily, some 2,000 laypeople not on the *gratis* mailing list are paying for their own private subscriptions. We would encourage others interested in the affairs of their national church to do the same. That being said, people should know that *Reporter*, in its entirety (save for advertisements and caption-only photos), is freely available, along with added and updated content, at the *Reporter Online* Web site.

Such is the demand for videos that Digital Media constantly finds itself in the position of being asked to produce more videos than it reasonably can and at a greater cost than our national offices and ministries can afford to pay. Already in this current triennium (January 2013) we are forced to scale back on the number of video projects produced for the sake of doing the highest-priority ones.

Going forward, we will continue this practice of providing limited but high-quality video work. When a request for a video is made, we will consult with our prospective client and ask, "What is the reason for creating this video? Does the purpose go beyond the notion that 'it sounds like a good idea'? Is it worth the money?"

Finally, LCMS Communications looks forward to working with the Office of the President and others in planning and executing a fitting celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017.

Conclusion

The Synod has a window of national and international opportunity to make a difference for the kingdom of God through an intentional, coordinated effort to enlist all synodwide resources in a united work. The Synod is in a position to be the premiere catalyst of a seamlessly connected global network of confessional Lutheran partners united in mission to *Witness* to the Gospel, manifest *Mercy*, and enhance *Life Together*. Synod's confessional teaching, preaching, and care are steeped in the Scriptures. The world and the Church Militant are in desperate need of hearing the inspired truths of Scripture. Faithfulness, unity of purpose, and mutual trust are the necessary components to make the most of this time of opportunity, and Synod's purpose is for times as these—historic moments of opportunity—to work together to share more effectively the life-saving message of Christ come in the flesh, Christ crucified, Christ risen, and Christ coming again. We are collectively this enduring witness to the world. Now is the time for the church to stand united to call sinners to repentance and to share the Good News that Christ has come to forgive sinners. Let us ever be faithful to this our witness to the world.

Gregory K. Williamson, *Chief Mission Officer*

Entered into Rest

Ordained Minister

Abbott, Norman V	Deterding, John G	Hannusch, Hugo A	Krahn, Robert A
Adam, William W	Dickinson, Richard C	Hansel, Wilferd A	Kramer, Robert L
Aldrich, Bradley C	Diebenow, Peter	Happel, Edward H	Krause, E George
Aleman, Raul	Dienst, Martin P	Harms, David G	Krause, Martin H
Aman, Norman	Dierking, Norman H	Hasenstein, Steven J	Krekeler, Carl H
Arndt, Richard Louis	Dierks, Reinhold F	Haug, Don D	Kreyling, Paul C
Azzam, Edward B	Dietz, Paul T	Haugen, James A	Krueger, Carl Louis
Baese, Walter J	Dingel, Arthur C	Hauser, J George	Krueger, Stephen C*
Bakalyar, Donovan A	Discher, Gerald R	Heerboth, Paul M	Kuhn, Gerald E*
Balzer, Douglas K	Doran, Daniel W	Heinlein, Harold E	Kuhn, Wesley J
Bangert, Martin W	Eifert, Edwin W	Herfkens, Steven G	Kurz, George E
Barnes, Bob A	Einem, Edward H	Herfurth, Lawrence E	Lang, Edward M
Barth, Walther L	Elgert, Louis G	Hermetz, Harold Gene	Larsen, William F
Bauer, Jack A	Ellis, Terrance K	Hessel, Theodore E	Lasky, Dale G
Bauer, Walter R	Elrod, J Murray	Hill, William A	Leas, Joseph F
Baumgartner, George A	Emslie, John W	Hischke, Roland N	Lichtsinn, Edmund W
Baumgartner, John D	Ertl, James A	Hoffmaster, Paul D	Linderman, James R
Beck, Paul R	Esala, H Paul	Holz, Herbert F	Lochhaas, Philip H
Begin, Robert M	Etzel, Lenhart E	Huxhold, Paul F	Loesch, Nathan Otto
Beiderwieden, John H	Fahr, Duane L	Jackson, Robert L	Lozano, Mario
Benner, Roger L	Fechner, Raymond W	Jaeger, Robert F	Ludwig, Arnold W
Berg, Darin P	Feddersen, Earl P	Janssen, Carl Warner	Lueders, Carl E
Bergt, Robert R	Fees, Ross W	Janzow, Walter Theophil	Luedtke, Carl F
Berndt, Manfred Helmuth	Feierabend, John O	Jensen, Robert A	Mac Gregor, William J
Bessinger, David H	Felton, Charles W	Jeske, David G	Machina, J S Frank
Beversdorf, Alden James	Finch, Robert L	Ji, Won-Yong	Mackensen, Gordon R
Beyers, Burnell	Fischer, Kenneth E	Johnson, Donald L	Majewski, Aloysius
Biester, Donald W	Friedrichs, D William	Johnson, G Edward	Mangone, Charles R
Bloker, James S	Friedrichsmeyer, Eugene O	Jording, Howard J	Mann, Donald Dale
Blunck, Paul H	Frincke, Herman R	Jost, Larry A	Martin, Terry L
Bode, Gerhard F	Fritz, Marvin R	Junkans, Ervin A	Matthias, Elmer W
Boettcher, Lowell F	Fritze, Andrew J*	Kabelitz, Norbert E	Mattson, John M
Borcherding, Charles D	Galchutt, Gary C	Kappeler, Eugene D	May, Wilbur T
Brack, La Vern L	Garrett, Gerald Gene	Kassulke, Willard J	Mehl, Carl E
Bradtke, Traugott Paul	Garton, Horace W	Kaufmann, Clifford C	Meissner, Harold V
Brauer, Martin W	Geisler, John H	Kaufmann, Kenneth M	Meitz, Erwin W
Brelje, Milford C	Gentzke, Robert W	Kaufmann, Philip S	Mendenhall, Thomas B
Broeske, Donald E	Gerike, Ernest L	Kayser, John Walter	Mentz, Marlin A
Buehner, Theo W	Gerlach, Donald R	Keekley, Harold F	Merkens, Guido A
Bunnett, Thomas T	Gesterling, Donald Le Roy	Keller, Walter E	Merz, Robert J
Bush, Gene H	Gilmore, Rozell	Kelly, Adrian R	Meyer, Arno H
Buuck, LeRoy E*	Gleason, Howard Jess	Kelm, Alvin Dean	Meyer, Charles A
Campbell, Scott C	Gohdes, Melvin J	Kiehl, Erich H	Meyer, Edward H
Campen, Ralph M	Goldberger, Arthur J	Kirchner, Donald E	Meyer, Eldor W
Christiansen, Donald A	Goltermann, Elmer M	Klawitter, Harold J	Meyer, Jerome H
Christiansen, Herman	Gragg, Randolph Lewis	Klein, Kurt A	Meyer, Walter H
Claasen, Donald K	Gravesmill, Keith P	Klemp, John A	Middendorf, Marvin L
Clausen, Marvin W	Griesse, Elmer E	Koch, Willard E	Miller, Fred M
Clayton, Gary R	Griffin, Robert E	Koehler, Edward J	Miller, La Mar
Croll, Edgar A	Groerich, James G	Koehler, Robert T	Miller, Richard A
Crook, Norris C	Gronbach, Arthur F	Koenker, Ernest B	Mirly, Herbert H
Cutler, Robert E	Gross, Edward H	Kohlmeier, William G	Mitchell, Harold R
Dake, Melvin L	Groth, Harvey W	Kolb, Erwin J	Mueller, Armand J
Dallmann, Theodore C	Gundlach, Theodore E	Koller, Walter E	Mueller, Norbert H
Daniel, Thomas A	Haack, Milton G	Koschmann, Paul H	Mueller, Robert G
De Ramus, David T	Hackmann, E Edward	Koyra, Eshetu Abate	Mueller, Theodore H
Dengler, Donald C	Hafner, Carl W	Kraft, Donald A	Mulder, David P
	Hamlow, Richard L	Kraft, Philip H	Myers, Joseph L

Myers, L Wayne	Salvhus, Arvid M	Vogel, Luther E	Dittman, James L
Nau, Louis Y	Sammeter, Carl A	Vogel, Theodore H	Ebel, William H
Neff, Karl M	Sandmann, Rudolph D	Volz, Paul M	Ebert, Dorothy L
Nehring, David P	Sarria, Rick H	Wachholz, Edward R	Eggerding, Thomas M
Nelsen, Louis E	Sauer, John A	Waech, Oswald A	Einspahr, Marie E
Nichols, Ronald A	Schaff, Rudolph H	Wagner, Arnold O*	Eisman, Jerry M
Nickel, David M	Schiebinger, Darrell D	Walters, Ralph M	Erdman, Marvin R
Niederbrach, Willard E	Schielke, Frederick W	Weber, Erhardt P	Fairman, Donald
Nielsen, Richard J	Schinnerer, Carl F	Webern, Wolfgang M	Felts, Florian L
Nieting, Edmund P	Schlecht, Richard L	Wells, James L	Fenner, Margaret
Nissen, Norman E	Schlessmann, Phillip C	Werberig, Robert J	Flandermeier, Wilfred W
Norden, Al J	Schlie, David S	Wesselschmidt, Quentin F	Flesch, Robert W
Nygaard, Spencer M	Schmidt, Edward A*	Wessler, Arnold A	Foote, Eunice L
Oetting, J Louis	Schmidt, Raymond D	Westermann, Ted D	Fritz, Estella
Olimb, Curtis A	Schneider, Norman A	Weston, Robert W	Gaede, Richard H
Olson, Robert W	Schoenfuhs, Walter P	Whitecotton, Howard	Gersmehl, Lienhard W
Ostruske, Neal J	Schoppa, Roy M	Wiese, James Lorenz	Gesch, Ron
Ott, Norman W	Schreiber, William A	Wilcken, Robert S	Geske, Laura Ruth
Palkewick, Robert J	Schultz, Oliver M	Wilk, James L	Giese, Mary A
Palmer, Kevin R	Schumacher, Fred	Williams, David R	Glinsmann, Ervin E*
Pankow, Edward R	Schwolert, Norman Walter	Wiltenburg, William J	Goldfish, Carol M
Pardieck, David C	Seegers, Conrad J	Wippich, De Lloyd D	Grebasch, Douglas H
Park, Thomas C*	Siefkes, William F	Wippich, Ellsworth R	Gresens, Ronald J
Parsch, Daniel Paul	Skibbe, Cecil H	Wolf, Lester August	Greve, Kenneth
Patscheck, Arthur F	Smith, Elmer Charles	Wolka, Allen D	Grewe, Edwin A*
Pavel, Jan	Sparaco, Gerard T	Wyneken, Gerald E	Grimm, Carol Ann
Perez-Arche, Mario	Spatzek, Carlton C	Zagel, Richard C	Grimm, William I
Peterson, Clifford H	Speckman, Timothy R	Zeile, Walter L	Grotelueschen, Paul G
Peterson, Matthew B	Spiekerman, Victor J	Zietlow, Harold H	Haag, Robert J
Pflugger, Ronald M	Springer, Norman R	Zimmermann, John C	Halter, Clifford A
Piller, Robert H	Steffen, Norman L		Hanssen, Melba Joan
Pinnt, Walter M	Steinbeck, Arnold G	Commissioned Minister	Hauch, Robert H
Polack, William Gustave	Steinberg, Alan G	Adams, Sue Anne Ruth	Hauser, Delores A
Poock, Donald F	Steinbronn, Reuben August	Althouse, J Stanton	Hemler, Arthur G
Prange, Erwin E	Stelzer, Harold T	Anderson, Judith Estelle	Hilgendorf, Richard
Prifogle, Mitchell J	Stennfeld, Fred H	Aronson, Devie S	Hillert, Richard W*
Prouty, Albert I	Steuernagel, David A	Backs, Peggy A	Hillmann, Paul L
Recks, John F	Stiemke, Frederick A	Bathje, Arnold A	Holschen, Judith A
Rehwaldt, Alan C	Stoehr, Waldemar C	Becker, Gerhardt Christian*	Holthus, Eldon
Reichel, Charles E	Stuempfig, Ewald L	Behrendt, Howard L	Holtzen, Milton P
Reimer, Robert K	Theiss, Louis C	Bergman, Delia	Honig, Martin L
Reimold, John Irvin	Thiele, Karl	Bergman, Henry W	Jagels, Harold E
Reinheimer, Daniel D	Thiem, Alfred E	Beuschlein, Martha I	Jahnke, Ronald H
Reinisch, Richard O	Thies, Gerard L	Bluma, George W	Jahr, Rachel R
Renken, Glenn E	Thoelke, Robert L	Bolt, Louise R*	Jensen, Brian Leslie
Riemer, Ronald E	Thurber, William J	Brackensick, James R	Jiede, Edwin A
Roberts, Walter W	Thyr, Elmer D	Brauer, Friedrich E	Kaun, Charles R
Roever, Kenneth H	Timm, Terry A	Bredchoft, Linda L*	Kirshtner, Diann C
Rogers, Michael L	Tompkins, Donald L	Bunge, Harold O	Kloha, Glenn E
Rohlfing, Lawrence F	Tornow, Hans R	Burright, George Doug	Koepke, Edgar A
Rolf, Robert F	Trout, Larry James	Callies, Bernhard J	Korth, Dale W
Rosche, Kenneth L	Tuchardt, Paul L	Camberg, Terry N	Korthals, Richard G
Rowoldt, Walter E	Ude, Willis P*	Claude, Wilbur	Koschmann, Edward G
Rowoldt, Walter E*	Uhles, Paul F	Dallmann, La Verne M	Kostencki, Daniel S
Ruhlig, Edward M	Utecht, Robert E	Daniel, Catherine Sue	Krause, David L
Ruhlig, Erwin A	Vance, Phillip E	Delventhal, Wayne H	Krause, Edward B
Ryding, Eugene C	Vick, Calvin T	Demske, Robert M	Krepesky, Richard D
Sallach, Wilbert L	Vigil, Leopoldo	Dinger, Ralph E	Krieger, Edith E

Krueger, Frederic R	Nelson, Paula Beth	Schluckbier, Robert Alan
Kruse, Kathryn Winter	Nelson, Stacey	Schmidt, Karl W
Kurth, Florence M	Neumeyer, William	Schmidt, Mabel Marie
Kurth, Frederick A	Nielsen, Richard J	Schroeder, Erlen O
Laubenstein, Leonard P	Nitz, Ralph Ernest	Schroeder, Noel J
Lauckner, Edie H*	Ore, Constance	Schroeder, Robert H
Lawson, Sandra Mae	Ott, Edwin Ralph	Schultz, Wendy Marie
Lebrecht, Larry G	Palisch, Theodore Herman	Schwarz, Myrna Lou
Lederer, Nancy R	Palmer, Connie L	Seevers, Kenneth F
Lietz, Fred E	Palmeter, Donald W	Sengele, John M
Lorenz, David E	Patterson, Thomas	Serra, Deborah Lynn
Luttrell, Richard D	Pflugger, Ronald M	Soat, Mary P
Manley, Joan B	Potantus, Carolyn Ruth	Steinweg, Henry W
Marciniak, Trudy *	Poynter, Rachel Lea	Telschow, Earl T
Marten, Donald E	Prahlow, August J	Tesch, Helen Deanne
Marten, Wilbert	Pride, John F	Teske, Kathryn A
Martin, Fred D	Quillen, Ernest Wilbert	Van Dyke, William Richard
Marxhausen, Reinhold P	Rand, Susan J	Walker, Sarah R
Masengarb, David G	Rappe, Roger W	Wallis, Darrell H
Maske, Richard John	Remer, Rose A	Wegener, Wilfried W
Maurer, Marion V	Rikkels, Robert G	Wickersham, Elizabeth A
Mc Clary, Richard W	Rikkels, Robert G*	Widenhofer, David
Mc Comas, Barbara L	Rivers, Marlene M*	Wied, Alwin J
Messerschmidt, Edna M	Rosel, Philip J	Woldt, Joyce Adelle
Meyer, Merle J*	Roth, David M	Wuerdeman, Lily
Meyer, Michael J	Sablotny, Gayle D	Yount, Susan D
Miller, Lloyd L	Sagehorn, Donald J	Zahn, O Thomas
Mortimer, Darlene Elaine	Schenck, Sandra K	Zesch, Brenda L
Mueller, Gordon P	Schlegl, Frank L	

R1-3-01

Board for National Mission

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours in our risen Lord Jesus.

This past triennium has been challenging and exciting for the Board of National Mission (BNM) as we have worked to implement the new structure approved by the 2010 Synod convention. The most urgent challenges have been to clarify our understanding of the relationship between our board, the President's office, and the Office of National Mission (ONM), as well as to define how we must function as a policy-making board and not as a program board.

Our board very much appreciates the help and guidance which Dr. Raymond Hartwig has provided us in working through the new bylaws and helping us to understand more clearly our role in relationship to the ONM and the President's office. Under the mandates of the Synod's revised structure, our board has the task of creating policies for the ONM that will enable the ONM to carry out effectively the mission of the church as understood under the approach of "Witness, Mercy, Life Together" developed by the President's office. The BNM has approached this task slowly, deliberately, and carefully, recognizing that the work we do sets important precedents for the future. Our board has developed policy statements that not only seek to provide clear guidance for the ONM and its work, but which also seek to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the LCMS and clarify the relationships between the ONM and the 35 districts of the LCMS. This work of devising policies is obviously a very fluid process as new challenges for mission and ministry continue to arise. Policy development and monitoring is an ongoing effort.

One of the highlights of this past triennium was the National Mission Conference held in St. Louis September 20–23, 2011. In addition to the five members of the Praesidium, the Executive Director of the Office of National Mission, LCMS staff, and members of the Board for National Mission, all 35 district presidents were in attendance, together with 32 district mission executives and 17 representatives of various RSOs of the Synod. The purpose of this mission conference was to engage in dialogue with relevant "stakeholders" regarding the work of the ONM and how it can best support the work of districts and congregations. The conference provided valuable input to the BNM and has significantly guided its discussions in subsequent meetings. Much that was learned during this important conference has guided the development of the policy statements worked out by the BNM. The results of these discussions continue to fuel policy discussions within our board. We believe that the conference's greatest value was in allaying many concerns about the relationship between the national office and the local districts and congregations and that the frank and open discussions during the National Mission Conference have helped to build increased trust between the national office and the districts in the Synod.

Initial skepticism held by some members of our board regarding the new structure has largely evaporated as we have worked together within it during the past three years. Many of us now see the wisdom in much of the changed structure approved by the Synod in convention. This new structure has eliminated what many have called "*siloing*," which characterized the work of the Synod in the past and contributed to inefficiency, unnecessary expense, and overlap of efforts of the various boards in the Synod. Without a doubt, the new structure is much more efficient, cost-effective, and collaborative. Having worked under the new structure now for three years, we do have a few concerns which we think that the Synod may want to address in the future. These concerns include the amount of authority placed in the office of President and the current provision that appointments can be made by the President's office without board approval. There is some concern that this aspect of the new structure places

too much power in the President's office and has created the question of whether the elected boards should be given more authority in some of these matters. There also seems to be some confusion over the precise meaning of certain terminology in the bylaws, plus the implications of such terminology for board authority (e.g., the word "oversight" in Bylaw 3.8.2.1, "The Board for National Mission shall have oversight of the implementation of policies adopted by the board and implemented by the Office of National Mission"). Clarification of these terms is needed for better functioning of the board under the current structure.

This being said, we certainly do not want to imply that any problems have surfaced in the relationship between the BNM and the President's office. Quite to the contrary, the BNM has enjoyed a wonderful, collegial relationship with the President's office. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep thanks and appreciation for the advice and help given to our board by President Harrison and his staff, including Barbara Below, Al Culver, Jon Vieker, and, most recently, the Executive Director of the ONM, the Rev. Bart Day, who has worked closely with our board to help us "wrap our heads around" the new structure and its realignment of units within ONM, plus providing critical guidance as to needed policy. We also appreciate the encouragement and advice that the newly appointed Chief Mission Officer (CMO), the Rev. Greg Williamson, has given our board in helping us shape a vision for the future and develop policies that will enhance the mission and ministry of the LCMS. We especially want to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the theological guidance and leadership President Harrison has provided to our board, including his understanding of and commitment to the Lutheran Confessions. His ability to teach from his well-worn Greek New Testament is always stimulating and inspiring; he always seems able to give us new and exciting insights into the Scripture.

As chairman, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of our board who have worked tirelessly and faithfully on your behalf to implement the new structure, developing policies that will enable the ONM to work with the congregations and districts of the Synod to be bold in their witness to the Gospel, to be eager and willing to show mercy when and where it is needed, and to strive for harmony and *concordia* in their life together under God's Word. God has blessed you with a board comprised of dedicated, faithful men and women who are enthusiastic about the mission and ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It has been my privilege to serve with them as chairman in the past triennium.

I would also like to express the BNM's appreciation to the BIM and its chairman, the Rev. Bernie Setter, as well as the BIM's executive committee. The collegiality and collaboration we have enjoyed as we have worked together has greatly helped us to understand each board's respective responsibilities per the new bylaws and to implement the new structure nationally and internationally.

Finally, we give thanks to our gracious Lord, who continues to bless our humble efforts to serve the baptized in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We invite your continued prayers and support that God will keep us faithful to the task He has given us through you, so that we might "live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together [we] may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:5–6).

Steven C. Briel, *Chairman*

R1-3-02**Board for International Mission****Introduction**

At its July 2010 convention, the Synod realigned the Board for Mission Services, the Board for World Relief and Human Care, and other program boards into two independent policy-providing boards—the Board for International Mission (BIM) and the Board for National Mission. The Synod also established two offices for the implementation of the respective boards' policies and the mission and ministry emphases set by convention—the Office of International Mission (OIM) and the Office of National Mission, with both offices being responsible to the Office of the President through the Chief Mission Officer of the Synod. The Board for International Mission's authority and responsibility is set forth in Bylaw 3.8.3.

The BIM has been delegated four responsibilities: (1) to determine policies for the OIM; (2) to assist the Office of the President in identifying goals for the OIM; (3) to act as the only Synod sending agency through which workers and funds are sent to the foreign mission areas of the Synod; and (4) to monitor, through oversight, outcomes from the policies and goals implemented through the OIM.

Board Members of the Board for International Mission

The 2010 LCMS convention elected 10 persons to serve on the BIM for six-year terms according to regions determined at the convention. The President of the Synod also appointed a representative to the BIM, thereby comprising an 11-member board. The members elected and appointed:

Adle, Ms. Rose E.	(Great Lakes Region)
Almstedt, Mr. Kermit W.	(East Region)
Bruns, Mr. David	(South Region)
Edson, Mr. John W., Vice Chair	President's Representative
Gonzalez, Rev. Juan A.	(East Region)
Lange, Rev. Michael	(West Region)
Magness, Mr. Phillip A., Secretary	(Great Lakes Region)
Peacock, Ms. Lois	(West Region)
Seter, Rev. Bernhard M., Chair	(Great Plains Region)
Temple, Rev. John F.	(South Region)
Van Gundy, Mr. Robert	(Great Plains Region)

The Report

This report will provide an update on the activities of the newly formed BIM, which currently has a schedule of three meetings each year (some in joint session with the Board for National Mission). The meetings generally are held in the months of February, June, and September.

At its first meeting in September 2010, the BIM elected its officers for the triennium of July 2010 through July 2013:

- Reverend Bernhard M. Seter, Chairman
- Mr. John W. Edson, Vice-Chairman
- Mr. Phillip A. Magness, Secretary

By its June 2011 meeting, the BIM was prepared to adopt its internal self governance policies, i.e., the Board for International Mission (Self Governance) Policy Manual. At its February, May, and September 2012 meetings, the BIM undertook discussion and then adoption of its policy directives (through the establishment of boundaries, parameters, and principles) for implementation by the OIM. As may be seen, the BIM has outlined 12 broad policy areas for which it is obliged to determine appropriate "ends" for implementation. Those areas are as follows:

- Overall guiding principles

- Safeguarding the rights of our partner churches with and through which our international missionaries work
- Working with the Synod's colleges, universities, and seminaries
- Working with the Office of the President
- Human care and associated efforts
- Military chaplaincy
- International schools of the Synod and those aligned with partner or associated churches
- Providing for spiritual edification and growth for LCMS called and appointed missionaries and for LCMS members living abroad
- Providing strong missional leadership
- Training of LCMS missionaries
- Calling and withdrawing of called and appointed missionaries
- Working with LCMS auxiliary organizations, RSOs, and districts and congregations

The BIM has adopted self-governance policies to guide its work in accordance with the 2010 Constitution and Bylaws and has approved Policy Ends and Principles which outline the general purposes of the work to be carried out by the OIM. The OIM staff is developing metrics and objectives toward meeting these ends. The BIM has drafted policies to govern this work and has received a draft of metrics and objectives from the OIM staff, which are under mutual review in anticipation of being finalized at the BIM's May 2013 meeting. In fulfillment of the 2010 convention mandate for monitoring policy implementation, the OIM is already working under and with these policies as they proceed with their work in fraternal collaboration with the BIM, pending final review, revision, and approval by the Commission on Constitutional Matters.

The one non-policy directive mandated by the Synod at its 2010 convention was the authority of the BIM to act as the "only sending agency through which workers and funds are sent to the foreign mission areas of the Synod, including the calling, appointing, assigning, withdrawing, and releasing of missionaries . . . and other workers for the ministries in foreign areas" (Bylaw 3.8.3). The BIM has been actively calling and releasing missionaries as appropriate and necessary, in response to recommendations by the OIM.

The members of the BIM express their thanks to our gracious Lord and to the members of the Synod for the opportunity and privilege of serving our Lord through His Church in this important area of authority and responsibility.

Bernhard M. Seter, *Chairman*

R1-3-03**Lutheran Women's Missionary League**

"The mission of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is to assist each woman of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world." (LWML Mission Statement)

The LWML is the official women's auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The year 2012 marked our 70th year as we continue to "Serve the Lord with Gladness" (LWML motto, based on Psalm 100:2). As Lutheran Women in Mission (our "doing business as" name adopted in 1998), we have thousands of women who daily are dedicating their lives to serve the Lord, share the Gospel, and make a difference where He has placed them.

Significant activities and programs since our 2010 report:

- The Board of Directors meeting in Peoria, Illinois, in January 2011 was canceled because of a blizzard. This cancellation resulted in the first LWML WebEx meeting. Since this first WebEx meeting, hundreds of such meetings have been held by LWML committee members, saving

the LWML money and allowing the committee members to serve from their homes.

- Our Lord has blessed the LWML with mite offerings of over \$100 million given to grant recipients around the world in the past 70 years.
- In January 2011, the first LWML DVD Bible study, *Your Strong Suit*, was produced with Donna Pyle and Artesian Ministries.
- In 2012, the 40 LWML districts held conventions with over 10,700 in attendance. The districts voted over \$5.7 million in support for the mission outreach and focus of the LWML.
- In March 2012, three members of the LWML Executive Committee traveled to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, to resume our face-to-face fellowship with LWML—Canada. This meeting was reciprocated by three members of the LWML—Canada’s General Council, including President Iris Barta, attending meetings in Saint Louis, Missouri, in October 2012.
- Our Internet communications have been expanded, offering an eQuarterly and daily electronic *Mustard Seed Devotions*.
- In October 2012, just over 200 women, representing every district, gathered for the Inspiration 2012, PING (Prepare, Inspire, Nourish, Go) training event in Saint Louis, Missouri.

In January 2013, the LWML Board of Directors adopted the following three targets and goals for the 2013–15 biennium:

Primary Target: NURTURING FAITH IN CHRIST

We are committed to helping every woman find personal opportunities in her daily life and in her congregation to be nurtured in faith in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to discover her unique gifts and value in God’s family.

Primary Target: SHARING ENCOURAGEMENT

We believe that women value the friendship, support, and encouragement from other women and strive to offer warm, welcoming opportunities for women to grow in faith and relationships as sisters in Christ.

Primary Target: MAKING OUR MISSION MEANINGFUL

We challenge and equip women of all ages, stages, ethnicities, and experiences to make a meaningful difference in the lives of hurting, helpless, and unbelieving people at home and throughout the world.

The LWML met in convention June 27–30, 2013, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to celebrate under the theme *Quenched! by the Water*, based on John 4:14. New mission grants were selected for the 2013–15 biennium, past grant recipients shared their stories, and attendees had opportunities to worship, encounter Him in His Word, and live boldly as His children. New officers were elected to serve the organization 2013–17.

As the women’s auxiliary of the LCMS, we are blessed to be “Baptized for the Moment.”

2011–13 Mission Grants

1	Support for Lutheran Orphanages—Haiti	\$70,000
2	Lutheran Braille Workers Plate Embossing Device	\$100,000
3	Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) Spread God’s Word through Print and Audio	\$97,344
4	Outreach to At-Risk Children—Detroit, Michigan	\$55,000
5	Cancer Care Package Ministry	\$100,000
6	Crow Indian Ministry—Montana	\$69,999.64
7	Exodus 2:6 Project: Spiritual Care in Disasters—Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma	\$50,000
8	Children’s Nutrition and Care—Vietnam	\$72,255

9	Grace Place for LCMS International Missionaries	\$75,000
10	Pregnancy Center: Newborn Protection—Malaysia, Southeast Asia	\$54,500
11	The Lutheran Malaria Initiative—Kenya, East Africa	\$100,000
12	Two Graduate Scholarships for International/Minority Students—Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri	\$50,000
13	Project JOE—Outreach to Youth—Central/South America	\$75,000
14	Children’s Development Disabilities Group Home and Rehabilitation Center—Dominican Republic	\$100,000
15	Missionary Family Care and Education	\$100,000
16	Gospel Outreach through Open Arms Child Care	\$65,000
17	Haskell Indian Nations University Lutheran Campus Ministry Expansion—Lawrence, Kansas	\$100,000
18	Financial Support for LCMS Prison and Jail Ministry Conference	\$27,500
19	Physical and Spiritual Nourishment for the Impoverished—United States/Mexico Border	\$27,970.36

Kay A. Kreklau, *President*

R1-3-04

**International Lutheran Laymen’s League
(Lutheran Hour Ministries)**

Introduction

The International Lutheran Laymen’s League (Int’l LLL) serves as a grassroots auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Lutheran Church—Canada by focusing its energies on a mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church*. Because of God’s great blessings and the success He has granted through **The Lutheran Hour** radio program, the Int’l LLL captured the essence of our ministry in 1992 when it adopted the title Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) to better describe our outreach ministries. Thus, the International Lutheran Laymen’s League is the corporate name under which we do business; Lutheran Hour Ministries is the public identity under which we conduct worldwide Gospel outreach on a daily basis.

Lutheran Hour Ministries serves as a catalyst in connecting the unchurched and dechurched with congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Lutheran Church—Canada (as well as partner congregations worldwide). The ministry carries out its mission by developing culturally relevant programs and projects that proclaim the Gospel to the unchurched, encouraging those people who are reached through these ministry efforts to respond by contacting staff or volunteers. Relationships are then cultivated with those who have responded, ultimately to facilitate a relationship between them and a congregation, thus helping to grow the kingdom of God.

Lutheran Hour Ministries’ ultimate goal is to see people transformed through the Holy Spirit into the creation God intended. Therefore, Lutheran Hour Ministries is on the frontiers of communicating the Good News of Jesus to the hurting and lost, facilitating eternal relationships. The ministry is actively engaged, alongside ministry partners, in connecting the hurting and lost to the church community, resulting in change and hope in our world.

God's Blessings upon Lutheran Hour Ministries' Outreach in the Past Triennium

The Int'l LLL/Lutheran Hour Ministries' significant activities accomplished since our 2010 convention report include the following:

- Naming Rev. Gregory Seltz as the eighth Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour** in January 2011 to succeed the retiring Rev. Ken Klaus.
- Broadcasting **The Lutheran Hour** on an additional 350 stations through a partnership with the Christian Satellite Network, bringing the number of radio stations airing the program across North America to 1,400.
- Producing several new **Men's NetWork** Bible studies on a variety of topics (the entire collection now totals 23) to ignite and challenge the faith lives of men, including Telly Award-winning studies such as *Joseph: Carpenter of Steel*; *Bible on Trial: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*; *How We Got the Bible*; and *We the People*.
- Redesigning our successful **Equipping to Share** program into **MISSION U**, a multifaceted, multilevel witnessing-training curriculum. **MISSION U** has developed partnerships (or is in the process of developing partnerships) with the Eastern, Ohio, Michigan, Kansas, New England, and New Jersey LCMS districts and Rural and Small Town Missions (LCMS).
- Launching **Regional Outreach Conferences** to share ministries with people on the local level, equip and train participants, and motivate individuals for action. More than 2,000 individuals attended our inaugural series of conferences throughout 2011, and another set of eight conferences is being held across North America in 2013.
- Partnering our Men's NetWork program with the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces to provide Operation Barnabas, a network designed to offer encouragement, support, and resources to the men and women who put their lives on the line for our nation—and to their families as well.
- Returning to television with two full-length documentaries: *The Bible on Trial: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* aired in 2011 with national broadcasts on the Inspiration Network and the Religious Broadcasters Network (as well as 600 local airings), and *The Intersection of Church & State*, aired nationally in 2012 on the Fox Business Channel as well as being shown locally in several U.S. markets.
- Airing the Gospel across much of the Arab world—in Arabic—through broadcasts produced by the staff of our Lebanon ministry center.
- Unveiling our **Online Mission Trips** concept to allow Lutheran school students to meet one of our international ministry center directors and learn about the ministry their staff does, all via live and recorded streaming video. The program rolled out during National Lutheran Schools Week in March 2012 with a trip to Paraguay and then to Thailand in January 2013.
- Implementing governance changes that are designed to streamline our operations with an increased focus on outreach. As part of these changes, we conducted our first-ever mail-in balloting of all members of the organization to approve bylaws changes and elect a new Board of Directors based on core competencies rather than regional representation. Previously, just LCMS and LCC members who were in attendance at our international convention were allowed to vote. More than 16,000 people voted in this election, likely the largest member participation ever in an election of our officers.

The Results of God's Blessings

By God's grace, Lutheran Hour Ministries' various programs result in more than one million Gospel message touches each week in the United States:

- **The Lutheran Hour** radio program reaches 800,000 listeners per week.
- Outreach through our international programs in just the last year has, by the power of the Holy Spirit, netted nearly 400,000 responses and 58,700 referrals to congregations.

- At any one time, around 165,000 people are engaged in **Bible Correspondence Courses** offered through our international ministry centers to introduce people to Jesus and biblical principles of our faith.
- Lutheran Hour Ministries has trained more than 25,000 people throughout North America in witnessing through **MISSION U** and its predecessor program, **Equipping to Share**.
- Internationally, 5,500 people were trained in witnessing just last year through our **Equipping the Saints** program.
- More than 15,000 individuals are registered to use the free online resources offered through our **Men's NetWork**; more than 4,000 LCMS and LCC churches are represented among these registered users.
- Rev. Ken Klaus, Speaker Emeritus of **The Lutheran Hour**, writes daily devotions that are received via e-mail by 45,000 people.
- Our **JCPlayZone** children's Web site recorded more than 290,000 visits this past year.
- Lutheran Hour Ministries ranked number six on the list of top small companies in St. Louis (under 149 employees) as published in summer 2012 by the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. The ranking is based on employee opinions gathered in surveys conducted as part of the Top Workplaces program through WorkplaceDynamics, LLC, a program that recognizes the very best organizations nationwide by partnering with 30 leading publications around the country to produce a special section profiling national and regional winners.

Goals for the Future

God's mission of rescuing people who have become separated from Him, restoring relationship with them, and renewing them for holy living and service to others is vitally important in today's world. It is the reason why we believe God is opening so many doors for our ministry as He calls believers like us to the work of reaching out to those who don't know Him. Now is the time for rescue—for restoration—for renewal. This is His mission for the Church; His mission for us; our message to the world. Together, by the power of God's Holy Spirit, we can live that message and spread it to our communities and beyond. Below are some of our ministry goals for the next three years as we walk alongside congregations as Your Partner in HIS Mission!

Specific Goals for the Next Triennium

- Increase our impact in radio and television through updates and expansion of **The Lutheran Hour** radio program as well as a Spanish-language program.
- Develop initiatives that reach out with the saving message of the Gospel to those who otherwise have little opportunity to hear it (the unreached), urban areas, and among the burgeoning worldwide population of younger people.
- Launch a major evangelism effort that will result in fulfilling the mission of Lutheran Hour Ministries to "bring the nations to the church" and have a positive impact on LCMS membership trends.
- Train a total of 20,000 additional lay members through evangelism-training programs such as **MISSION U** and **five14** in partnership with LCMS districts.
- Strengthen our collaborative and cooperative partnership efforts with the Office of International Mission of the LCMS.
- Strengthen existing international ministry partnerships and identify and develop new partnerships for prayer support, advocacy, and volunteer and financial support.
- Strengthen collaboration with partner churches overseas to increase the percentage of responses that become new congregational members.
- Increase the use of existing and emerging digital media, develop digital outreach strategies that effectively engage people with the salvation story of Jesus Christ, and connect these people to local congregations.

- Through our international ministry centers, provide improved and contextualized Bible information courses to those who wish to learn more about the Christian faith.
- Integrate Gospel outreach resources developed in foreign ministry centers for use in North American congregations to reach out to ethnically diverse groups, immigrants, and refugee communities.

In Conclusion

God has blessed His Church at large through the use of various media and technology tools for outreach as employed by Lutheran Hour Ministries. The ministry has also provided valuable resources and services to the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Lutheran Church—Canada. Those services may be as simple as providing **The Lutheran Hour** sermons and daily devotions for shut-ins and the homebound. They may include training for outreach and evangelism, topical booklets for addressing daily problems or witnessing, Christian outreach tools and resources on the Internet, Bible study information and devotions, or opportunities for hands-on service projects in a foreign country. They may include solid doctrinal media programming and the truth of the unchanging message of the Gospel that help associate listeners in your area with your own local Lutheran churches.

But Lutheran Hour Ministries is much more. Not only do these media tools help grow and nurture faithful Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit, but they also allow the Gospel message to penetrate the expanse of distance, the barriers of prison walls, and the lines of civil unrest or hostile political regimes. They bring a message of forgiveness, love, and hope found only in Jesus Christ to a world that is hurting and hungry for the one thing that is sorely needed.

Lutheran Hour Ministries pledges to continue as a leader in sharing the Gospel through whatever communications, media, and technology means are most effective to touch lives for Christ. We will continue to support congregations by offering training and outreach tools for local volunteer evangelism efforts. And we will strive to be a leading resource for sound Lutheran programming to support our churches and pastors in their outreach efforts, not only in the United States but throughout the world.

Kurt Buchholz, *Chairman*
Bruce Wurdeman, *Executive Director*

R2-01

**Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans
Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services**

Description and Background of Concordia Plan Services

For nearly fifty years Concordia Plan Services (CPS)—formerly Worker Benefit Plans—has been entrusted with the responsibility of administering the Concordia Plans for the workers of the LCMS and their families. Today, CPS is the benefits provider of choice for approximately 6,000 LCMS congregations, schools, universities, seminaries, and other organizations in the United States and in mission fields worldwide. Through these participating organizations, more than 31,300 active workers along with approximately 57,800 dependents are covered by the various benefits of the Concordia Plans.

In addition to serving active workers, CPS is providing pension benefits to 18,417 retirees, health benefits to 342 seminary students and their 332 dependents, as well as offering continued health coverage for qualifying retirees. As of December 31, 2012, the value of the assets of Plans within CPS was in excess of \$3,300,000,000.

Founding Principle

Established by the LCMS in Convention, CPS was created to support the LCMS in fulfilling the directive found in Article III, Objective 10 of its constitution: “Aid in providing for the welfare of pastors, teachers, and other church workers and their families in the event of illness, disability, retirement, or death.” CPS exists solely for the purpose of providing comprehensive benefits for workers of the LCMS.

Serving the Workers and the Work of the Church

The Church’s Plan: Our Most Comprehensive Benefits Package

Introduced in 2006, *The Church’s Plan* (TCP) provides a comprehensive package of benefits designed specifically to meet the needs of full-time workers of the LCMS during all stages of life.

The Church’s Plan bundles all of the Plans—Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP), Concordia Retirement Savings Plan (CRSP), Concordia Disability and Survivor Plan (CDSP), and Concordia Health Plan (CHP)—in one package. In addition, TCP includes an additional benefit within the CRP, the Retiree Medical Supplement.

Participation levels among employers (3,932) and workers (23,717) attest to the popularity of this comprehensive plan.

The Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP)

The Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP) provides workers with retirement income benefits, proudly offering a comprehensive retirement package to assist workers with their retirement planning. Workers who are employed by an eligible LCMS employer that has adopted the CRP, and who are hired to work more than 20 hours a week and more than five consecutive months, are eligible for membership.

The CRP was amended in 2012 to consist of two options:

1. **The Traditional Option** (comprised of the following benefits):
 - The Primary Retirement Benefit,
 - The Supplemental Retirement Account, and
 - The Retiree Medical Supplement (for workers of employers participating in *The Church’s Plan* benefit package).
2. **The Account Option*** (comprised of the following benefits):
 - The Retirement Cash Account, and
 - The Retiree Medical Supplement (for workers of employers participating in *The Church’s Plan* benefit package).

**The new Account Option with the Retirement Cash Account—only available for non-rostered church workers—was introduced in 2012 to meet the needs expressed by LCMS employers who experience a high turnover rate of lay workers. Ministries were seeking a solution that would allow them to continue to provide retirement benefits but could also offer some budget relief for a growing population of workers who do not spend their careers serving the church.*

Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP) Participation

	Traditional	Account Option
Active Members	29,852	252
Retirees and Survivors of Retirees	18,417	0
Terminated Vested Workers and Survivors of Terminated Vested Workers	10,936	0

The large and growing number of retirees, plus the increase in life expectancy, is reflected in the retirement benefits provided to these servants over the past three years.

Benefits* Provided by the Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP)

	2010	2011	2012
Primary Retirement Benefits	\$142,516,245	\$152,924,365	\$163,271,861
Supplemental Retirement Account	\$12,929,210	\$13,994,031	\$14,809,591
Survivor Benefits	\$15,468,256	\$16,443,719	\$17,444,695
Retiree Medical Supplement	\$13,137,800	\$13,406,634	\$13,579,756

*As a new benefit, no Retirement Cash Account benefits were distributed through 12/31/2012.

The value of the total assets of the Concordia Retirement Plan as of 12/31/12 was \$2,824,327,687.

Concordia Retirement Savings Plan (CRSP)

Workers participating in *The Church's Plan* package of benefits through their LCMS employer can save for retirement through the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan (CRSP), a 403(b) tax-deferred savings plan with a matching contribution component. This provides workers with an opportunity to establish a personal retirement savings account to supplement their retirement income from the Concordia Retirement Plan.

The Concordia Retirement Savings Plan allows workers to:

- Save for retirement with pre-tax dollars
- Grow assets on a tax-deferred basis
- Diversify their retirement savings portfolio

In December of 2010, the CRSP fund lineup was substantially updated and expanded to offer improved investment selections and diversity to our members. In addition, the fee structure was updated in order to bring even more value to our members. In some cases, the asset-based administrative expense fees associated with the funds were cut by more than 50%.

The popularity of this plan is seen in continued strong growth and participation over the past three years:

Concordia Retirement Savings Plan (CRSP) Accumulation

	2010	2011	2012
Employee Contributions	\$27,788,467	\$28,961,149	\$30,564,886
CRSP Basic Match	\$5,060,114	\$5,197,460	\$5,375,809
Optional Employer Match	\$584,452	\$618,150	\$628,013
Employee Rollover Contributions	\$2,017,532	\$2,697,618	\$1,951,075

The value of the total assets of the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan as of 12/31/12 was \$222,567,816.

Concordia Disability and Survivor Plan (CDSP)

CPS is proud to offer the Concordia Disability and Survivor Plan (CDSP) to eligible workers. All full-time workers (those who are employed more than 20 hours per week and more than 5 consecutive months) must be offered the opportunity to enroll themselves and any eligible dependents in the CDSP.

Taking care of workers in a time of great need, the CDSP provides a disability income benefit (for workers) and a pre-retirement lump-sum death benefit (for workers and their enrolled dependents). In addition, the CDSP covers the CHP contributions for enrolled disabled workers whose disability lasts more than three months.

Benefits Provided by the Concordia Disability and Survivor Plan (CDSP)

	2010	2011	2012
Survivor Benefits	\$9,591,118	\$5,536,202	\$7,139,605
Disability Benefits	\$3,656,783	\$9,788,828	\$11,413,824
Health Benefits for Survivors and Disabled Workers	\$4,906,970	\$5,421,135	\$5,268,016

The value of the total assets of the Concordia Disability and Survivor Plan as of 12/31/12 was \$112,607,864.

Concordia Health Plan (CHP)

The Concordia Health Plan (CHP) is designed to protect LCMS workers and their families against the financial burden of illness and serious injuries, as well as to provide preventive, well-child, and routine medical care as recommended, helping members be as healthy as possible.

The CHP is a self-funded, all-inclusive healthcare program. While the majority of workers are blessed with good health, rest assured that the necessary funds are there to share with our co-workers and their families in the event they incur higher medical expenses.

The Concordia Health Plan offers:

- Ten health plan options, including HMO, PPO, and CDHP designs, along with a plan specifically for seminary students
- Medicare supplemental program for retirees 65 and over
- Health and Wellness programs
- Employee Assistance Program

Concordia Health Plan (CHP) Options Available and Percentage of Members in Each

	2010	2011	2012
Option A	11%	8%	6%
Option B	36%	30%	26%
Option C	26%	27%	27%
Option D	12%	15%	17%
Option E (formerly Options Blue HRA)	1%	1%	1%
Option HDHP (formerly Options Blue HSA)	10%	14%	18%
Option HMO—National	0%*	0%*	0%*
Option HMO—California	1%	1%	1%
Option HMO—California 2	1%	2%	2%
Option CSS	2%	2%	2%

*Less than 1%

The table of CHP Option enrollment above illustrates how employers and members continue to migrate to Options with lower contribution costs.

Benefits Provided by the Concordia Health Plan (CHP)

2010	2011	2012
\$224,355,406	\$236,718,023	\$249,292,318

The value of the total assets of the Concordia Health Plan as of 12/31/12 was \$148,270,787.

Healthcare and the rising cost of coverage have been front-page news for several years. With the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act or health care reform) in March of 2010, the issue received increased attention and focus.

Now, as implementation of the new law approaches on January 1, 2014, LCMS employers and workers can be assured that we will continue to be vigilant in following the progress and studying the law’s implications. CPS is committed to meeting the needs of plan members by:

- Operating the CHP in compliance with the law
- Sharing information and providing education to help improve awareness of opportunities, requirements, and changes necessitated by the law
- Helping LCMS employers understand and comply with responsibilities
- Helping our members understand their options, benefits, and protections under the law
- Continuing to serve those who serve the church in a manner consistent with our Lutheran faith and doctrine

There have been many key decisions and positive outcomes associated with various components of this landmark legislation. Among them are:

- Declaring “Grandfathered Health Plan” status in order to preserve the opportunity to keep our benefits aligned with the Lutheran faith and beliefs as well as avoid more onerous regulatory requirements.
- Removing certain limits and the lifetime maximum, modifying eligibility rules to cover adult children (and their spouses in some instances), and other applicable changes required to comply with the law.
- Securing access to the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit for small employers in church plans like the CHP, with the potential credit across approximately 2,000 eligible LCMS ministries of approximately \$11 million annually.
- Filing for and receiving \$1.6 million in funds through the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program which CPS is using to help control CHP rate increases.
- Redefining the prescription drug coverage under the CHP Medicare supplemental option as a Medicare Prescription Drug Program which allowed access to additional discounts provided through pharmaceutical companies and resulted in an 8% reduction in CHP rates for this option; the change was invisible to members.

Pension Plan for Pastors and Teachers

Prior to the CRP, the Pension Plan for Pastors and Teachers (PPPT) was the only pension program for pastors and teachers of the Synod. When the CRP was established in 1965, new enrollments in the PPPT ceased.

As of December 31, 2012, there were 3,138 individuals receiving benefits as retired members, disabled members, or surviving dependents of deceased members.

Benefits Provided by the Pension Plan for Pastors and Teachers (PPPT)

2010	2011	2012
\$10,282,539	\$9,872,377	\$9,398,346

The value of the total assets of the Pension Plan for Pastors and Teachers as of 12/31/12 was \$5,187,013.

Serving Those Who Serve the Church to the Glory of God

Over the past three years, CPS has undertaken several initiatives and expanded others in order to provide proactive, resource-focused assistance to LCMS ministries and the workers who share the Gospel. Our objective is to provide benefits and services that allow ministries and ministers to focus on their mission—a mission we are proud to share. These efforts and programs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Expanding the presence of Benefit Consultants to enhance relationships and support of missions and ministries at the local level
- Expanding collaborative efforts with Synod entities
- Providing benefits specifically geared for missionaries serving in foreign countries, both career and short-term service church workers
- Offering financial and retirement planning workshops
- Increasing the usage of technology to expand educational program reach
- Focusing on the Be Well ... Serve Well initiative and promoting the Be Well Rewards Program

The Be Well ... Serve Well program deserves special attention and emphasis as together we strive to improve the health of workers, control out-of-pocket costs for the members, control CHP contribution rates for employers, and foster an overall culture of health and wellness throughout the LCMS.

Member participation in programs designed to help them better manage complex health conditions or make better lifestyle decisions is a testament that these programs add value to the CHP for our members and ministries.

CareAllies Health Management Programs

Program Title	No. of Participants
Disease and Depression Management	11,288
Health Advisor and Lifestyle Management	3,337

Engaging members to embrace healthier lifestyles and take better care of themselves is key to controlling healthcare costs, as a great portion of contribution dollars received are used to pay health claims for many controllable or preventable conditions, such as diabetes and circulatory disorders.

To bolster participation and interest in the health and wellness programs, as well as to encourage members to make healthy lifestyle choices, the Be Well Rewards program was introduced in 2011. The program provides monetary incentives for the performance of specified activities designed to form or improve healthy habits. CHP members and their enrolled spouses could earn rewards up to a maximum amount per person each year. Studies show that incentive programs often provide a positive return on the investment within about 3 years of program start.

To inspire LCMS employers to encourage healthy habits for their workers and foster environments for healthy choices, the program includes a matching reward feature for the employer. In 2011, the maximum reward per person was \$250. In 2012, the amount was

increased to \$300 per person and included a special bonus of \$50 for consistent physical activity over 24 consecutive weeks.

Be Well Rewards Health and Wellness Incentive Program

2011		2012	
Earned by CHP members*	Shared with their CHP employers	Earned by CHP members*	Shared with their CHP employers
\$1,743,000	\$1,583,000	\$3,215,000	\$2,798,000

*Early retirees and other individual participants who are no longer working for LCMS employers are eligible to earn rewards through the program; therefore, rewards distributed to members is higher than those shared with employers.

The program, including the matching rewards for LCMS employees, continues for 2013 with a \$300 reward maximum and additional bonus reward opportunities for participants.

CPS is proud to provide a program specifically designed to support LCMS ministries by helping LCMS workers and their families to Be Well so that they may Serve Well. It is also a blessing to be able to share the rewards with the employers of those workers who are participating in the program.

Awards and Recognitions

2012 Healthiest Employer Award

Concordia Plan Services was honored to be a finalist in the 2012 Healthiest Employer contest held by the *St. Louis Business Journal*. The Healthiest Employer Awards recognize companies and nonprofit entities that commit to making wellness a priority and proactively shape the health of their employees.

CPS has made a commitment to encouraging health and wellness among all Concordia Health Plan members and understands the importance of encouraging healthy living for our staff as well.

Our wellness programs have had a positive impact on our corporate culture. A weight loss challenge resulted in a total reduction of 570 pounds for our employees. Over 80% of our staff completed a mile-by-mile marathon, in which participants walked or ran 26.2 miles over 6 weeks. About 50% also signed up for a walking or running event during the Go St. Louis Marathon & Family Fitness weekend events.

A survey revealed that, as a result of our health and wellness initiative and rewards program, 7% of employees are taking fewer medications, 65% are controlling or improving an existing health condition, 25% have lowered their cholesterol, 27% have lowered their blood pressure, 85% are making healthier food and drink choices, and 87% are engaging in more physical activity.

Communications Awards

Several CPS publications and communication campaigns received MarCom Awards over the reporting period, including the *Benefits Bulletin*, our plan administrative guide series for employers, special newsletters, and our National Save for Retirement Week promotional campaign. MarCom Awards is an international competition for marketing and communication professionals.

In addition, a CPS promotional postcard campaign designed to increase participation in the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan was honored with an IABC Bronze Quill award in 2011. The award, presented by the St. Louis chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators, recognizes excellence in communication marketing and planning efforts.

Looking to the Future

- **Recession and Economic Environment Impact on CPS:** The Plans continue to face challenges presented by ongoing volatility and uncertainty in the economy, both domestic and global. However, CPS remains focused on delivering products and services designed to meet the benefit needs of Concordia Plans members, while practicing biblically-based stewardship principles.

- **Changes to the Concordia Retirement Program Benefits Effective July 1, 2014:** In February, 2013, the LCMS Board of Directors, approved changes to the Concordia Retirement Plan and Concordia Retirement Savings Plan that will go into effect on July 1, 2014. The changes will preserve the stability of the core CRP pension benefit.

The modifications were necessary to address external factors that have impacted retirement plans nationwide both public and private. These include: (1) severity of the global financial crisis in 2008; (2) the recovery period since 2008 has outlasted historical norms; (3) ministries have been affected through reduced contributions and higher costs.

Concordia Plan Services' goal is to preserve the core of the retirement plan and to sustain the Plan for tomorrow's members. This means there will be no changes for current retirees or surviving spouses and current plan members maintain retirement benefits they have already earned. The core monthly pension will not be affected.

Among the modifications that will take effect July 1, 2014, are adjustments for early retirement, changes to the death benefit and supplementary benefits, and adjusting the normal retirement age to generally conform with normal Social Security retirement age. In addition, the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan (CRSP) –403(b) will no longer require an employer match.

For complete details and all the changes, please see the special CRP Update link on the CPS website: www.ConcordiaPlans.org.

We have made the decision to take these steps after significant analysis and careful consideration of what it means to the LCMS workers and their families. As we continue to walk together, we believe updating the CPS retirement program benefits now will put us on a prudent and appropriate path toward preserving the core retirement benefit, sustaining the plan's financial strength for the long term, and providing retirement benefits to the thousands of fellow workers (past and present) and the next generation.

- **Health Care Reform—Status and Impact on CPS:** Since the Affordable Care Act was passed in 2010, there have been several key decisions and benefit changes made regarding the Concordia Health Plan, some mentioned earlier in this report. The list will continue to grow as effective dates for applicable requirements draw near and additional guidance is issued. We continue to evaluate the legislation and have strategies in place designed to move the CHP into a position of sustainability for 2014 and beyond. In addition, we continue our participation in the Church Alliance, which gives us a voice with Washington lawmakers and the White House.
- **MyCPS.org:** In efforts to enhance member and employer communication and education, and improve Plan administration, CPS is introducing an online services portal in 2013 and into 2014. Through MyCPS.org members will see a customized display of enrollment information and use a single entry point to access personal information through benefit partners such as Blue Cross Blue Shield and Cigna. The portal will also offer members and employers the capability to perform certain transactions and activities online, thereby reducing paper transactions. Functionality under the portal will be rolled out and communicated in phases over the next few years.
- **The CPS Brand:** In 2012, CPS embarked on a journey to evaluate and build the CPS brand. Survey and focus group results revealed that while CPS customers are aware of and satisfied with our products and services, there is a need to raise awareness of why CPS exists, who we are, and how we can best serve the ministries of the LCMS. CPS is striving to move beyond just a benefits provider to be an essential mission partner and trusted resource.

CPS wants to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude

- CPS Board of Director's members whose terms ended since 2010 or will end in 2013:
 - Rev. Ronald R. Carnicom, served three 3-year terms, 2004–2012
 - Rev. Fredrick F. Schroeder, completing three 3-year terms, 2005–2013
- Rev. David Callies, served as the President's Representative to the CPS Board of Directors, 2007–2010
- The support and participation of LCMS employers, workers, and retirees
- God's continued blessing on the work of CPS as we strive to serve the needs of LCMS ministries and workers

CPS is blessed to be entrusted with providing for the workers of the LCMS and in many ways alleviating worry that can distract from the ministry. Each and every day we take our charge of walking together to heart, committed to serving those in His service with integrity, compassion, excellence, stewardship, and accountability. CPS is the Church—caring for its needs, equipping its workers—dedicated to its mission through all that we do. We proudly serve those who serve to the glory of God.

God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them. Hebrews 6:10 NIV

James Sanft, *President*

R3-01

Concordia Publishing House

The past three years have been good ones for Concordia Publishing House (CPH), for which we give all thanks and glory to God. As the publishing arm of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, we strive to be the premier publisher and provider of choice for products and services that are faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. It is CPH's great privilege to partner with the congregations of the LCMS in support of their ministry of proclaiming Baptism and repentance in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins so that all might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Prior to the last convention, CPH won the Missouri Quality Award (2009). In November 2011, we were honored to be presented with the United States of America's Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The award was the culmination of years of hard work by the entire team of employees at CPH, involving careful analysis of all that we do to assure that our processes and procedures across all our activities are focused on continuous improvement. As we often say at CPH, quality improvement is not a destination, it is an ongoing journey. (It should be noted that this was the first time in the history of this federal government business quality program that a publishing company qualified to receive the award.)

We are grateful to God for seeing us through the economic storms that have beset all areas of our nation during the past three years. Because of the loyalty and support of our core customers—the congregations, agencies, entities, and church workers of the LCMS and the laypeople of our congregations—CPH has been able to realize the required internal efficiencies that allow us to remain strong financially. Anything we receive above our expenses is invested in future products and the staffing and infrastructure needed to deliver these resources. In 2012, our annual revenue was \$35,025,000.

It is a very exciting time to be in publishing. The entire industry is going through a time of great change as revolutionary as any since Johann Gutenberg's invention of the movable type printing press in the 1440s. The "Gutenberg" event of our times is the advent of digital

publishing. All secular and church publishers are responding to the digital era by investing heavily in research and development.

CPH has invested heavily in the digital future of publishing by creating an Emerging Products unit, which, together with our Innovation Technologies department, develops resources for the future. In the past three years, and for the first time in our history, we have published books first in eBook formats, before the printed books have appeared. We closely monitor all developments in digital publishing and printing technology, since there is such rapid change, and have produced numerous eBooks and other digital resources, including our Web-based resources *Confirmation Builder*, *Bible Study Builder*, and the next generation of church management tools, *MemberConnect*.

But even as we explore the best way to use the wide variety of options before us, the sales of traditional printed materials remain the greatest source of ongoing revenue. This is true for all secular and church publishers. CPH cherishes our partnership with the various agencies and entities of the LCMS, and we seek to be their exclusive publisher for any and all resources they desire to produce in support of their various duties and activities.

At the last convention, the Synod encouraged CPH in Res. 1-04 to consider publishing more materials on the subject of Islam to assist our church in understanding and responding to Islam. In response, we updated and refreshed the volume on Islam in our How to Respond series. We also have a book in the production cycle that offers a comprehensive analysis of Islam and the challenges and opportunities it presents. And we have five solid resources available on this subject.

We invite and encourage everyone to visit the CPH Web site at cph.org to spend some time looking at the variety of resources we produce in support of all the work going on across the LCMS. Indeed, it gives us great joy to join with all our brothers and sisters in Christ in thanking our good and gracious God for putting us here, baptized for this moment. May He bless the work of our hands and continue to guide, guard, and govern all that we do together in His holy name.

Bruce G. Kintz, *President/CEO*

R3-02

Concordia Historical Institute

1. Introduction

Concordia Historical Institute (CHI) serves as the Department of Archives and History of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Incorporated as a separate entity in 1927, it provides a function that the Synod recognized as essential from its founding in 1847. Located on the campus of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, CHI serves the member congregations of the Synod, its rostered workers, individual members of local congregations, and the general public with a modern archival facility, a reference library on Lutheran history, a state-of-the-art museum, conferences, publications, and reference and research services. It also owns and administers historic sites in Perry County, Missouri, that interpret the Synod's history and heritage: the Saxon Lutheran Memorial at Frohna, Missouri, and the "Hill of Peace" historic church at Friedenberga, near Perryville.

The Institute provides several significant benefits to the Synod:

1. CHI is dedicated to the long-term preservation of the official records of the Synod and its work through its boards, commissions, officers, and other entities.
2. It provides access to these records and assistance with finding information to help Synod staff in carrying out their work.
3. It provides guidance and counsel to the districts, congregations, educational institutions, and other entities of the Synod in the management and preservation of their important historical records.
4. It publishes articles on the history of Lutheranism in America so that people may better understand and appreciate our Lutheran heritage.

5. It seeks to educate the members of the Synod in their own history through museum exhibits, educational materials, and online resources.
6. It conducts conferences for the general public on Lutheran history and to train archivists of the Synod's districts, congregations, auxiliaries, and other entities in their work.

2. Goals and Assignments

1. The 2007 LCMS convention (Res. 2-08) called on CHI, in cooperation with the President of the Synod, to engage in several activities "To Celebrate Significant Synod Anniversaries," specifically the 200th anniversaries of the births of Wilhelm Loehe (2008), F. C. D. Wyneken (2010), and C. F. W. Walther (2011).
2. As the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017 approaches, the Institute will be involved along with other entities of the Synod in promoting an awareness of the significance of our Lutheran heritage and how God's people in the Synod have worked to further the Gospel-centered ministry that was the focus of Martin Luther and the other reformers.
3. The Institute is working on repairs and upgrades to the CHI Museum located at the LCMS International Center.
4. It is the ongoing goal of CHI to improve its services to the Synod and its members, as enumerated above, by continuing to gather and preserve historical records and artifacts, make them available for research, educate the church and the general public about our Lutheran history and heritage, and help others to care for the records of their work.

3. Performance Assessment

1. Special exhibits were developed at the museum in the Institute's headquarters in fulfillment of Res. 2-08 of the 2007 convention.

Exhibits on the life and work for the first two presidents of the Synod—C. F. W. Walther and F. C. D. Wyneken—celebrated the 200th anniversary of their births in 2011 and 2010 respectively. These exhibits continue in place for visitors to the Institute's facilities.

Articles on the life and work of Wyneken and Walther were published in the *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*. The Institute staff made special presentations on these leaders at meetings of various organizations.

The Institute hosted a traveling exhibit on the 300th anniversary of the birth of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in 2011 prepared by the Halle institutions in Germany. Conference exhibits and presentations also have noted the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and ways in which the church, particularly in Missouri, was affected by the conflict.

2. The CHI Museum project at the LCMS International Center was designed to present an overview of the Synod's history rooted in the Lutheran Reformation of the 16th century, from its origins out of the German Lutheran immigration movements of the 19th century through the development of the Synod as a national church body, its worldwide mission outreach, and its expanding use of modern resources to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world.

The museum was dedicated and opened to the public on July 26, 2009. It is open during the regular hours of the International Center and is staffed by volunteer greeters throughout the day. It is designed to provide a self-guided walk through the Synod's history. Groups may arrange in advance for a docent to accompany the group through the museum, highlight special features of the stories that are depicted, and answer questions. The museum's presence in the International Center offers the opportunity for visitors to the Synod's headquarters to learn about its background and witness the examples of mission dedication of those who have gone before us in the faith. Participants in meetings and conferences at the IC from around the world also have this opportunity to understand more about the Synod's history and heritage.

The Institute staff is currently working on upgrading some of the exhibits in the museum and making needed repairs.

3. The work of gathering and preserving historical records has continued, though financial challenges continue to limit the full processing, arrangement, and cataloging that the records require for their effective and efficient use. New resources continue to come to us from around

the Synod and from interested individuals. We regularly provide guidance to congregations that are closing for the proper preservation of their significant records and to individuals who hold important resources from the ministries of their ancestors.

The restructuring of the Synod that began with decisions of the 2010 convention resulted in the transfer of numerous records from the International Center to the Institute. Much work needs to be done with the arrangement and description of these records so that they can be consulted efficiently.

Reference services to individuals, congregations, organizations of the church, scholars, and the general public have continued to grow significantly and keep our part-time reference staff busy. Family history inquiries make up the largest portion of the requests that are received. We have been able to make use of modern technology—email, scanning, digital images, etc.—to a great extent in providing efficient assistance and answers to questions.

4. Challenges and Opportunities

1. Since May 2008, the Institute has been functioning with a part-time executive director because of financial limitations. With the provision of additional funding from the LCMS Board of Directors and with the assistance of the Mission Advancement Team of the Synod, the Institute is working toward calling a full-time executive director by the end of 2013.
2. A major challenge facing the Institute for the future is the need to provide for the preservation of and access to Synod records that are created in electronic form. Closely related to this is the need to digitize existing records in order to make them more readily accessible for use through the Internet. The Institute has been working with various Synod entities toward this goal. Priorities are being established to determine the most useful records to make available in this way.
3. Planning has begun for CHI's participation in the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, including the production of a comprehensive catalog of Reformation commemorative coins and medals in the Institute's collection.

Scott J. Meyer, *President*

R3-03-01

Atlantic District

The Atlantic District is composed of the eastern portion of New York State, including Long Island, New York City (the capital of the world), the northern suburbs of New York City, the Hudson Valley, the state capital region around Albany and Schenectady, and points north to the Canadian border. It is one of the most beautiful geographical regions of the United States and one of the most densely populated. As Iowa is to corn, so New York is to people.

Mission outreach has been the main focus of the Atlantic District endeavor since the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001. The theme of the national LCMS convention, "We Are Baptized for This Moment," was the marching order of Lutheran Disaster Response of New York after Sept. 11. The Atlantic District theme is "Engaging the World with the Gospel of Hope." This theme was developed by the president of the Atlantic District for presentation on Sept. 11, 2001; has been resoundingly affirmed at the district's conventions in 2006, 2009, and 2012; and is now the basis for our national church body's outreach "engagements" in word and deed.

During the triennium 2009–2012, the board of directors and staff of the Atlantic District addressed the mission and vision statements of the district. The results were ratified at the 2012 district convention as follows:

Mission Statement:

The Atlantic District’s congregations, workers, and agencies share God’s grace in Christ Jesus to nurture Christians and reach out to others.

Vision Statement:

The Atlantic District is “Engaging the World with the Gospel of Hope” through

- vitalized congregations that grow in the grace and work of the Body of Christ through Word and Sacraments while reaching their neighborhoods and the world with the life and love of Christ;
- sanctified workers who are supported so that they love, teach, and lead the baptized while seeking the lost and sharing the Gospel with all people; and
- dynamic agencies that are committed to partnerships in the Gospel that edify the faithful while transforming our society.

In addition, during the triennium, the Atlantic District’s goals were redirected by the board of directors and ratified at the convention in this regard:

1. That every congregation be an active mission station
2. That creative collaboration partnership is encouraged among our congregations
3. That two hundred homegrown mission leaders be trained and equipped for the sake of the mission

Each goal is connected to the theme of “Witness, Mercy, Life Together.”

With regard to the first goal, the Atlantic District Engage Covenant grants provided close to \$300,000 for new mission concepts in 16 parishes and schools during the past triennium for a total of over \$650,000 throughout the past six years. Several congregations have worship services in three or more languages with a total of 20 different languages in use on Sunday in Divine Services in the district.

With regard to the third goal, there are at least a half dozen men studying for the Holy Ministry who have come directly from our parishes and their confirmation/youth programs. Additionally, over an eight-year period, 40 men and women have entered the roster of the Missouri Synod in the Atlantic District through colloquy, DELTO (now SMP), EIIT, and alternate route placements.

“Witness in the Public Square,” the Atlantic District Mission Society’s annual luncheon in midtown Manhattan, has now brought over \$1.5 million for mission-planting resources. The scores of servant trips to bring healing through deeds of love sponsored in the district as an aspect of our mercy ministries, originally to the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina and more recently to Atlantic District areas affected by Hurricane Irene, have most recently become an amazing “coalition of the willing” in partnership with the national disaster response team after Superstorm Sandy.

Disaster response after Superstorm Sandy has eventuated in extensive mercy outreach all along the southern edge of the Atlantic District. National and district leaders have engaged teams from over 25 Atlantic District parishes as well as congregations from around the LCMS for the recovery of pastors and teachers, parishioners and community residents from Staten Island to the Rockaways, Long Beach, Amityville, and Islip. There is an active plan to begin mission outreach in Far Rockaway underway in creative collaboration with four LCMS parishes.

The congregations, schools, and pastors of the Atlantic District are committed to engaging the world with the Gospel of hope in Christ Jesus through every baptized member’s words and deeds.

David H. Benke, *President*

R3-03-02

California-Nevada-Hawaii

The vision guiding the California-Nevada-Hawaii (CNH) District the past several years is that our churches become increasingly equipped to serve as missionary outposts in their unchurched communities. As such, we have focused on orienting our pastors and people to minister in a post-churched world, to proclaim the Gospel in contexts in which the Christian Church no longer sets the rules for “where,” “when,” and “what the starting places are” for those conversations. Recalling St. Peter’s words to his first-century readers, we remember that God has called us to be “elect exiles of the dispersion.” Peter’s letter brought reassurance and encouragement to God’s people at a time of great uncertainty, even anxiety, as they lived out their faith in a world hostile to the notion that Jesus Christ is Lord. We in the CNH are also encouraged by the great apostle to understand what it means to live as “cultural exiles” in our own time and to embrace that role as ordained by God Himself. God planted us in the soil of an American mission field with an identity and purpose rooted not primarily in the preservation of our past but in the proclamation of His Son. As Christ’s missionary people, three significant challenges lay before us:

1. To be outreach churches in an increasingly post-churched society, that is, a society that finds little significance or value in connecting with Christian congregations.
2. To confess our cross-centered faith not only in the arena of the Christian Church but also in the arenas of other religions and religious pluralism.
3. To shift from ministry roles of clergy and laity commonly associated with a churched environment to roles regularly employed on mission fields.

We in the CNH give thanks to the Lord that we do not face these mission challenges alone. In concert with Synod’s national revitalization program, Transforming Churches Network (TCN), we have intentionally focused our district resources on congregational revitalization with a goal of developing locally based mission outreach. CNH’s “Transforming for Mission” combines team consultations, continuing education, and coaching for congregations, pastors, and leaders to become more mission minded and to work to establish additional mission outposts. Due to his experience in “turn-around” ministries, the Rev. Ted Hartman oversees this ministry for the district. Nearly 40 congregations are involved in some level of the process. Over the past five years, several pastors and lay leaders have arisen to serve congregations in the revitalization process, including participation in consultation weekends, assisting congregations in next steps such as missional visioning and congregational governance, and serving as mission/ministry coaches for the pastors and key lay leaders involved in the revitalization process. A significant revitalization network has developed throughout the district.

One of the last significant connecting points between our churches and the unchurched is the education of children. Here is where our Lutheran schools, preschools, and early-childhood centers continue to serve as critical mission posts in our communities. We have 74 schools in our district, with over 7,800 children attending. Approximately one-third of these children are unchurched. In this last triennium, we had reported 175 baptisms, 64 adult member transfers, and 186 adult baptisms or confirmations that have resulted directly through their ministries. To increase their mission potential, our schools utilize

admission counselors who connect directly with their local communities. They approach their work as ministry, recognizing its missional purpose and potential. Begun in 2006 as a pioneering effort with one of our oldest congregations, this ministry has become part of almost every school in CNH and has spread to several other districts. Due to its success and increasing demand, our education executive, Joel Koerschen, formed an independent 501(c)(3) corporation, Enrollment Management Network, to continue promoting and equipping this ministry throughout the Synod.

A growing number of CNH congregations are no longer able to sustain regular Word-and-Sacrament ministry through traditional full-time pastors, especially in the rural and urban areas. To address this challenge, we dedicated staff resources in the person of Rev. John Whaley to walk alongside these congregations to plan how best to sustain their ministries and connect to their larger community. CNH deeply appreciates the ministry of both seminaries—Concordia Seminary and Concordia Theological Seminary—in developing innovative approaches such as the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program to assist us in caring for the found and reaching out to the lost.

While we see an overall decline in congregational membership among Anglo populations, missionary work across cultural and linguistic lines is growing. Outreach among Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Hmong, and Hispanic populations continues on a strong course, with both congregational growth and the emergence of men being trained for pastoral ministry. We give thanks for the combined theological education contributions of our district pastors, along with the cooperation of the larger Synod through the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), the Center for Hispanic Studies at Concordia Seminary, and our pastoral colloquy process. Six new outreach/church-planting ministries have begun among our growing Hispanic and East African populations, along with the emergence of several ordained workers.

Like the Jewish exiles in Babylon, CNH congregations have entered a period in our history where we Christians do not direct the affairs of our world in any significant way. We take heart in the fact that Jesus owns this part of history too. His promises cannot be shaken; His strong arm cannot be shortened as He moves triumphantly to the completion of His Father's will—"that all might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." This post-church era provides us with new and great opportunities to be His faith-filled people. We have the opportunity, even the necessity, to grow in faith and rely less on human sight; to choose the adventure of following our risen Lord into the world, rather than clinging to the fleeting safety of our own human plans and structures. Regardless of how shaken the foundations seem to be in this post-church world, we are anchored by Word and Sacrament to the unshakable cross of Christ.

Robert D. Newton, *President*

R3-03-03

Central Illinois

The more things change, the more they stay the same. The Central Illinois District always holds the "caboose" convention, the very last of the district conventions, a long-standing practice dating from when farmers had more free time in the mid-summer than in the spring. Our 2012 convention was held in early July, under the theme Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, and Faith Alone. As President Bueltmann noted in his convention report, this theme "points to the fact that everything we do as a church body, and as a district, is to be based upon God's Word. That Word tells us that we are saved, not by what we do, but solely by the grace of God. ... We receive this gift of God through faith." President Bueltmann ended that statement with the simple quote with which we are all catechetically familiar: "For it is by grace

you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast." Our pastoral, worship, and mission life is simple and ancient. Those who have God's Word must speak it faithfully. We, and all, are saved by the universal atonement of Jesus, and not by the works of the Law. Trusting in Jesus, a product of Word and Spirit, accrues to us every spiritual blessing. Wherever the Word of the Lord is cast, it springs up into a harvest of souls.

During this convention, we strongly supported traditional Word-and-Sacrament ministry, traditional marriage as God instituted it, and the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, especially as regards the recent stir created by the mandate from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services attempting to cause church-run insurance programs "to provide sterilization, hormonal and abortive-inducing drugs, and IUDs." The most "controversial" resolution dealt with a change in term limitations within the district praesidium which increased to three terms of service among the district vice-presidents and reduced from unlimited terms for the president to three terms. This resolution passed by a three-vote margin.

At this convention, a change in leadership occurred when on the third ballot the Rev. Mark A. Miller, senior pastor of St. John, Pekin, Illinois, was elected to become the 16th president of the Central Illinois District ("16th President" and Springfield, Illinois, together ring rather ominously). Although a new president has been elected, it does not change the desire or direction of this district to be faithful to the Scriptures and our Confession, or to the task of making disciples by baptizing and teaching.

One of the challenges that looms before us, in the face of the secular and the satanic ever encroaching on the spiritual, is that our predominately rural congregations must still do what the Lord of the church has called us to do: "urgently preach the Word in season and out of season." This we must do even if the demographics are not on our side. The larger urban congregations have no different charge. They must not succumb to the fiscal pressures of watering down the message for the sake of worldly peace and prosperity. All must trust in the promise of God, "My Word will not return empty;" and His unfailing track record "to add to the church daily those who are being saved."

The bedrock and heartbeat of our district remains our 159 congregations, their pastors and their people. The church in this place is the 75,000 or so baptized members of our congregations. Our outreach includes 76 of our congregations involved in the operation of 22 full-time elementary schools and three high schools. Another 30 congregations are operating early-childhood programs. The Lord has worked mightily as the Word is proclaimed and taught by our ordained and commissioned ministers, as our laypeople give testimony of the goodness of our God through Christ Jesus, and by the various ways the Lord's mercy has been extended through us in the context of where and the vocation in which that same Lord has placed us.

Our budget, even in this difficult economic period, *solī Deo gloria*, has remained stable, and we are still forwarding on 30 percent to support the Synod, the seminaries, and worldwide missions. Fifty percent is still being used to support and extend our local mission efforts throughout central Illinois. The district staff was reduced by one and one-half in the last triennium as the Rev. Wesley Reimnitz took a call back into the parish and our part-time CID gift planner, Mr. David Rohe, retired from this position. Mr. Rohe still continues as the executive director of our CID Church Extension Fund.

Our joint work being done among the Latino population in Central Illinois is bearing fruit. In the Quad Cities, under the Rev. Pablo Dominguez, the Lord has blessed. New efforts are underway in the Beardstown area and St. John's congregation to reach out to the Latinos who have settled and are employed in the area. The model

of our local congregations establishing a mission council, such as in the Quad Cities, makes this mission a hands-on effort in which these congregations hold joint oversight and participation together with the district. This same paradigm for expanding mission work is being encouraged among the other circuits of our district, once again, that there can be an increase of volunteer possibilities among our laypeople and a wider circle of local ownership in these mission projects. There are mission prospects to be found among the 20,000 or so Muslims settled in and around the Peoria area. Even the face of central Illinois is changing, but the need for the Gospel is still the same.

We still support the planting of new congregations and outreach to the hearing impaired, the developmentally disabled, and the imprisoned. Our work continues on the campuses of four of the state's largest universities, and though difficult, it remains traditional Word-and-Sacrament ministry with pastoral presence on-site.

A new congregation, Faith, Monticello, had 90 members already at the time of its commissioning in 2011. However, the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church in Canton just recently worshiped together for the last time. Established congregations are seeking ways and means, by Word and Sacrament, to have the Lord breathe new life into the hearts of the members and the fellowship of those churches. We are seeing with the eyes of faith that "the gates of hell shall not prevail."

The more things change, the more they stay the same. The message must remain unaltered, even if our vocabulary oftentimes must be tweaked a bit for a 21st-century audience; and then as these mature, they may exalt the saving God in His language, the language of the Bible, of the creed, and of prayer.

The gifts we receive from the Lord—water, bread, and wine connected with His Word—are still the same and only tools with which we enter into the harvest. The word of absolution is still the comfort of sinners stepping out every day in their weakness and seeking help and peace from above.

The main focus, as the world is still entrapped in Satan's net of lies and death, is the Victor who makes us more than conquerors. The Head of the Church is still the One who overcame sin, death, and the grave. The blood that bought our redemption is the substance of an unchanging Gospel. An empty tomb is the sign and seal of everlasting life.

The names and faces may be different from age to age. Leadership in this life waxes and wanes, and the folks who step into those roles come and go. But the real essentials of the Church are no different through the centuries.

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Mark A. Miller, *President*

R3-03-04

Eastern

The Eastern District celebrates 159 years of ministry in 2013. As it does, it takes high delight in the privilege and responsibility as God's chosen to share the Gospel of Jesus in central and western New York, the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Garrett County, Maryland, through 136 congregations, 13 schools, and 46 early learning centers. Our vision is "We desire healthy leaders vigorously equipping God's people for Kingdom growth."

Through a time that is both declining and exciting for the church in America, in the past triennium the Eastern District has focused efforts on outreach opportunities that have presented themselves with congregations building bridges into their communities and among a variety of ethnic and immigrant populations, primarily in the major metropolitan areas of the district. Those groups have included people of Indonesian, West African, Nepalese, Hmong, Asian Indian,

Spanish-speaking, and Korean background. New church starts have been made in suburban and rural contexts.

The Eastern District Board of Directors, recognizing the presence and strength of missional activity on the congregational level, recently affirmed efforts in our four regions to organize regional mission organizations. These grass-roots organizations—Linc-Pittsburgh, Linc-Rochester, Christian Life Ministries in Buffalo, Northeast Pennsylvania Missions, and Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries—identify, initiate, fund, and engage mission opportunities as they present themselves. Thanks to local leadership and sacrifice, the future of mission activity is held within these mission organizations as they seek to foster ways to reach the lost by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As our congregations engage themselves in God's Holy Word and Sacraments and are surrounded by prayer, they seek opportunities to form strategic alliances for the purpose of shining the light of Christ in the sin-darkened world surrounding them with a clarity and brilliance of the Gospel in a style and language that cannot be missed by those who live there.

Congregational revitalization efforts which had been initiated under the direction of district staff in a process provided by Transforming Churches Network (TCN) are now being stimulated through 5–2 ministries and their catalyst groups. While still early in the development stage, the strategy is to encourage, nurture, and link our congregations and ministries in prayer, vision setting, asset evaluation, and strategic planning of professional church workers and lay volunteers work to map the best utilization of existing resources and the development of key areas of needed growth to best reach the community in which the congregation is situated with the Gospel message.

Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center remains one of the high-visibility, high-impact ministries of the district. Longtime camp advocates and new supporters have met decisions made in the past several conventions to continue to increase support of Pioneer. With the retirement of Linda Gage, who now serves as fund development officer for the Lutheran Foundation and Lutherans in Mission (LWML), Alex Knowles currently serves Pioneer as executive director. The objective to make Camp Pioneer a primary resource for ministry in the district is being achieved at an increasing level.

Pioneer offers the only family servant event in the Synod and has creatively developed a camping program for children in foster care. The Buffalo area has the second-highest concentration of children in foster care in the nation. The Eastern District, Pioneer, Bethesda Lutheran Homes, Lutheran Service Society of the Niagara Frontier, and the Lutheran Association for the Developmentally Disabled [LADD] enjoy a unique partnership that promotes disability awareness and ministry to those with developmental disabilities, utilizing the gifts of a Bethesda congregational resource contact person and offering camping opportunities for those with severe developmental disabilities.

The Eastern District works under the mandate to help train and equip missional leaders to discover and cultivate resources in order that congregations become spiritually stronger, better equipped, more outwardly focused, fiscally sound mission outposts that identify and embrace outreach opportunities in their community, their region, and throughout the world. These are the questions we keep asking: How can we best equip and train ourselves to reach into the world, according to God's command to make more and more disciples of Jesus? How can we most effectively share the Light as His chosen citizens of heaven and earth?

Chris Wicher, *President*

R3-03-05

English District

The 102-year-old English District is one of two non-geographic districts of the LCMS. It is, as in its slogan, igniting Christ's Church in mission by the power of the Holy Spirit. Consisting of 158 congregations, the English District also has six new mission starts, six campus and human care ministries, and 65 school ministries in 19 different states in the US and in the province of Ontario in Canada, across four time zones. Adoration and praise of the triune God is spoken and sung in 21 different languages of worship and Bible study. The district is a microcosm of the Synod. It provides a unique "servant district" and leadership role in the Synod as a mission catalyst and collaborative partner with other districts in mission and ministry, and as a responsible safety net.

In the past triennium, the following highlights occurred:

- Reception of six new congregations in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Nevada, and the addition of a new Lutheran high school in western Pennsylvania at Redeemer Lutheran, Oakmont, and Penn Hills, PA
- Celebration of the English District's 100th Anniversary Year (2011–2012), with a theme Scripture verse and logo and culminating in the district convention in St. Louis, a centennial-replicated "seven block walk" from old Redeemer (English Missouri Synod) to Holy Cross (German Missouri Synod), visits to Concordia Seminary and the LCMS International Center, and a 100th anniversary group picture and anniversary hymn
- 100th Anniversary Committee's work, including the writing of articles for the *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, *English Channels*, and other journals, and producing a centennial year cookbook (*The Great Potluck from Across the English District*), anniversary mugs, seals, coasters, pins, a Camp Pioneer weekend, 100th anniversary birthday cakes and cookies, and encouraging concerts and mission projects as part of local church and school celebrations
- A 100th anniversary banner and Christmas ornament, centennial year prayer list, TV and other centennial special appearances, with special speakers for fall pastoral and spring church-workers conferences
- A new Georgia mission plant out of Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church and Open Arms, Alpharetta, GA, supported by a 100th Anniversary District Mission Thank Offering
- New or revitalized District Stewardship, Lutheran Malaria Initiative, Campus Ministry, and Endowment Fund Committees and Missions Council, with transcontinental meetings via phone or Webcam
- Mission partnership with the Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission
- The "Under the Net" initiative of the district's LMI team
- A district Millennials Church Workers Gathering in San Diego in January 2012
- The naming of three district exemplary schools in the Synod through NLSA
- The selection of a new district triennium theme for 2012–2015: *Christian Faith Expressed in Courageous Action*, and new core values and end statements
- The continuing of annual Doctor of Divinity and Lumen Christi awards in the district

The 54th convention of the English District was held in St. Louis, MO, June 27–30, 2012. Reelected to a third and final term was the Rev. Dr. David Stechholz as Bishop and President. Also elected were 1st Vice-President Rev. Wayne Morton of Pinetop, AZ; 2nd Vice-President Rev. Nate Schwartz of Lee's Summit, MO; 3rd Vice-President Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy of McMurray, PA; 4th Vice-President Rev. Derek Mathers of Toronto, ON; District Secretary Rev. Bob Fitzpatrick; and eight new members to the board of directors, which operates with policy-based governance.

The English District executive staff includes Tim Ewell, parish services/school ministry executive, and Sally Naglich, business administrator/treasurer. The dedicated support staff workers are Peggy Oke, Evelyn Jentzen, and Mary Ann Holvenstot and a part-time Internet communications person, Kate Storey, and Rev. David Thiele, who serves as the deployed LCEF vice-president. The missions executive hat is worn by Bishop Stechholz, with strong assistance by the regional vice-president in reviewing monthly mission grantee reports and by the District Missions Council. In addition, we are blessed with local volunteers at our district office.

One other uniqueness of the English District is the use of the words circuit "visitor" (counselor) and the biblical term "bishop" ("overseer") as a servant of Jesus Christ, along with the title of "president" of the district.

The four major emphases or goals for this triennium include the following:

- New mission plants across North America
- New school starts and expansions with schools of excellence
- Campus ministry and new campus ministry starts
- Strengthening congregations—inner city, urban, suburban, and rural, with strong doctrine and faith, liturgical, mission, and ethnic emphases.

What may be lacking in a smaller district staff in suburban Detroit is more than made up for with healthy and courageous congregations and their members, who seek the lost for Jesus Christ in responsible risk-taking and creative ways, and with Christ-centered, joyful confession and worship of the blessed Trinity. The English District embraces the challenges and opportunities in this second decade of the 21st century in living hope and faith in our blessed Redeemer, the Lord of the harvest.

David P. Stechholz, *President*

R3-03-06

Florida-Georgia District

The Rev. Gregory S. Walton was elected to a second term as president of the Florida-Georgia District at the district's 31st regular convention, June 22–24, 2012, in Lake Mary, Florida. The theme of the convention was "Stewards of God's Grace; Empowered by the Word," based on 1 Peter 4:10 (ESV): "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

A steward is defined as one who manages somebody else's property, finances, or household. We often misuse the term in Christian circles by assigning it to a financial position. The greatest gift God has given us is His grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are stewards of that grace. It doesn't belong to us; we didn't earn it, and we certainly don't deserve it. It is God's gift to us in Jesus, a gift meant to be shared with the world.

So we go into this post-church world as stewards of God's grace. It is His grace to give away. We are simply the vehicles He counts on to share it with those who so desperately need it. He empowers us to go, as His stewards, with His Word and Sacraments. It's His Word about forgiveness and new life and His grace made known to us in the very body and blood of Jesus in, with, and under the elements, to strengthen our faith and empower our action as His stewards.

The district's focus in the current triennium is on revitalizing the church. We work together under the assumption that "revitalization" means to give new life or energy to somebody or something, or to restore to health. Very few churches can claim they don't need new life or energy. In fact, we have had no churches say to us, "Please come and help us because we have too much life or energy!"

How can a church be revitalized? God has called us, as stewards, to be about His mission, reaching souls with the grace of Jesus Christ.

We do not compromise our doctrine and practice, but we may need to adjust and revitalize our sense of intentionality for the Gospel and care for the lost if we are serious about connecting people to Jesus.

We have introduced a new vision statement for the district: “The people of the Florida-Georgia District are equipped, empowered, engaged ... connecting people to Jesus!” We want to equip people so they can better understand their roles as stewards. Paul says in Ephesians that we are “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12 [ESV]). Our desire is to continue to offer opportunities to equip leaders in our congregations to lead revitalization efforts for the sake of the Gospel in a responsible way.

Congregations are empowered by the Word and the Sacraments in their witness, mercy, and life together. We want people to be empowered by allowing the Word of God and participation in the Sacrament of the Altar to be a regular part of their daily life and practice. In the waters of Holy Baptism, God gifted each of us so that we are equipped to serve Him.

We want to see that our people are engaged with their faith, engaged in their church, and engaged in their community for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we want to have a lasting impact for Jesus, we must engage our communities. Church no longer happens only within the confines of the walls of a building. As we are out in the world, showing the love of Jesus in word and deed, our witness will draw people to Jesus and His Church, our acts of mercy will increase, and our life together will be blessed. This is being stewards of God’s grace, empowered by the Word.

Strategies for carrying out this vision include the following:

- Continuing to provide leadership training, assistance with the creation of personal development plans, and coaching assistance for all professional church workers, as well as for active lay leaders, so that they are better equipped for service
- Restructuring our district into five regions instead of four to give us greater and more strategic lines of communication, as well as creating new partnership webs to expand the missional focus that has been so much a part of the fabric of the district
- Working toward greater fiscal responsibility in the mission and operation of the district. At the close of 2012, we sold the district office building, which we had occupied for over 20 years, and leased more efficient office space near the Orlando International Airport. This will provide greater flexibility and proficiency in the administration of district operations
- Restructuring our mission-granting process to one of providing mission development loans that will be repaid on a generous time schedule, thus increasing the investment and commitment of those developing new missions
- Enhancing our school ministries through the development of networks that will provide training, encouragement, sharing of resources, and critical information for ongoing growth and development

We humbly seek your prayerful support in the efforts of the Florida-Georgia District to help its people be equipped, empowered, and engaged ... connecting people to Jesus.

Gregory S. Walton, *President*

R3-03-07

Indiana District

The Indiana District is celebrating its 50th anniversary with the theme *Celebrating God’s Love!* When we gather as a district, we celebrate who we are and whose we are in Christ Jesus! We gather as God’s beloved, forgiven, and redeemed people to do the will and work of our heavenly Father.

Our anniversary celebration revolves around the partnership we share in the Gospel! Paul writes to the Philippians, “In all my prayers

for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Our partnership includes all of our congregations, church workers, and laypeople as we strive to do together what none of us can do alone. It is a blessing and pleasure to be able to share this time in history and this geographic area as we live out our Christian vocations! We are happy to provide this report of God’s work among us. May our work always be the outgrowth of God’s active grace in this place!

As we evaluate our present circumstance, we thank God for the opportunities we have in common. As we look ahead, we boldly plan to forge into the future, knowing that even through the mission climate has changed, is changing, and will change, we serve our Lord Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Opportunity

God has blessed us with a terrific mission field in Indiana and northern Kentucky. We have a new congregation recently chartered, several others about to be chartered, and 10 other mission starts in process. We have new opportunities for our schools and preschools, and many of these have expanding facilities.

Affirming Our Lord’s Mission

In the midst of all that we do in the Indiana District, we reaffirm our biblical and confessional foundation as we “fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” There will always be uncertainties and challenges as we do ministry in this fallen world. The world and its culture continue to challenge us and resist the Gospel we share. Taking up the cross and following Jesus has always meant going against the flow. And yet, as we celebrate this anniversary, we celebrate God’s love in Jesus Christ. Our mission is Christ’s mission! “*The Mission of the Indiana District Is to Encourage and Assist the Christian Outreach and Nurture of Its Congregations and Other Ministries.*”

Identity in Christ

The partnership we share grows directly out of our baptismal faith! We are a family of 236 congregations in the Indiana District! More than 1,200 professional church workers work in partnership with more than 100,000 baptized congregational members in boldly bearing witness of Jesus Christ in this part of God’s vineyard! The diversity of gifts, interests, and opportunities that exist from northern Kentucky to northern Indiana are astounding and humbling.

The faithful people of our district trace their heritage back to missionaries in this part of God’s world like Wyneken, Loehe’s pastors, Walther, and the early pastors of every one of our congregations. The heart and spirit of the early missionaries is a heritage we celebrate and treasure! Our intention to let the world know the Holy Gospel is as strong now as it was in the mid 1800s.

By convention action, we have resolved to do the following:

1. Encourage our congregations to invite 50 new families to church on this 50th anniversary year.
2. Encourage all circuits to come up with a mission plan of action for their circuit for the next 10 years of growth.
3. Encourage congregations to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the district by providing gifts designated for church-worker scholarships.

We are God’s loved, forgiven, and redeemed people in Christ Jesus living in this time and this place. As with those before us, we feed on Word and Sacrament and proclaim clearly the Law and the Gospel.

As we preach, teach, and share this holy message, we find a multitude of reasons to rejoice and celebrate God's unconditional love in Christ! We experience what Jesus said is celebrated in heaven: *"I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."*

We enjoy the opportunity to provide financial support for pastors who have high student loans and other financial challenges. We have a *Ministry Excellence Fund* that grew out of a Lilly Foundation grant of nearly one million dollars. This program functions under the leadership of Dr. David Ebeling and a volunteer task force. Requests are reviewed and grants provided to those qualifying pastors. We are striving to maintain the corpus of the original grant so that this can be an ongoing blessing.

We are amazed by the growth and vitality of many of our congregations. We see a variety of approaches to establishing satellite missions, daughtering new congregations, and launching new mission starts from some of our larger congregations. We have pastors and circuits working at restarts and new starts in many areas of our district.

We remain convinced that our working and walking together will be enhanced by strong circuits and cooperative efforts in local communities. Our circuit counselors work hard to encourage this spirit. God continues to bless these efforts as we see a variety of ministry projects growing up in every region of our district. We encourage and bless one another as we partner to cooperate in a lot of work in this district! This is not only the history and tradition of this district; it is also a dynamic and profound definition of who we are as a people of Christ!

Outreach

As a district, we commend ourselves to seriously and faithfully taking God's Word to heart and to the world. We are aware of the growing number of unchurched, dechurched, and lost people living in Indiana and northern Kentucky. What a blessing 100,000 of us can be as we look for ways and opportunities to share our faith in Jesus Christ!

New Congregations

We look forward to establishing more new congregations that will serve people from every segment of our changing society. We anticipate some "daughtering," satellite, and fresh mission starts. As we collaborate with one another, we anticipate more Spirit-powered celebrations that come when the lost are found. Jesus tells this short parable: *"Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

Our prayer is that God's working in and through us will provide great encouragement, regular celebrations of God's love, and a strong witness in the world! What we do and how we do it is an example that reaches far beyond our district borders. Jesus said, *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

This is my prayer, and I know that it is yours too as we work and walk together as the Body of Christ in this place. What we confess

as Christians and as a church we also profess, proclaim, and share in many ways and on every day!

Education

Our Lutheran schools (preschool, elementary, secondary) are vital treasures and a powerful aspect of our ministry to children and youth. While Lutheran education is never easy and never inexpensive, it is increasingly important and vital for our young people. Some of our schools are carefully working with the voucher program in Indiana as a way of making a Lutheran education accessible to those in need. We are working to encourage the opening of new schools and the health and expansion of existing schools. We also attend to the other educational agencies of the church (Sunday School, adult education, youth ministry, and VBS).

Endurance, Encouragement, and Unity

It would be a very lengthy list if we were to name all of the entities and agencies in our district; although we cannot catalogue all of them in this report, they are wonderful partners and great blessings!

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." It will always be critical for us to strengthen the relationships and partnerships we have with one another as we move ahead with faithful determination and a burning desire to be God's faithful people in this place now and all the way to the Father's house! May God bless us as we mark our 50th year of celebrating God's Love as the Indiana District!

Daniel P. May, *President*

R3-03-08

Iowa District East

Iowa District East is comprised of 121 congregations. It has a baptized membership of approximately 55,000. We have a mixture of rural and city congregations with the district office located in Marion, a suburb of Cedar Rapids.

The goal of the district remains what it always has been. We desire to remain faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. Our commitment to them calls for us to reflect the face of Christ from the chancel as well as in our daily vocations. The extended mission effort to accomplish this is carried out at our two campus ministries, prison ministry, and two congregations to the deaf as well as three more preaching stations, the district camp as well as other local opportunities. We look for areas of population that have no LCMS presence and work with the circuit or nearby congregation to plant churches in those communities. We also team up with the Synod from time to time in efforts to proclaim Christ Jesus in the foreign mission field.

The well-being of our church workers is of top priority. We regularly schedule conferences and workshops to build one another up in the faith as well as strengthen fraternal relationships. Our pastors and commissioned workers are encouraged to make use of a father confessor for the blessed Absolution. In the past three years, we have concentrated on sermon evaluations of our pastors. We involve the district president, circuit counselors, and Winkel brothers to do this. The goal is to assist the pastors with preaching the Word of God in its truth and purity for the sake of God's sheep. The Church deserves the best preaching it can receive. The circuit counselors meet three times a year with presentations on theological and practical topics. The presenters are from among the brotherhood as well as men brought in from outside the district with specific expertise in certain areas of interest. The circuit counselors take these studies to their Winkels and may use them for further study, discussion, and growth.

In the last three years, we were able to plant two new congregations in the district: New Hope Lutheran Church in Charles City and St. Silas Lutheran Church in North Liberty. Both cities have substantial opportunities to take the Lutheran confession into communities who have not heard the Word from our lips. Both congregations are faring well. Last year marked the conclusion to the efforts IDE made in cooperation with Human Care and World Relief to construct a Deaconate Center in Palanga, Lithuania. It was a seven-year project that was finished with a wonderful celebration in July 2012. The center is serving a congregation in Palanga as well as an excellent outreach center for the Lutheran Church of Lithuania.

Publications of the district continue to display activities in the congregations and theological growth in the church. The *IDE Today* keeps the district informed of all the vacancies, calls, and installations, congregational events, and district missions. A new publication has begun this year called *Theological Journal for the Church (TJC)*. The intent of the publication is to address pertinent issues in the church with articles written by our pastors in the district. Each article is around 1,500 words with footnote references. Each publication will address one topic from the three different estates (the church, the home, the society). They will be theological in content but not in terminology. Our goal is that these articles be written in the language of the laymen so that we can strengthen the doctrinal and practical acumen of the baptized. Our prayer is that growth in the Word will translate into more confession of Christ in the community through given vocations.

A challenge that IDE faces in the upcoming years is the declining population in our rural areas. This is due to smaller family sizes as well as corporate farms taking the place of the smaller family farm. Congregations are facing aging membership. While it is true that the population in rural America is declining, there is yet no shortage of unchurched in these areas. There is much work to do and a great harvest of souls in rural Iowa. We will do this by remaining faithful to the Word we believe is true and the Confessions we trust are a correct exhibition of the Word. Faithfulness is complete when what we believe is confessed with our lips. The confession is celebrated in the Divine Service and lived in the daily vocations among our neighbor. In and through this, Christ will bless His Church here and around the world.

Brian Saunders, *President*

R3-03-09

Iowa District West

But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. ... Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us ... so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. (Titus 2:1–10)

Paul had left Titus on the island of Crete to straighten out what was left unfinished in organizing the church. He was to appoint elders, qualified leaders, and pastors. In the face of opposition from outside the church and false teachers within, Paul charged Titus to “teach what accords with sound doctrine.” He was also to teach them how to live as believing children of God in their vocations. Titus was to show himself “in all respects as a **model** of good works ... so that in everything they might adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (emphasis added).

Paul had mentored Titus. Now, Titus was to be a teacher and model of good works to faithfully pass on the Gospel that had been entrusted to him. So it has been throughout the history of the Church. One generation teaches another by word and deed. Now, this responsibility has been entrusted to us!

Our focus for the next triennium reflects the fourth part of our district’s vision, **Joy in Modeling**.

During the past triennium, the district board of directors and staff have sought to be models of Christian stewardship of the resources entrusted to our care. A move into a new office building will serve the needs of the district for years to come. While increasing the percentage of the district income remitted to the Synod by one percent per year (now at 45 percent), the board also balanced the budget. We hope this will serve as a model and encouragement for all of our congregations.

The retirement of a key staff member has led to an adjustment of the staff and the utilization of part-time executives in school ministry, youth ministry, stewardship ministry, and rural missions. A task force has been appointed to study the staffing needs of the district into the future.

The missions committee has proposed a bold new mission strategy, which has resulted in increased support for district missionaries, grants to assist congregations in implementing new local mission programs, and a stronger rural mission initiative. Despite the changing demographics in our rural communities, our goal is to encourage all of our congregations to turn from an inward focus that asks, “What must we do to keep the doors of our church open?” toward an outward focus that asks, “What has the Lord of the Church called us to do to serve and proclaim His Gospel in our community and beyond?”

It is critical that we continue to prepare future pastors, teachers, and professional church workers. Through our endowment funds and our annual “Joy in Ministry” banquet, the district continues to provide generous financial aid to our students preparing themselves for ministry and assistance to every IDW student attending one of our Concordia universities.

Equally as important in the work of passing on our faith is the training and equipping of our lay leaders. The district staff continues to provide workshops for teachers, elders, treasurers, secretaries, youth leaders, emergency responders, organists, stewardship committees, evangelists, and trustees. The IDW Lay Leadership Institute provides even more in-depth training.

Our eight Lutheran schools and 46 preschools equip our children to take their places as Christian men and women in their churches and communities.

The youth of the district are engaged in gatherings, camps, servant events, and mission trips through IOWAY, “Individual Outreach With Adults and Youth.”

Our partners, the ILLL and the LWML, are actively recruiting and training younger members. Lutheran Family Service continues to serve and strengthen families and people of all ages. Camp Okoboji, one of the finest Lutheran camps in our country, provides the place and programs for families, youth, and children to relax, to learn, and to grow stronger.

We are keenly aware that this is our time to take our place among the company of saints throughout the ages who have faithfully carried out the Lord’s mission and passed the blessings and responsibility to us. Now may we joyfully “teach what accords sound doctrine,” “show ourselves “model[s] of good works,” and “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”

Paul G. Sieveking, *President*

R3-03-10

Kansas District

“The servant mission of the Kansas District is to equip, encourage and empower each congregation in its mission vision and Christ-care ministry.”

Grace to you and peace, from our God and Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord! Amen.

The Kansas District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod continues to pursue the mission of our Lord. There are countless episodes that are recorded by the men, women, and children of the church. They are recorded in the histories of the congregations and ministries of our district.

I am always hesitant to try to list them, because such a list is never exhaustive. Please hear these words as a synopsis of many, many works that our God is doing in and through the people of God.

We have invested ourselves in the continuing effort to revitalize and transform congregational ministries. One account that was indicative of this work of God was in a congregation that my great grandfather helped found. When I began my service in the district, I met with the congregation and discussed their future. At that meeting, we had a serious discussion, and it included an honest discussion about their closure. God thought differently. In the last triennium, the same congregation accomplished a significant building program because they were running out of Sunday School space. The Lord continues to accomplish these things through the inspiration of His people looking for new horizons of where God is leading.

We have invested in the Transforming Congregation Network, and many of our workers and congregational leaders are seeing their setting and their communities with “new eyes.” What a blessing of God.

We continue to know transformation as a district as well, with consolidation and new alignments in our work. We share partnerships in various ministries with the Nebraska, Oklahoma, Iowa West, and Missouri Districts.

It still comes down to this: It is “the servant mission” of a district dedicated to the “mission vision and Christ-care ministry.”

Keith Kohlmeier, *President*

R3-03-11

Michigan District

Choosing to emphasize the Synod’s loci of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* in the 2012, 2015, and 2018 Michigan District Conventions (in a unique way and different order), the June 2012 convention theme was *IMAGINE ... Living as God’s Forgiveness and Forgiving Family* (Life Together). The next two convention themes will be *IMAGINE ... Living as God’s Loved and Compassionate Community* (Mercy) and *IMAGINE ... Living as God’s Saved and Sent Servants* (Witness).

A new logo and tagline were developed for the Michigan District representing its identity in, and purpose for, the contemporary context in which we live: *People of Hope ... Vigorously Making Known the Love of Christ*. We are *People of Hope* even though the State of Michigan has lost about 500,000 people, which is roughly the combined populations of Grand Rapids, Warren, and Sterling Heights, the second, third, and fourth largest cities. Grateful for our salvation in our crucified and risen Savior, we embrace the words of Romans 15:13: “*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*”

Two theological conferences were enthusiastically received by laity and professional church workers. The *Theological Conference of Worship* and the *Theological Conference on Apologetics* were offered in three different locations on three different weekends. Because of the growth in faith and knowledge they afforded, two more are being planned: a *Theological Conference on Church & State* in 2014 and a *Theological Conference on Prayer* in 2015.

While annual regional pastors’ conferences are planned by a committee of pastors in each region, the district has taken a very deliberate

approach to the planning of its annual all-district pastors’ conferences through the help of district-appointed committees.

- 2010 *Not All Who Wander Are Lost* with Ken Hamm (Creation Museum) and Tony Cook (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis)
- 2011 *Lead Us Not into Temptation* dealt with care for one another in an area of increasing danger for pastors: internet abuse with pornography, gambling, etc.
- 2012 *First of All: PRAY!* was an encouragement for pastors and their wives to renew their commitment to scheduled daily prayer time alone with the heavenly Father

Additional all-district pastors’ conferences and a Professional Church Worker Conference continue to be organized:

- 2013 All Pastors’ Conference—*Spiritual Disciplines* with Dr. John Kleinig
- 2014 Professional Church Worker Conference for all professional church workers in the district is being planned under the theme *Imagine Immeasurably More*.

Under the tagline *Transforming Spirits—Stories—Cities*, the Michigan District’s Urban Ministry Initiative, *A2E (Acts 2 Enterprise)*, called Rev. Christopher Bodley to provide leadership and direction to Detroit and other urban areas. The ministry encompasses spiritual, social, educational, and human-care dimensions. Efforts continue with the anticipation of having a charter school open in Detroit within the next 12–18 months.

Over 16,000 students attend an LCMS-sponsored early childhood center, elementary school, or high school in Michigan. God uses these ministries to help parents in their role of nurturing their children’s faith. Over 1100 adults daily share Christ through these ministries and raise up *People of Hope* who are rooted in Christ Jesus.

Concordia University Ann Arbor (CUAA) was perilously close to closing, which would have been injurious to the district and Synod as well. Now, through the grace of God, CUAA has entered into a preferred future of thriving, not just surviving. Special thanks to

- Interim CEO Dr. Rusty Nichols, Acting President Randy Luecke, and the CUAA Board of Regents
- President Patrick Ferry and the rest of his leadership team at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) including Roy Peterson, Ken Gaschk, Al Prochnow, Ross Stueber, and the CUW Board of Regents
- Synod’s Presidents Kieschnick and Harrison
- Synod’s Board of Directors
- The Michigan District Church Extension Fund
- The Indiana, Ohio, and English Districts
- The Concordia University System

Tracking to be one university on two different campuses by the end of June 2013, CUAA and CUW will have one president, one business office, and one board of regents.

The Michigan District Church Extension Fund (CEF) is separately incorporated from the district and thrives under the continuing, capable leadership of Mr. Ronald Steinke. CEF has been and continues to be a great blessing to the district. At the end of its most recent fiscal year, its total assets stood at \$275.7 million, with total net assets of \$50.4 million, representing a strong capital ratio of 18.3 percent.

By God’s grace, protection, provision, and power, we will remain effective as *People of Hope* as long as we are anchored to God’s Word and Sacraments. As *God’s Forgiveness and Forgiving Family*, the people of the Michigan District will strive to “*hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*” We will also boldly “*consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near*” (Hebrews 10:23–25).

David P. E. Maier, *President*

R3-03-12

Mid-South District

The continuation and expansion of the ministry and mission of the Mid-South District continues to be expressed in the words of its mission statement:

“As an alliance of congregations and schools, the Mid-South District provides leadership, resources, and encouragement for reaching the lost for Christ’s kingdom and equipping the found for service in our churches, communities, and in the world.”

Our vision statement became this:

“We see every ministry reaching the lost and discipling the found.”

For the 2012 district convention, we chose the theme “Founded on Christ; Focused on Community.” The theme provided the convention and all the member congregations of the Mid-South District a means to enable congregations to equip and encourage the priesthood of all believers and make significant strides to touch the lives of the community surrounding our congregations.

The Mid-South District was founded on the principle of mission and outreach to the lost for the mid-South area. The convention encouraged the participants to think and consider means by which they could touch the lives of those who are unchurched and dechurched in their immediate area and around the world.

During the past three years, the board of directors and executive staff have worked intentionally and diligently to bring about a greater awareness of what steps are necessary for the assembly of resources to assist congregations to become stronger in their own context, and with the wisest use of limited resources. A wider emphasis on assisting congregation leadership to be focused on community has come from Congregation Revitalization and the A.C.T.S plan, bringing meaningful and intentional contact with the community through the congregation’s membership.

By encouraging smaller congregations and enabling more diversity in the larger congregations, more educational opportunities have been provided through the district for specific ministry pastor and deacon program participants. Professional workers and lay-church workers have received more opportunities for continuing education in their own areas of development.

Congregations have been encouraged to continue efforts toward meaningful alliances with other congregations, whereby either new mission opportunities can be explored and developed, or resources can be combined to enable a way in which essential ministries may continue in a more efficient fashion.

The 2012 district convention continued its support, by resolution, of church planting, the ELVD outreach in Tanzania, the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, the deacon program, and Trinity Hope, Haiti.

The District renewed its interest in and support of its church-planting initiatives. Since the 2009 convention, three new church plants have started, bringing the Gospel to areas of Memphis, Knoxville, and northwest Arkansas, in areas and neighborhoods where it has never been before. A church-planting training site has recently offered year-long training to potential church planters for other districts in the LCMS as well in the Mid-South District. The number of congregations involved in revitalization has maintained a manageable and active number of congregations, with noticeable results.

The convention and activities of the district continue to urge the professional church workers and laity to be involved in active outreach into the community, the workplace, the schools, and the region. The Mid-South District will provide the leadership, resources, and encouragement for congregations and schools to develop an outward-focused vision for mission and ministry. Several initiatives were prayerfully introduced and considered for this upcoming triennium:

- * Re-establish a Small and Rural Congregation Council
- * Town Hall meetings to ascertain the needs and resource potentials of each congregation
- * Create a President’s Council of past presidents to act as an advisory board
- * Establish a District Mission Board with broad-spectrum representation
- * Provide a means for resource distribution for congregational strengthening
- * Develop means for cooperative use of congregational resources for mission and ministry
- * Establish a tool by which congregations can evaluate their relative risk factors for continuing ministry
- * Continue meaningful church planting to maximize use of limited and valuable resources

The Mid-South District continues its focus on the mission and ministry entrusted to us under the privilege and stewardship of workers for the kingdom of God and to His glory.

Roger Paavola, *President*

R3-03-13

Minnesota North District

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so, I am sending you’” (John 20:21).

These words of Jesus served as the foundation for the 21st Regular Convention of the Minnesota North District gathering under the theme ***Sent to Share Christ’s Healing Grace***. Through His Holy Word and Sacraments, Christ comes into our midst and gives us life. Basking in His forgiving grace, we cannot help but give thanks for His mercies that are new every day. Forgiven and redeemed, we take the Good News of salvation into our daily callings in our home, work places, and communities, sharing through word and deed the love of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus draws His people out of the world into the Church, and He sends the Church out into the world. Christ is in the midst of His Church, reaching out over the world by stretching the Church out over the world.

The following sets forth how the Lord is working in and through the Minnesota North District during the past triennium:

Witness:

1. A new mission start in partnership with the Minnesota South District was begun in Otsego. This is our second such start, the first one being Alive! Lutheran Church in Monticello. Alive! is now a member congregation of our district.
2. *Sowing for Christ* and *Engaging Rural Communities* workshops were held to encourage and assist our rural/small-town congregations in reaching out with the Gospel.
3. A *Discipleship Workshop* was conducted to provide congregations and individuals with resources to equip God’s people to “follow Jesus” out into the mission field to be effective witnesses where He has placed them.
4. A *Regional Outreach Conference* (ROC) presented by Lutheran Hour Ministries was hosted by the district and had over 400 people in attendance.
5. *Children’s Bible Clubs* is a part of the effort of *Project 24* to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to thousands of orphans in Kenya and was endorsed by our district in convention.
6. *Hearts for Jesus* is an opportunity for the children of our Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, preschools, and elementary schools to support mission projects such as the work of Julia Mueller—serving in Lima, Peru, as the service coordinator for short-term LCMS teams—and the Lutheran Heritage Foundation—providing children’s materials in countries around the world.
7. *Anyuak Ministry*: Trinity Lutheran Church of Sauk Rapids has initiated a ministry to the Anyuak people living in the greater St. Cloud/Sauk Rapids area. Their plan is to establish an Anyuak congregation

by 2016. To that end, John Bakou has enrolled in the EIIT program, leading toward his ordination as an LCMS pastor. John is currently serving his vicarage at Trinity under the supervision of Rev. Paul Cloeter and working with DCO Craig Cooper. Our district has entered into a partnership with Trinity to support the establishment of this ministry.

Mercy:

1. *Parish Nurses* continue to be a valuable asset to our congregations and the district as a whole.
2. *Project 24*: In partnership with the North Dakota District and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya, our convention adopted a resolution to provide funds to build three rescue centers (orphanages) in Kenya.
3. *1001 Orphans*: The district convention by resolution encouraged our Sunday Schools, our Christian day schools, our various church organizations and auxiliaries, and individual members and families of our congregations to sponsor one or more orphans in Kenya through the 1001 Orphans program and to support the *Lutheran Malaria Initiative*.
4. *District Lutheran Emergency Response Team/Disaster Training* was held to equip team members with the necessary response skills.
5. A workshop sponsored by the district parish nurses and the Disability Task force was conducted by Rev. Peter Preus, whose presentation was entitled *Speaking of Hopelessness: When Believers Consider Suicide*.
6. *Sowers Fund* enables the district president to disburse funds to assist church workers in times of financial emergency or hardship, or to provide for counseling services not covered by insurance.

Life Together:

1. A *Joint North Theological Conference* was held together with the North Dakota District featuring our Synod President, Rev. Matthew Harrison, speaking on the theme *The Church as the Body of Christ*.
2. *Lay Leadership Training* led by Mr. Ted Kober of Ambassadors of Reconciliation was held in four locations, covering the geographical areas of the district.
3. State pastors' conferences with the Minnesota South District have been held for over 40 years and continue to enhance relationships.
4. We gave thanks for the ministry of Rev. Rick Hans, who served as mission and ministry facilitator, working with the Division of Parish Life and Nurture (PLaN) and is now enjoying retirement. Rev. David Strohschein, who served as mission and ministry facilitator working with Missions and Congregational Outreach (MaCO), will be switching roles and working with the Parish Life and Nurture Division, and we are in the process of calling an individual to work with MaCO with a special emphasis on congregational health.

2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the Minnesota North District. From its very beginning, the Minnesota North District has had a double focus, that of its firm commitment to the Word of God with its message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and its desire to share that message with the world, which is in dire need of it. If our district is to continue to be a genuine blessing, we will need to hold ever firmly to God's inerrant Word, and our Lutheran Confessions as a correct exposition of that Word, as well as to purposefully, passionately, and positively reach out with the Gospel as individuals, congregations, and organizations here in the north woods of God's country: **Sent to Share Christ's Healing Grace!**

Donald J. Fondow, *President*

R3-03-14

Minnesota South District

In the last triennium, the Minnesota South District continued to pursue its goals of 50 new congregations, 50 revitalized congregations, and 250 new ministries by 2017. In March 2011, David Roth, assistant to the president for schools and commissioned workers,

retired after 19 years of service and, on July 18, 2012, joined the saints in light. His gentle, encouraging leadership has been missed.

Our June 14–16, 2012, district convention saw us taking a strong stand in favor of God's institution of marriage as a life-long union between a man and a woman. This stance supported the proposed marriage amendment to the Minnesota State Constitution, defining marriage as such. The proposed amendment failed on November 6, 2012. Further action included the awarding of \$2 million to University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis, to find a new home as the district divested itself of campus ministry properties in both Minneapolis and Mankato. The district hopes to expand campus ministry through congregations near campuses.

The district celebrated the 21 years of faithful service of Rev. Dr. Lane Seitz as our district president. Dr. Seitz retired August 31, 2012. His steady, mission-centered leadership in our district and on the Council of Presidents leave behind a lasting legacy. Elected as district president was Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasy, former first vice-president, seminary professor, and senior pastor of Woodbury Lutheran Church.

The newly elected board of directors has identified the following mission statement as the focus of our district in this triennium: **Developing Leaders Intentionally Engaged in the Mission of God.** This focus will drive eleven initiatives for this triennium:

Uniting in Mission

1. We will celebrate our growing unity around God's mission.

John 17:23: "I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me."

2. We will facilitate growth in concord and harmony among pastors in our district.

Ephesians 4:15–16: "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

3. We will raise congregational and public awareness of God's mission in the Minnesota South District.

Matthew 5:16: "Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Leading in Mission

4. We will promote the spiritual, emotional, physical and professional development of leaders involved in God's mission.

Colossians 2:2: "My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love."

5. We will prepare and equip legacy leaders and congregations to further God's mission by finishing well.

Hebrews 12:1–2: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set out before us, looking to Jesus."

6. We will hold leaders accountable for God-pleasing professional conduct.

1 Corinthians 13:4–6: "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth."

7. We will facilitate an efficient call process effective for God's mission.

Ephesians 4:11–12: "It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up."

Engaging in Mission

8. We will provide administrative services for schools (early childhood, elementary, and secondary) and their supporting congregations.

Matthew 19:14: "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me.'"

9. We will use biblical formational processes to align leaders with God's mission.

Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God."

10. We will assist congregations in developing new starts and new ministries to gain new believers.

Mark 4:8: "And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

11. We will implement new ways and means of funding God's mission.

1 Chronicles 29:9: "The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord."

In response to Initiative 2 above, the Minnesota South District will implement the Koinonia Project among eight of our 24 pastoral circuits as a one-year pilot, seeking greater concord and harmony among our pastors. To implement Initiatives 8 and 9 above, in 2013 we will add to our district staff a part-time director of school services and a second, full-time assistant to the president for mission formation.

Dean Nadasy, *President*

R3-03-15

Missouri District

"Life Together," based on Romans 12:4–5, was the theme for the 2012 Missouri District convention. "Life Together" serves as the theme for the 2012–2015 triennium.

President Mirly's report to the 18th convention of the Missouri District gave thanks to God for blessing the Missouri District with 35 mission initiatives. He encouraged congregations, rostered workers, and lay leaders to be prayerful, intentional, and deliberate in seeking opportunities to be mission outposts from which the Gospel is proclaimed.

Synod President, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, conducted a Bible study with delegates and guests. Through means of a video report, President Harrison shared highlights of the mission efforts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He explained the three-fold emphasis of the work of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: Mercy, Witness, and Life Together. He concluded his time with a period of questions and answers.

The convention essayist was the Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. Dr. Meyer emphasized that we spend a lot of time talking about God and not much time talking to Him. He invited the delegates to listen in as he conducted an extended conversation with God.

The convention adopted the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI) as a district-wide mission project for the new triennium. Ms. Martha Mitkos addressed the convention regarding LMI.

Important resolutions adopted encouraged support for the Koinonia Project; encouraged congregations and pastors to work toward harmony in worship; encouraged study of proper admission to the Lord's Supper; encouraged the planting of new churches; and encouraged congregations to support the district and Synod.

Rev. Dr. Ray G. Mirly was elected to serve a third term as Missouri District President. Also elected to the Praesidium were: Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan, First Vice-President; Rev. Dr. Kevin Golden, Second-Vice President; Rev. Alan Wollenburg, Third Vice-President; and Rev. Dr. Ron Rall, Fourth Vice-President.

During the past triennium, the Missouri District board of directors focused on equipping lay leaders through regional training events. It intends to continue training events to encourage and equip lay and pastoral leaders.

Rev. Matthew Schultz joined the Missouri District staff. His responsibility is working in urban St. Louis to recruit and equip volunteers for ministry in the city of St. Louis.

Statistically, the district numbers 300 congregations, with 133,000 baptized souls served by 293 parish pastors. In addition, there are 58 elementary schools with 9,800 children enrolled. The district has 52 early childhood centers not affiliated with elementary schools; they have an enrollment of 3,180. Seven high schools have 1,745 students enrolled. The number of sole pastor vacancies has averaged fewer than 10, and the number of vacancies not actively calling a pastor has averaged 21.

The population of the state of Missouri continues to grow. The state has experienced significant challenges due to the economic recession. Many congregations have encountered financial challenges. Several congregations have reduced the number of full-time staff, including ordained and commissioned ministers of religion.

The Missouri District, under God's guidance and blessing, is committed to faithfully proclaiming the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. Our prayer is that members of the congregations of the district and all who hear the Gospel will grow in God's grace and faith in Jesus Christ.

Ray G. Mirly, *President*

R3-03-16

Montana District

The Montana District consists of 67 congregations of God's people gathered around Word and Sacrament and comprising some 14,000 souls. The district has two congregations outside the borders of the state of Montana (Williston, North Dakota, and Salmon, Idaho). Congregations of the Montana District support six day schools and 15 preschools or day cares. They also support missions to the Crow and Cheyenne Indian reservations and to the Montana Developmental Center (developmentally disabled).

The theme for the district's 2009–2012 triennium was from Hebrews 10:23: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." We remembered and rehearsed God's faithfulness in keeping us secure in our confession of the faith. This theme built the foundation for the theme of the 2012 district convention from Mark 16:15: "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation." Only when we are faithful to the Word of God do we have something to say that is of benefit to the whole creation.

How do we know when we have gone into all the world? Forswearing the world's map of success, and numbers and dollars and growth, which have a tendency to become the source of idolatry, the Montana District has settled on measuring our proclamation of the Gospel by the trinity of faith, hope, and love.

God is faithful. He gives His people the gift of faith. In this faith, we are used by Him to live and speak the Gospel. The gift of hope also comes from God. It comes in spite of the fear of failure. The fear of failure often keeps us from trying new ways to proclaim the Gospel. Since God is a God of hope, we can take some risks and trust His Word to do what it says it will do. Love is not our power. It comes from God. God is love. He loved the world so much He sent His Son to be the Savior. God's love is at work in His people, using them to live and speak the Gospel to the whole creation.

God has blessed the Montana District. In the past triennium, we have been blessed with a new congregation, as district congregations supported a missionary-at-large to work in Thompson Falls. We have been blessed with a new preaching station in Dillon, the work of our congregation in Ennis. We have issued a call to start

new work in the Big Timber and Livingston area with the hopes of another congregation.

In addition, we launched a new method of serving remote areas through the use of technology. The congregations in Wolf Point, Plentywood, and Glasgow are served by one pastor, who each Sunday visits one of the congregations and live streams his Bible class and worship service to the other two congregations. Proclaiming the Gospel in sparsely populated areas brings challenges. The district is determined not to close the doors of even tiny congregations. In fact, the goal is to find ways to open even more.

God has also blessed us with faithful servants ordained and commissioned. These dedicated men and women give of themselves so that the Gospel is proclaimed in its truth and purity and the Sacraments administered according to it. One interesting note is the ordination of Park Timber, our first Cheyenne pastor serving the Cheyenne people in the communities of Lame Deer and Ashland.

One big challenge in the future is proclaiming the Gospel in the Bakken oil boom communities of northwestern North Dakota and northeastern Montana. The population in this area is expected to quadruple during the boom. Our congregation, Concordia, Williston, has worked hard at welcoming the transient population so that it can hear the Gospel. The Montana District is working with the North Dakota District to find new and innovative ways to proclaim the Gospel under the very difficult circumstances of an oil boom.

The Montana District looks forward with great joy and anticipation to the next triennium as God uses His people to “Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.”

Terry R. Forke, *President*

R3-03-17

Nebraska District

The mission of the Nebraska District is to resource congregations, leaders, and related organizations in their mission of discipling the saved and proclaiming Christ to a lost and changing world.

The Lord has blessed the Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) over 130 years with congregations who preach the true Word of God and administer His Sacraments, as well as Lutheran schools who teach the truths of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

The 2012 convention of the Nebraska District gathered under the theme “The Good Life ... The God Life,” based on Galatians 6:9–10: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to the family of believers.”

LCMS Second Vice-President Rev. Dr. John Wohlrabe Jr. preached the sermon on the convention’s biblical theme for the opening service at St. John’s Lutheran Church of Seward. He also reported on the mission and ministry of the Synod. LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison also addressed the convention and engaged in a helpful question-and-answer session. Convention Essayist Rev. Rick Marrs, Professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, unpacked from the Scriptures a theology of reconciliation and congregational re-engagement into community mission fields. The district’s board of directors continues to seek the Lord’s guidance to monitor a strategic plan for resourcing its congregations, schools, missions, and professional church workers in their mission to disciple the saved and reach out to those who do not have Christ.

It was a joy for the convention to again meet in the arena of the Walz Health and Human Performance Center on the campus of Concordia University in Seward, where students are prepared for servant leadership for the church and world. The Nebraska District and Concordia University Nebraska continue a strong partnership

in the Gospel. District congregations and individuals are moved by the Spirit to support the mission of Concordia University Nebraska as well as the two LCMS seminaries at St. Louis, Missouri, and Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The Nebraska District is blessed with 248 congregations, 39 Lutheran elementary schools, 4 Lutheran high schools, and 39 pre-schools. Camp Luther continues to offer outdoor opportunities for growth in the Word and Christian fellowship, offering the only Christian camp in Nebraska for developmentally disabled individuals.

God continues to provide amazing opportunities to share His grace in the person and actions of Jesus Christ. Nebraska is experiencing some population growth in some communities, as well as a growing population of Hispanic, African, and Asian immigrants. The African Sudanese population in Nebraska is the largest in the United States, and Sudanese Lutherans participating among Nebraska District churches continue to be great blessings. There are four Sudanese American LCMS pastors and two Hispanic American pastors in Nebraska. The ongoing outreach to the Native American Winnebago Tribe continues by a school association of congregations and the Nebraska District. Campus ministries by congregations at the University of Nebraska Kearney, Wayne State College, and the many higher education institutions in Omaha, as well as by the district at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln, offer to university and college national and international students the Good News of salvation in Jesus.

Nebraska District congregations and schools continue to be moved by the Holy Spirit to a strong commitment to personalized mission. Youth and adults are active in mission servant events in the district and on international mission fields. Pastors, teachers, and directors of Christian education are teaching and serving on various international mission fields. Nebraska District pastors who serve as military chaplains have been deployed to war zones and disaster sites. The Orphan Grain Train, based in Norfolk, Nebraska, continues its worldwide human care ministry. The Nebraska District and Iowa District West enjoy a partnership to involve congregational members and church workers in personal mission prayer, financial support, and servant events through the work of Mission Awareness Developer Gary Thies and Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa.

The Nebraska District also continues to work together with the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer quality human-care service through Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska.

The four district vice-presidents and twenty-three circuit counselors assist the district president in supervision and services for the professional church workers, congregations, schools, and missions of the district. The district also provides church-worker health care to its ordained and commissioned professional church workers through an executive assistant to the president for church worker health.

The LCMS Foundation Gift Planning and Lutheran Church Extension Fund are special blessings in the Nebraska District. The district is also participating in the Transforming Churches Network for revitalization of the congregations.

Christian stewardship is once again being emphasized around the district. The District Stewardship Committee has offered to all congregations of the district a DVD stewardship Bible study series developed for the district by Dr. Joel Biermann of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

Over the last nine years, nine congregations have been birthed by the Holy Spirit in the Nebraska District. Praise be to the Lord of the Church! Many rural and small-town areas of Nebraska are experiencing population decline and new socio-economic populations. At the same time, urban areas of the district are also experiencing immigration and population changes. Still, opportunities to share the Gospel of

Jesus are abundant. But this is not without challenges, which call for reliance upon the Lord. An Omaha congregation in partnership with People of the Book Lutheran Outreach (POBLO) is offering Christian outreach to Muslims for the Holy Spirit to bring them from Islam into faith in Christ alone for life and salvation. Missional Leadership Conferences are being offered for pastors and principals and will begin to include lay participation in 2013.

The District continues its Lay Leadership Program in partnership with Concordia University Nebraska to train congregational members for special service in assisting their pastors, teachers, and DCEs. The Lay Leadership Program also provides courses to those men who are preparing to enter into the Synod's Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program. Six district congregations currently have SMP vicars.

The Nebraska District is blessed with two LWML districts and an LLL district. Mission and outreach partnerships are strong with the LWML and LLL districts. The Nebraska District will host a Lutheran Hour Regional Outreach Conference in 2013.

The district has strong commitment to assisting the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan/South Sudan (ELCS/SS) to emerge as a strong confessional Lutheran Church. The district is coordinating with the LCMS Office of International Mission and Orphan Grain Train to send Sudanese American LCMS Pastor John Deang and his wife, Martha, to assist Bishop Wilson Noah Rule of the ELCS/SS. As the Nebraska District looks to the future, congregations, schools, pastors, missionaries, teachers, other commissioned workers, and lay leaders are focused on the Lord's strength as they encourage one another with these words: *"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to the family of believers."*

Russell L. Sommerfeld, *President*

R3-03-18

New England District

On June 14–16, 2012, the members of the New England District gathered in convention at the Sheraton in Springfield, Massachusetts, to recognize and celebrate God's mission work among the saints of the NED-LCMS. This convention was one of transition, as with sorrow but also a "well done, good and faithful!," we said good-bye to our retiring District President Rev. James Keurulainen. As his successor elected at that convention, I can only stand in praise before the Lord for my predecessor, and my sincerest prayer is that I can follow in his footsteps—yes, in my own pair of Christ-given shoes, but with the humility of recognizing that I could have no finer example of a district president than in the man who came before me.

With a new era upon us in New England, we moved forward under the desire to be (a) missional, (b) collegial, and (c) pastoral in how we approach ministry in this part of the Lord's harvest fields. Mission outreaches continue with a nontraditional church plant in Marlborough, Massachusetts, with a desire to expand church planting possibilities and with an intentional outreach ministry in Boston to Portuguese peoples and to college students. A Missions Blueprint has been revised and updated for continued use in our district. We have revitalized and strengthened our district's relationship with our partners in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya and welcomed a visit from Bishop Walter Obare. Part of that connection focused on our involvement with Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI). I am happy to report that our district's goals set by LMI were reached and surpassed, and support is ongoing. In the area of missions, I have voiced a goal of every congregation in our district having an international-focused mission, of which our Kenyan and Portuguese connections provide ample opportunities, though there are other nations and

people groups to which we reach out with Christ's love. We encourage every congregation to adopt a national mission, and our beloved Synod provides numerous opportunities to support Synod work in the US and with the work of other ministries. We encourage every congregation to adopt a local mission as it reaches out to its community. One example is "Hands of Grace," started by our congregation in northwest Connecticut. The church, located off the beaten path, has rented space on Main Street in its town and in one year provided 12,000 meals to the community, bags upon bags of clean clothing, and prayer and Christian counseling to the hurting of the towns in that area. The district also maintains an active connection to Transforming Churches Network and has learning groups for pastors. It has also provided church consultations for congregations wishing to revitalize, and now offers "hinge events" for the same mission outreach revitalization purposes. As a former member of a TCN learning group, I took to heart one lesson learned there, which is called "The CBS Plan," encouraging each congregation to focus on "Calling, Building, Sending." It recognizes that the first occurs primarily in worshiping and meeting Jesus Christ and that the second occurs when the Word of God and the Sacraments build us up in the Lord; it then realizes the biblical outpouring that flows from these: sending!! Many congregations have also reinforced their mission work with the addition of an SMP (specific ministry pastor) vicar or pastor to their staff, and we thank the Synod for providing SMP resources and training to us. The district also takes to heart the Synod theme of "Mercy, Witness, and Life Together," and such was the theme for our 2012 convention. On a practical note, in addition to the 20 percent that the district currently contributes as nondesignated funds, the district in convention voted to designate another 5 percent of all district receipts to specific LCMS missions, agencies, and RSOs.

The New England District has also had its share of trials and heartaches. In the last triennium, we lost a significant number of pastors to the attacks of Satan. The evil one struck at the marriages and homes of our pastors and church workers. As such, we made a commitment to monitor, help, and strengthen the physical, spiritual, and mental health of the district's church workers and church-worker marriages and families. We have had a one-day retreat for all pastors with Dr. Bruce Hartung to discuss how we can "Hold Up the Prophet's Hands." We intend to have a repeat of that same retreat, if possible, in 2013 with congregation presidents and lay leaders joining us. Our spring pastors conference will have a focus on church-worker marriages with marriage and family counselors from the Florida-Georgia District leading us and joining us. We have received monetary grants to help us reach our goal of having every pastor's wife come to that spring conference with her husband. A 2013 pastors' wives conference may take up a similar theme as our sisters in Christ meet together to strengthen one another and defeat Satan's goal to isolate us and divide us from Christ, our spouses, our earthly families, and our family in Christ.

Hurricane Sandy left its mark in our area, although by God's grace we did not suffer as our Christian family did in the Atlantic and New Jersey Districts. Our district in support had a "Feeding Children Everywhere" event, where we packaged 25,000 meals which were delivered to New York and New Jersey, including 200 "flood buckets" to help with Hurricane Sandy cleanup and restoration. Two more "Feeding Children Everywhere" events are now scheduled in two of our district congregations!

We also suffered the tragedy at Newtown, Connecticut. Words cannot express the horror of this personal nightmare for us in New England. But we have reached out to our brothers and sisters at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Newtown with her pastor, Rev. Rob Morris. They have been beacons of hope in Christ to their community and to the world. There were tense moments in our walking together as a Synod in the aftermath of that crisis. But we all, with our brothers

and sisters in St. Louis and in the Synod, stood together at the cross of Christ and His empty tomb. We appreciate the vast support of the Synod and her leadership in ongoing efforts to bring hope to the hurting, and we rejoice in a commitment to find Christ's ways to help us all deal with future crises of this kind, which will come to us all this side of heaven. Jesus, however, is Lord, and the enemy, who showed his true colors on December 14, 2012, in his hatred of all that is God and all that is good, is defeated. We stand together with all of you in Jesus Christ our Savior.

To God be the praise, and to us be the enabling power to be His Church in mission.

Timothy R. Yeadon, *President*

R3-03-19

New Jersey District

The 2013 New Jersey population is estimated to be 8,864,590 people, residing in 21 counties and 566 municipalities, with 59 percent of the population being white, 18 percent Hispanic, 14 percent black, and 9 percent Asian. Of the 4.8 million religious adherents, the largest religious affiliations are 3,235,290 Roman Catholics; 214,620 Jews; 167,015 nondenominationalists; 160,666 Muslims; 160,226 Baptists; 138,052 Methodists; 97,885 Presbyterians; 79,066 Lutherans; 75,390 Episcopalians; and 60,430 Assemblies of God members.

The New Jersey District (NJD) comprises 55 congregations, with 16,170 baptized members and 12,631 communicant members and an average Sunday worship attendance of around 5,000. Seventeen congregations operate preschools, six operate PS–K schools, three operate PS–2nd-grade schools, and two operate PS–8th-grade schools. As a Lutheran presence, we are almost invisible in a state that numbers nearly 9,000,000 residents (.0018 percent—one out of every 5,000 residents—is an LCMS member).

The State of the New Jersey District—LCMS'

We continue to see that many of our congregations are growing smaller in terms of both baptized and communicant membership, and that the average age of those who worship are getting older. We also know that this trend has been taking place for several years now, beginning already in the early 1980s. At present, of the 55 New Jersey District congregations, eight are close to closing their doors, since their average worship attendance is below 20 now, and another 12 to 15 congregations worship below 50 members on an average Sunday morning.

The crisis situation in which we find ourselves is this: we no longer live in a church culture but in an unchurched and dechurched culture. This state of affairs both challenges and invites God's people to possess a proper ministry balance between edification and evangelism and becoming more missionary in our posture and orientation toward those who are not Christians.

What Have We Done in Response to This Reality?

At the 2007 Synod convention, one of the more significant adopted resolutions was the goal of having one-third of LCMS congregations participate in a revitalization process. The New Jersey District, under the leadership of President William Klettke, challenged 25 congregations (approximately 40 percent of the district's congregations) to become involved in a structured change and transition process with Transforming Churches Network (TCN), a process that would guide and form pastors through monthly learning communities and strategically intervene in strengthening congregational health through a weekend consultation event (and ongoing ministry coaching). In order to support this process, consultants and coaches were

extensively trained and certified for their ministry to NJD pastors and congregations.

We, overall, are very pleased that so many pastors and congregations have chosen to engage in the TCN process, but we also realize that, for one of many reasons, other congregations have not chosen to participate; and yet, whether a congregation is currently participating in a process of revitalization and transformation or it is not, all pastors and congregations of the New Jersey District face significant adaptive challenges that require adaptive solutions, led by adaptive leadership.

In response to these adaptive challenges, the New Jersey District has extended its contract with TCN, requesting them to design and implement a process that would guide NJD pastors and congregational leaders in their labors to

1. name the presenting issues that their congregations are facing;
2. use these presenting issues to discern and name their adaptive challenges;
3. think biblically and theologically about these challenges;
4. formulate an action plan that addresses the adaptive challenges that they are facing in their congregations; and
5. identify the next steps that they need to own and commit themselves to in order to move into God's preferred future.

And what might be a few examples of adaptive challenges that LCMS congregations are experiencing? Challenges that require a deep change and sacrificial shift in our habits, identity, and ways of thinking and living?

- + Evangelism is only for ordained pastors and "serious Christians."
- + How do we evangelize people "who are not like us" and who have built their lives upon non-Christian narratives?
- + For many within the church, their identity and mission is defined more by a "club" or "church member" mentality than by what the Scriptures have to say about "who they are in Christ" and "why they are in the world."
- + Studying and growing in one's knowledge of the Scriptures ends at age thirteen (the traditional time of confirmation), fostering the practice that education is for children only, that confirmation is finishing school, and that only "serious Christians" are to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ.
- + For a growing number of congregational members, the Christian faith has been reduced to four sacred moments: Baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death, along with the celebration of Christmas and Easter.
- + We are too much "of the world" and too little "in the world"; in other words, our daily ways of living are scripted too much by the "world spirit" and not by His Holy Spirit.
- + The inability to teach and pass on the Christian faith to our children and grandchildren; this is evidenced by the significant gaps in our churches between
 - + babies being born but never baptized;
 - + babies being baptized but not taught the faith;
 - + babies being baptized, taught the faith, and then confirmed, but then refraining from engaging in a consecrated life as His baptized disciple.
- + How to communicate and channel the Christian message in oral, print, broadcast, and digital cultures, especially how to use social media effectively for social engagement in the "public square."
 - + How to "be" and "live" and "witness" as His people in a post-churched world.

What Is Our Reflective Response to This Present Reality?

From the very beginning of time and human history, God's fundamental mission is to save humankind; for God desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of their salvation in Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:4).

Everyone has a mission, and everyone is a missionary. In Baptism, God reaches into the life of the baptized and claims him or her to be

His own. The newly baptized, whether young or old, is commissioned into His service and mission with the words, “through Baptism, God has added you to be His own people to declare the wonderful deeds of our Savior, who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Every baptized believer has been called and set apart and is constantly being sent out, to be a kingdom of priests and to be His witness to people walking in darkness so that others might know of Him who is the light of the world (Matt. 4:13–16; John 1:9–14; 8:12).

The mission and ministry of God’s people is to make disciples³ of all nations. The Great Commission lays the double obligation upon His people: the strengthening of present disciples in their already existing discipleship and reaching out to those who are not yet His disciples with the Gospel that they will become His disciples. Therefore, every task of the Church makes sense only if it serves His mission of making disciples.

This is the mission that is ours in Jesus Christ as His evangelizing, edifying, and missionary priests and people. The following statements describe core strategic focuses that will guide the New Jersey District during the next triennium as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20) and the Great Commandment (Matt. 25:31–46; Luke 10:25–37; John 13:34–35; 1 John 4:7–12, 19–21):

Focus 1: implement a district-wide process that addresses the pressing issues and adaptive challenges that we are facing as professional church workers and New Jersey District congregations—a process that will help us acquire adaptive solutions and form adaptive leaders

Focus 2: connect and network with one another through a *Day with the Congregational Presidents* and monthly *Learning Communities*, as we form and equip ourselves for ministry and mission in the twenty-first century

Focus 3: identify 25 pastors for ministry service in New Jersey congregations; they will be the next generation of pastoral leaders to shape the district’s ministry and mission culture and lead it into the future

Focus 4: strengthen New Jersey District congregations through equipping resources and events that are based upon their needs, along with the onsite and online ministry of specialized district staff plus the ministry curriculum of the *New Jersey District Leaders and Learners* program

Focus 5: extend His kingdom through the formation of mission leaders, house churches, and missionary communities

Focus 6: encourage the formation of urban vicars for labor in densely urban congregational and mission contexts who can mentor NJD leaders in “Mission Shift”⁴

Focus 7: design and implement “renewal” models for densely urban and suburban congregational ministry so that they might experience a new chapter of ministry

Focus 8: acquire and embrace the counsel and practices of the five “Word-gifts” from our ascended Lord, given to equip His people for their work of ministry (Eph. 4:11–16) so that we, as the Body of Christ, might be an apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching church

Focus 9: develop a process to interface with and counsel “at-risk” congregations with the hope that they might have a ministry future; if this future cannot be realized, then to identify and discuss what kind of legacy options that they might act upon so that His Kingdom might be extended

Focus 10: explore creative and innovative ministry configurations at the congregational, circuit, and regional levels

In addition, these two projects will receive significant ministry attention from now until the end of 2017:

1. The district’s Disaster Response to Superstorm Sandy⁵
2. Celebrating the 500th anniversary⁶ of the Protestant Reformation

In closing, the professional church workers and congregations of the New Jersey District are thankful for the specialized and sacrificial ministry of these special servants:

- + Caren Vogt (Lutheran Schools)
- + Caitlin Dinger (Christian Education, Communications and Internet/ Social Media, Family and Youth Ministry)
- + Dave Hildebrandt (Stewardship, Sandy Response Coordinator, and Adaptive Challenge/Leadership to At-Risk Congregations)
- + Susie Herzberg and Suzanne Bottoms (Professional Church Worker and Family Care)
- + Elaine Schleifer (Assistant to the District President and District Secretary)
- + Bill Webster (Business Manager and Finances)
- + Rev. Jim Buckman (Urban Mission Strategist: Formation of Mission Leaders and Establishing House Churches, Establishing Congregational Prayer + Ministry, and Training Summer Mission Teams)
- + Rev. Tim Bayer (Urban Mission Strategist: Designing and Implementing Models for Congregational Renewal, Formation of Mission Leaders and Missionary Communities, and Overseeing the Urban Vicarage Program and the Revitalization of Densely Urban Congregations)
- + Rev. Dick Izzard (Adaptive Challenge/Leadership to At-Risk Congregations, Congregational Consultant and Advisor to the District President)

These servants, along with the collective giftedness of the district’s vice-presidents⁷ and circuit counselors,⁸ are cause for hope as we move into this next triennium. As with the Christians in the first century, we have this good work that is ours in Christ Jesus, and He is the One working through us to accomplish His saving intentions toward all people. Therefore, we can rejoice in this “partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a work in you will carry it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:3–6).

Anthony Steinbronn, *President*

Notes

1. We have built our fine homes, dine on the finest meats and drink good beer and wine, yet we have minimized the Lord’s admonition that a person’s life does not consist in the abundance of his or her possessions but lies in being rich toward God and rich toward one’s neighbor. We have often failed to act upon the reality that all of our talents and abilities have been entrusted into our care so that we might prosper the Master’s business of making disciples of all nations. We have churches that are well ordered, with lots of rules, restrictions and traditions, but little mission. We spend a great deal of our time and energy defining who is “in” and who is “not in” and little time helping people “get in and stay in” and not perish eternally.

2. One of the great movie scenes that can help us understand the concept of “adaptive challenge,” and the need for adaptive solutions and adaptive leadership, took place in *Apollo 13*. During the space mission, one of the astronauts routinely stirs the oxygen tanks, but this time an explosion occurs, causing all kinds of damage to the spacecraft and creating life-threatening conditions for the crew. The NASA leadership and engineers engaged in a process that “named the presenting issues” that they were facing and then began to address, with their collective giftedness, each specific issue and problem that arose with an adaptive solution. They constructed a “new flight plan” that permitted the crew to experience a much healthier future.

3. What does it mean to be a disciple? A disciple is a believer in Jesus Christ who is an active member of God’s Word, building his or her life on the person and Word of Jesus Christ. A disciple does more than just master the Word; a disciple is stamped and fashioned in the mold of Jesus Christ and is a living witness to Him. Jesus identified two fundamental marks of a disciple: If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples (Matt. 7:24–27; John 8:31–32), and if you love one another (John 13:34–35).

4. “Mission Shift” is a twenty-four week curriculum module used during the first year of seminarian formation at Concordia Seminary for those students interested in acquiring the ministry tools necessary for cultural

and neighborhood/community exegesis; this formation experience is convened and overseen by Rev. Jeff Thormodson.

5. Significant financial and human resources have been, and will continue to be, richly supplied through the generosity of God's people to neighbors of all kinds impacted by Superstorm Sandy. At the time of this report (early March 2013), active plans are being made to establish a volunteer ministry camp at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Point Pleasant, New Jersey. This camp will house, support, and deploy 40–80 volunteer laborers who will serve and minister to people living along the New Jersey Shore.

6. From now until October 31, 2017, we hope to initiate a local and regional celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The Protestant Reformation is one of the most significant historical, social, and spiritual events in world history. Both the Church and our culture are ever in need of experiencing the reforming ministry of His Spirit articulated through the foundational solas of the Reformation—Scripture alone, Christ alone, Faith alone, Grace alone—and how this everlasting Gospel (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 3:10–24; Rev. 14:6) speaks to the people of the twenty-first century.

7. Rev. Steve Gewecke, Rev. Deric Taylor, and Rev. Bob Kuppler.

8. Rev. Bob Holsten, Rev. David Rowold, Rev. Andrew Dinger, Rev. John Reynolds, Rev. Dennis Bottoms, and Rev. Chris Schonberg.

R3-03-20

North Dakota District

The North Dakota District held her January 22–25, 2012, convention under the theme “Now You Are God’s People” according to 1 Peter 2:10. This convention voted on three outcomes, or areas of focus, for the district in terms of mission and ministry.

Faithful Pastors—We agreed that the pastors of the North Dakota District will be engaged in the daily lives of their people through Word and Sacrament ministry and engaged with those outside the Church. The areas of emphasis under this outcome include:

1. *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*. The ND District has agreed to encourage her pastors and to provide opportunities for their continuing education in preaching, visitation, First Article skills, mercy acts in the community, and striving for continued *Life Together* on the circuit, district, and Synod levels.
2. *Lutheran Education*. The ND District provides resources for congregations to be more aware of and to support our Lutheran schools. We have also held children’s ministry workshops to help Sunday Schools and care for children ages 0–12. We are also exploring the potential for more preschools and day schools in the district.
3. *Doctrine and Practice*. We have begun to explore various avenues for pastors and congregations to dialog about doctrine and practice in venues that strive to build up the kingdom of God. We will be holding a joint theological conference with the Minnesota North District in 2014.

Bold Witnesses—We agreed to tell, actively and joyfully, the love of Christ to all people in word and deed. The areas of emphasis under this outcome include:

1. *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*. This task force held a “Bold Witnesses” workshop, with Adrienne Dorr and Jonathan Fisk as presenters. Another workshop is planned for 2013 with Dr. Carl Fickenscher on proclaiming and hearing the pastor’s sermon.
2. *Kenya*. The North Dakota District in convention voted on a mission partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK). In 2012, we provided funds for young adults, a pastor, and a layperson to go on a Mercy Experience Trip to Kenya. Another such trip is planned for 2013. We have also partnered with the Minnesota North District in providing funds for three of 24 orphanage rescue centers in Kenya under Project 24. The ND District has hosted Rev. David Chuchu and Deaconess Eunita Odongo this past year, and plans are to bring an ELCK pastor to the district in order

to shadow a pastor for a number of days. Go to northerncrossings-mercy.org.

3. *Disaster Relief*. In 2011, Minot, ND, experienced a flood on the scale of Hurricane Katrina, with more than one-fourth of families and homes affected. Our Savior Lutheran Church in Minot, in cooperation with the ND District and the LCMS, are operating “Hope Village,” a disaster relief effort in giving physical and spiritual care to many. In this effort, a three-fourths-time pastor was called specifically to provide pastoral care to Hope Village and those to whom mercy is shown throughout the community. Go to hopevillagend.org.

Empowered Stewards—We agreed that the congregations of the ND District will be actively engaged in biblical stewardship.

1. *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*. We have made a concerted effort in helping our pastors and congregations understand stewardship in terms of Galatians 2:20, that “it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us.” This emphasis is taken to pastors, Sunday Schools, day schools, and throughout the fabric of the district. We are also in the process of studying Paul’s collection for Jerusalem in terms of mercy care for the Church in the greater context of biblical stewardship.
2. *Youth Ministry*. The North Dakota District is event driven. District youth leaders are engaged in leading an annual junior high gathering, youth camps, national youth gatherings, Higher Things, helping youth to be leaders in the church, mercy mission experiences, and more.
3. *Congregational Life*. We have placed the congregations in four categories. These “cluster groups” meet to encourage and draw support from one another, whether they are city churches, town churches, healthy rural churches, or struggling rural churches. We are also planning on hosting young adult focus groups in order to have conversation with this age group in terms of church, faith, discipleship, worship, culture, and more.

Striving to keep up with the financial needs of a growing district, a director of biblical finance has been hired in 2012 in order to raise funds in terms of large gifts and deferred gifts. This individual works in cooperation with our district camp, Lutheran schools, and the district board of directors as we meet the joys and challenges of mission and ministry.

North Dakota has recently become the fastest growing state in the union. This is largely due to vast oil reserves. In partnership with the Montana District, this year we are calling upon the pastors and congregations most affected by this oil boom to discuss and plan the impact of ministry in the “oil patch,” new mission starts, mercy care, and chaplaincy. With growth throughout the state, the ND District is aggressively pursuing other potential mission starts as well. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

James A. Baneck, *President*

R3-03-21

North Wisconsin

“Shine Your Light” was the theme of our 2012 district convention based on the passage from Ephesians 5:8, “*For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.*” Delegates were challenged to be ready to give an account for why they believe that Jesus is the light, to reflect and share what Jesus means to them on a personal level, and to use the gifts that God has given to share Christ’s love with others.

In today’s world, the challenges are real for the church workers and laypeople throughout our district. The reality in our district is that our membership is getting older, worship attendance is declining in many of our congregations, the children are growing up and leaving home and not returning, and we are now living in a nation where even

the Protestants are no longer in the majority. But with these challenges come opportunities; opportunities to “Shine Your Light!”

The district board of directors is focusing on three primary outcomes to address the opportunities they are facing: congregations, church workers, and missions.

- **Congregations** are equipped and engaged in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit, North Wisconsin District **pastors and other professional church workers** are motivated to grow disciples in Jesus Christ.
- **Missions** and outreach ministries are fully utilized to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Congregations

The North Wisconsin District consists of 218 congregations in northern Wisconsin and 11 counties in the upper peninsula of Michigan. There are over 40 dual parishes. Baptized membership totals a little over 100,000. Over half of the congregations average under 100 people in worship. A troubling trend is that our congregations are getting smaller in the northwoods. In 2002, there were 18 congregations that averaged fewer than 35 in worship. In 2011, that number had grown to 41.

In an effort to address this, the district offered a rural workshop and has asked district pastors attending the LCMS Rural Conference to share what they learned with their circuit, interested congregations, and at district workshops. There was a meeting of dual parish pastors to discuss their experiences and issues they face.

Congregations of the district were given the opportunity to participate in revitalizing their congregation through the district’s Transforming Congregations Network team. This challenges the congregations to address both internal issues and how to reach out to the community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ along with training the leaders and coaching the pastors.

The district is also blessed with 20 elementary schools, 3 high schools, 33 free-standing preschools, and 7 free-standing child-care centers. Various workshops for principals and teachers are offered to continue to address the challenges facing our schools. Board training for school board members has also been offered.

Pastors and Other Professional Church Workers

Encouraging and motivating the pastors and church workers in today’s world is important. The district has taken a proactive stance to assist congregations in caring for their workers.

- The district has someone available for congregations to deal with ministerial health, sabbaticals, and encouraging their church workers.
- A district pastor is providing confidential counseling to church workers and addresses counseling needs.
- The district has a retired director of Christian education (DCE) who is sent out to encourage, listen, and coach the youth workers and DCEs.

Missions

The *Lutheran Malaria Initiative* was the mission effort endorsed by the convention delegates. Our congregations, schools, and Sunday Schools have supported this through the “Hearts for Jesus” effort. Members of the district were able to participate in a mission trip to Africa to distribute nets.

One new congregation was started in the last triennium. The district continues to support campus work at Michigan Tech in Houghton, MI; Northern Michigan University in Marquette, MI; and full-time ministry outreach at Peace Campus Center, UW–Stevens Point. We have one full-time chaplain at Wisconsin Veterans Home in King, WI, and deaf ministry meeting at various sites around the district. Three Hmong ministries meet in Appleton, Eau Claire, and Green Bay.

Camp Luther continues in their ministry to grow and strengthen the Church through its many programs of Christian growth and renewal. One program, *Every Kid to Camp*, provides children the opportunity to attend a week of camp that they may not have the resources to do so otherwise. In 2012, there were 390 children that attended.

The North Wisconsin District is blessed with many faithful leaders, executive staff, office personnel, board of directors, circuit counselors, and praesidium. Former President Joel Hoelter resigned after serving faithfully for five years, and Rev. Paul Weber stepped in and served one year in that role. Mr. Lee Belmas served the district for 21 years as district youth counselor, and Mr. Robert Whipkey retired after serving 14 years as school executive. Mr. Dennis Johnson continues to serve as the LCEF director.

“Shine Your Light” will continue to be the goal of the congregations and workers of the North Wisconsin District as they face the opportunities and challenges in the next hundred years.

Dwayne M. Lueck, *President*

R3-03-22

Northern Illinois District

The LCMS’s Northern Illinois District is not the district office or the district staff. The Northern Illinois District is the girls and boys and men and women, believers in Jesus, in the district’s 220 congregations. The district exists for two main reasons: (1) To work together to guard our life and doctrine closely; (2) To work together as the Holy Spirit carries out the local mission of God through the Word and Sacrament ministries of the congregations as they are lived out in their communities.

Additionally, we work through offerings, prayers, and short-term missions with the Synod’s Office of International Mission for the mission beyond northern Illinois. We are a new district partner with the Synod’s Peru Lutheran Mission led by Pastor Mark Eisold in Lima, Peru. We also are engaged with the Lutheran Church in Norway, a group that seeks mission partnership with the LCMS.

In the Northern Illinois District, we describe the local mission as “New Starts ... New Believers.” Every congregation can do a new start, one new thing that builds relationships in the community and connects people to the love of Jesus.

The longtime model for a “new start” was a mission plant. For a variety of reasons, that does not seem as practical for our congregations right now. Therefore, a new start may take many forms. As a district, working together, we promote new starts in congregations with the following:

1. Vision casting, supported by extensive communications of all types
2. Mission facilitating, helping congregations move from attitude change to passion to action
3. Coaching pastors and lay leaders, working in tandem with the Ohio District in our new Great Lakes Coaching Center
4. Mission advocating, taking the story of what we do together to lay people in churches, face-to-face
5. Challenging Lutheran schools toward fiscal responsibility, aggressive recruitment, and mission to the community

What are the recent outcomes of New Starts ... New Believers?

- 4 restarts with called pastors (three urban to replace existing congregations and a high school with new outreach, one suburban)
- 4 mission plants with called pastors (one Arabic, one Hispanic, two suburban)
- 8 multi-sites with called pastors or specific ministry pastors (replicating the congregation’s ministry at new locations)
- 37 congregational new starts in the community, serving and proclaiming Christ

- 34 congregations currently preparing for a new start or exploring what they can do
- And, all glory to God, new believers are being welcomed

Expecting unbelievers to attend the Divine Service on their own is false doctrine, since no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. But when the church goes out to be the hands and feet of Jesus, some will then listen to the voice of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will bring some of them to faith, where and when He chooses.

We also are blessed in northern Illinois with LCMS service organizations dedicated to the Lord's mission. We have a close relationship with Lutheran Church Charities, which serves as our district's arm for parish human care and has trained over 780 district volunteers for disaster response using Synod's LERT (Lutheran Early Response Team) materials. Recent new service organizations and collaborative ministries include Faith, Hope & Peace Ministries to bring Word and Sacrament ministry to the elderly in residential facilities, Phil's Friends to support cancer patients, and Haven Source to support families faced with foreclosure.

Guarding our life and doctrine and being used by the Holy Spirit to carry out the Lord's mission: That's what the Northern Illinois District is all about, and that's what it's doing by God's grace. Please join with us in praying that the Lord will send out workers into His harvest, that He will multiply new starts and new believers, and that He will keep us faithful to His Word—in the Northern Illinois District, in your district, in all our partner churches, and in all His faithful churches all around the world.

Daniel P. Gilbert, *President*

R3-03-23

Northwest District

The Northwest District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is comprised of congregations and schools in the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. In addition, the district includes a congregation in Hong Kong and a working relationship with the LCMS International Schools in Hanoi, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

The leaders of the Northwest District recognize the manner in which the threefold mission emphasis of the Synod—"Witness, Mercy, Life Together"—intersects and supports one another. Our ministries are encouraged to identify bridges from their ministry into the lives of the people they serve in their communities. Service leads to opportunities to witness, which then, with the blessing and gift of the Holy Spirit, lead to life together as the Church.

The Northwest District board of directors and the district staff have recognized the way in which leadership plays a vital role in the life of the Church. It is their focus to assist the leaders of the Church—both professional and lay—to grow in their abilities to help the people of God be the salt and light in the world our Lord has called us to be. The district board's mission states that we exist to "strengthen congregations and workers to reach the lost, disciple the saved, and reflect the love of Christ to all people."

Because the Northwest District is by far the largest geographic district in the Synod but is far from the largest in numbers of congregations and communicant members, the greatest challenge is distance between ministries and workers. Gathering together presents real economic and logistical challenges. To span the miles and give people the opportunity to connect more easily, the staff has invested much time and energy in the development of a reengineered Web site. This Web site provides the opportunity for individuals and groups to gather electronically to share resources, dialog, and encourage one another. All are encouraged to avail themselves of this resource at www.nowl-cms.org.

The district continues to be blessed by a grant-funded program—the Sustainable Lutheran Schools Initiative—that seeks to develop leaders serving 30 Lutheran schools and a pilot project of 5 early childhood centers. This effort intends to assist school leaders in assisting their school ministries to become stronger and healthier places where the love of God in Jesus Christ is proclaimed and practiced.

The Northwest District LCEF program has been and continues to be an integral servant-partner of the congregations and ministries in the district. During the last triennium, as the country continues to work its way out of the "great recession," the Northwest District LCEF program and portfolio have performed very well. With a total loan portfolio of just under \$50 million dollars, supported by more than 1,700 investors, ministries all across the district continue to look to LCEF as the primary funding source for capital expansion in the district. The challenges of support to more than 260 congregations, schools, and other ministries across four states are ongoing. Through the grace of God, LCEF will be a servant and a partner for many years to come, ensuring that funds and services are available for the creating of space and place for the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The district maintains a partnership with Mission Training Center in assisting professional and lay leaders in connecting their ministry with their communities. This includes an annual Mission Advance (not a retreat), the training of licensed lay deacons, the support of pastors and licensed lay deacons through a weekly sermon-building discussion group called Sunday Sermon, and regular opportunities for conversation around the issues related to developing missional bridges.

The district is involved in ministry to various ethnic groups through partnerships with Lutheran Indian Ministries, Lutheran Latino Ministries, and local congregations that have taken leadership in responding to a variety of ethnic groups within our boundaries. An Ethnic Ministry Symposium was held in the Spring of 2010, gathering people from the vast array of ethnic groups served by the people and congregations of the northwest. At its 2012 convention, the district adopted ethnic ministry as its triennial mission project.

The district also continues to offer congregational training in sharing their faith through its Tracking the Spirit program. There continues to be a focused effort in leading the district into a life of prayer through the Center for Prayer Renewal. Members of the armed forces and veterans are supported through the district Ministry to Military Personnel, Families, and Congregations. The District's Task Force on Ministry to Older Adults is developing a strategy for assisting congregations in responding to an aging population. And the Disabilities Task Force continues to make a huge difference in the district and beyond.

The Northwest District has identified five significant values around which its efforts and activities revolve:

- God's Word as the foundation of our mission and ministry
- Making Word and Sacrament ministry available under the Office of the Ministry in a responsible way
- Maintaining an atmosphere of dialogue and collegiality where people can be free to discuss theology—avoiding sectarianism
- Encouraging congregations to be and become places where people are introduced to the love of God in Jesus Christ and supported in their becoming His disciples
- Encouraging the activity of priesthood of all believers in sharing the love of God in Jesus Christ with the people in their lives

All these efforts and activities bring together the notion of Witness, Mercy, and Life Together in dynamic ways in a part of the world where many don't know the love of Jesus Christ. Pointing people to God's love in Christ remains the heart of what the Northwest District is and does.

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Heb. 12:2–3)

Paul Linnemann, *President*

R3-03-24

Ohio District

Greetings in the name of Jesus, by whom we are *enriched in every way!*

The theme for the district convention came by way of a Synod convention resolution, which urged the districts to focus on the theme of stewardship. This was done by way of the convention essayist, a segment of the convention that was devoted to planning the next triennium, as well as the district president’s report.

The Ohio District Board of Directors established three ends policies for the district six years ago. This report is organized around those three goals, as provided to the district convention.

Healthy Congregations: God has indeed enriched us as a district. My travels have revealed a wealth of talented and committed Lutheran Christians desirous of serving the Lord using the talents He has given to them. New pastors, new teachers, new DCEs, DCOs, and deaconesses come with a high level of dedication and desire to serve the Lord and His people.

The spiritual health of our congregations, based on my visits, is good in many places, large, medium, or small. More of our congregations are looking past their own four walls to serve the communities in which they live. More have asked the question, “If we no longer existed, what impact would that have on our neighborhood or our community? Would we be missed?” They have begun to be better managers of the gifts that they could be for their communities. They have begun to hold four or six events each year that enable them to interact with their neighborhoods. A few more congregations are beginning to see that if their schools are to be missions to the community, they must have a healthy working relationship with the pastor. Without his knowing and interacting with the kids on a regular basis, the chances of maximizing the school as a mission drop significantly.

But for our congregations to continue to grow, for them to find the strength to serve, quality food must continually be set before the members. The quality and consistency of our congregations’ worship remains problematic. Were we a chain of restaurants throughout Ohio, West Virginia, and the part of Kentucky that is our responsibility, our inspectors would not be entirely happy. Many serve nourishing Gospel to their hearers, who return home rejoicing in God and willing to serve Him in response. But we have problems: Some patrons would find unfriendly wait staff. Some would find food unfit for their consumption because it is bitter and harsh. Others would find food with a pleasant enough taste, but later learn they had consumed only a bunch of empty calories. Some offer very fine worship; others need great improvement. Issues of quality affect traditional, blended, and contemporary styles.

The quality of adult Bible classes is worrisome too. Churches are excited if they can get 20 percent of their members in a Bible class. What would you think our nation’s economic future would be if only 20 percent of our people had a high school education? How can we grow into spiritual maturity if we are not studying God’s Word together regularly? The reasons why this is not happening are many, but the effect remains the same—a dismaying low level of spiritual maturity coupled with a very parochial attitude toward the Body of Christ. Yet there are some shining stars among us, congregations with large percentages of their people in regular Bible classes. These

are led by pastors who are gifted teachers. By their skill, they draw hearers into the story. With skilful questions, they make their hearers think. They are able to move past just the “facts” of the story to help the hearer apply what is taught to their daily lives.

The triennium has seen the closure of several congregations and mission starts: St. Luke, Cleveland, OH; Immanuel, Dry Ridge, KY; Shepherd of the Hills, Portsmouth, OH; River of Faith, Waterville, OH; and Emmaus Journey, North Ridgeville, OH. Invariably changing neighborhoods, a continued aging population, and a feeble economy have all played some part in this. But that’s not all. To some extent, several of these closures were due to human problems with pastor, people, or both.

Healthy Professional Church Workers: The economy continued to exert a powerful negative force on our workers. The Concordia Planned Services (health benefits) costs continue to put pressure on congregations. Several have begun to function as dual parishes, and more will follow. A few others, relying upon sizable endowments, have seen those investments shrink and may find themselves having to make some important decisions about their viability in the near future. When congregations close or enter a dual parish relationship, workers have to move. The current real estate market has hampered pastoral mobility or has divided families, as when the pastor moves to his new call but his wife and family have to remain until the house can be sold. For a long time, parsonages had fallen out of favor; now they may be a blessing to those who can leave them for the new call.

Other workers are staying in their calls longer because of the economy. This has had an effect on congregations who otherwise would be calling a new pastor upon the current pastor’s retirement. So for the present time, it is still not accurate to say that we need more pastors. Within the next five years there will be more retirements, but that will be accompanied by a growing number of congregations unable to afford full-time pastors

When a group of doctors and lawyers learned that our pastors were not required to take continuing education courses, they were stunned. “And they consider themselves to be professionals?” one remarked in disbelief. The solution is not so simple and comes down to the usual problem: money. The salary many of our pastors receive is certainly not in line with the other “professionals.” Not only can they not afford continuing education, but their congregations also say they can’t afford it either. Yet most congregations would benefit immensely if their pastor improved his skills. For instance, most pastors receive only two education courses in seminary, and neither has much to do with actual teaching. Vicarage may provide some teaching opportunity, but not much monitoring takes place. Standard teaching methods are bumping up against young minds that have been altered in the way they learn, thanks to the Internet. So we have much to do to improve our abilities to teach the faith effectively.

Pray for your pastor regularly, and encourage him as much as you can. Explore with him possibilities for continuing his education.

Healthy Relationships: We continue to find ways to collaborate with nearby districts. Learning groups bring pastors together from all parts of our district to discuss common strategies and practices.

Finally, I give thanks for the talented staff with which our district has been enriched. Several are “in demand” across the Synod as they share their skills via the Lutheran Hour’s *Mission U* program of outreach. We strive to be a deployed, reachable staff, at your service. Their reports continue to demonstrate the variety of ways they have been a blessing, not only to the Ohio District but beyond its borders as well. Gordon Stuckert, Karen Dutton, Jeff Stephens, and Kevin Wilson are recognized nationally in their respective areas. I am privileged to work with them. I am also happy to commend to you our support staff, Deb Klusak, Mary Stuckert, Cheryl Shepherd,

and Vivian Smeraldi. They succeed in putting smiles on faces even in tough moments.

Terry Cripe, *President*

R3-03-25

Oklahoma District

The Oklahoma District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a fellowship of congregations committed to caring, sharing, teaching, preaching, and reaching people so as to bring them into a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Oklahoma District is made up of an all-volunteer staff of lay and called workers. These dedicated and gifted workers are committed to the work of the district while continuing to serve in their specific full-time calling. The only salaried and stipend positions include the administrative assistant, the outdoor ministries director, and the business manager. Whether salaried or volunteer, the district staff is composed of gifted people who freely and readily share their gifts and time in extending the work of Christ's kingdom.

The Holy Spirit continues to work dynamically within and through the 83 congregations of the Oklahoma District. The district continues to work toward the goal of planting new congregations while providing revitalization efforts for older and more rural congregations. Equipped with the effectual Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, many new people groups are being touched with Christ's grace.

In the *Western Region*, which includes the Panhandle, outreach has continued among the Burmese Karen people that has resulted in over 30 Baptisms. Camp Lutherhaven continues to be refined for greater outdoor ministry.

In the *Central Region* of Oklahoma, Hispanic ministry continues to grow and flourish, and a district-called Islamic outreach pastor is in place for one-on-one witnessing primarily in the Oklahoma City area.

In the *Eastern Region*, which includes the Tulsa area, spiritual doors miraculously open as outreach continues among the Hispanic, the Liberian, and the Hmong people. Camp Lutheroma has constructed two large year-round retreat centers to expand its outreach to adults and families, as well as continuing its ministry to hundreds of youth. Two new congregations were chartered in the last triennium, one in Bixby and the other in Skiatook.

Preaching stations continue to be maintained throughout the district, with some serving as satellites for some well-established congregations. There has also been some recent experimentation with bi-vocational pastorates in an attempt to provide Word-and-Sacrament ministry to struggling congregations. And in southeastern Oklahoma, a prison ministry continues to bring blessings to the Oklahoma State Prison at McAlester.

In spite of drought, grass fires, tornadoes, and an ongoing national economic dilemma, the saints of the Oklahoma District continue to give generously of the resources entrusted to them by God. We thank God that He has counted us worthy to serve Him through our varied landscapes in unique ways within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Barrie E. Henke, *President*

R3-03-26

Pacific Southwest District

"So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10).

The Pacific Southwest District began this triennium under the theme "Proclaiming the Mysteries of God." As Paul declared to the Ephesians, the mystery of God is that the grace of God is also for the

Gentiles, all people. Christ came that all might be saved and not just an elect few. We are also reminded that the word Sacrament means mystery, and we share that grace of God through water, bread, and wine, the Means of Grace.

The Pacific Southwest District continues to experience the impact of our nation's financial recession. What were once the fastest growing counties in the United States became the counties with the highest unemployment and largest number of foreclosures. The financial crises resulted in a decrease in school enrollment, offerings, and other resources. The district has been challenged to think about doing ministry in different ways with fewer resources, and the congregations continue to experience the challenges and opportunities that are the result of economic challenges, in addition to doing ministry in a post-churched culture.

In 2013, the Pacific Southwest District is 310 congregations/ministries and 183 schools (preschools, elementary and high schools). While some of our schools are flourishing, many are challenged with declining enrollment and resources. As parents are unemployed or underemployed, many cannot afford the tuition for a Lutheran school and opt for charter schools and public schools.

For the churches, the declining financial resources are forcing reductions in staff or salaries of workers. Thirty-nine congregations that at one time had full-time pastoral care are now served on a part-time basis. Twenty-seven of these congregations are in urban areas, and twelve are in more remote parts of the district. Some of our congregations are able to remain open because they have rented out their space to other groups, church and nonchurch related.

In the midst of all the challenges, congregations and mission societies have started 10 new ministries in the past three years. These new ministry starts take a variety of forms, including:

- satellites
- new congregations
- non-English-speaking ministries
- new English-speaking outreach within existing congregations

We are living in very stressful times, with the economy being only one factor. We see the lack of confidence in government, the continuation of men and women dying on foreign soil from war, the crime in our streets, the dissolution of families, the insecurity of the job market, and the misuse of social media. The list could probably be longer. The effect of all these factors on the Church is first to say, "People need the Lord as much as ever." We have a ripe harvest field in which the message of hope is in Jesus.

We are blessed as a district to have a long tradition of lay ministry training. I am grateful for all the men and women who have taken advantage of the opportunity to strengthen their skills in support of the mission efforts of their congregation and their daily witness. The apostle Peter says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:8-9).

More of our congregations are benefiting from the intentional interim pastors who serve during the time between settled pastors. These men have been especially trained to assist congregations in preparing to call and then receive their next pastor. Other congregations are blessed by the service of dedicated vacancy pastors who provide pastoral care during this time.

Gone is the day when we can be satisfied with having an inviting sign, advertising in the yellow pages or newspaper, having an attractive inviting Web site, and sitting in our churches on Sunday morning to wait for the community to come to us. Reggie McNeal, in his book *Missional Renaissance*, challenges the Church to leave the building and to become involved in the community. During the new pastor orientation the past two years, we have talked about what it means when

the Church “leaves” the building. It is sometimes called “incarnational evangelism.” Just as God knew our lost condition and came to us through His Son, the incarnation, so, too, we need to find meaningful ways to become active participants in our communities outside our buildings. Churches who are involved in revitalization activities are learning how to reach beyond themselves and into their community.

We are reminded more every day of the impact of globalization on our life and our churches. More of our churches are taking mission trips to all corners of the world, and more and more people are coming from all corners of the world to live, work, and worship among us. Eighty-one of our congregations have at least one non-English worship service each week, and during the past three years, we have organized a culture-specific ministry support group, which brings together, on a regular basis, leaders from our diverse ethnic ministries to talk about the challenges and opportunities that we share. It is exciting to listen to the many ways that God is working through these men and their ministries to reach those who live among us. Also on a regular basis, we meet with different ethnic pastors to support them in their mission efforts.

The people of the Pacific Southwest District are excited about planting new ministries, revitalizing congregations and schools, and “Proclaiming the Mysteries of God” in a multiculturally diverse mission field in Southern California, Arizona, and Southern Nevada.

Larry Stoterau, *President*

R3-03-27

Rocky Mountain District

The Rocky Mountain District includes the states of Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico and also has parishes in El Paso, Texas; Paige, Arizona; and Venango and Big Springs, Nebraska. The district—with its 181 congregations and 65 early childhood centers, schools, and high schools—is privileged to be the Lord’s mouth, hands, and feet to broadcast His saving Word far and wide. Additionally, the district’s congregations are blessed to have Lutheran Valley Retreat within our boundaries. This ministry, located in beautiful central Colorado, hosts camps and retreats for schools, confirmation programs, families, and congregations—in addition to a full program of summer camps for all ages.

School ministries continue to adjust, refine, and evolve as they’re pressured and responsive to changing models, shifting demographics, and new opportunities. Curriculum, instructional design, and modes of delivery have all changed dramatically in response to the needs of the twenty-first century learner. Yet, in the midst of change, our core purpose remains rooted in the mission of the church: discipleship and evangelism. Fundamentally, Lutheran schools play critical roles in assisting congregations and families in raising God-fearing children.

Directors of family ministry, children’s ministry and youth ministry bless many congregations and communities throughout the district. Their specialized gifts and intentional efforts shape the Church of today and tomorrow. Unfortunately, many of these servants find themselves released from their calls due to poorer financial circumstances or weakened stability and health of congregations. Yet, we remain grateful for their faithfulness in our midst.

During the last triennium, the Rocky Mountain District’s congregations had the blessed opportunity to support the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane, South Africa, in various ways through student tuition support and other seminary-related operations; the Lutheran Hispanic Missionary Institute (LHMI) and their efforts training future Hispanic ministry leaders; the Biblical Orthodox Lutheran Mission (BOLM) and their ministry to the Arabic-speaking community; and Hispanic ministry throughout the district. The *Fan*

into Flame campaign was completed in addition to the launch and support of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative.

The present mission statement of the Rocky Mountain District is *Mercy, Witness, Life Together*. Familiar to most, however slightly modified, the district chose to lead in *Mercy*. We have the blessed gift of Christ’s forgiveness in our troubled lives. We have a resource that shows us how to reflect the Gospel in mercy by thought, word, and deed. We can pray with and for our brothers and sisters. We can reach out to help and care. We can work together, knowing we are together at the foot of His cross. This is life together. “*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own*” (Matthew 6:33).

Our *Life Together* in the Rocky Mountain District is challenging and full of opportunities. The greatest opportunity is the gathering of His people to hear His Word and receive new life through Baptism and forgiveness through His body and blood. Our primary emphasis seeks opportunities to show *Mercy*, as demonstrated following the 2012 wildfires; the theatre shootings in Aurora, Colorado; the school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut; and with spiritually, financially or emotionally struggling church workers or conflicted congregations. Acts of *Mercy* allow further opportunities to bear *Witness* to Jesus in any setting.

The future of the Rocky Mountain District’s *Mercy, Witness, Life Together* will be carried through the “Gospel Gap”—a circuit-based mission model adopted by the 2012 district convention. This mission model seeks to identify where gaps exist, whether they be geographic, demographic, relational, spiritual, or financial, whereby in cooperation between the circuit and the district these gaps can be closed, healed, grown, or nurtured. The Gospel Gap places accountable stewarding of the triune God’s mission through cooperation between congregational, circuit, and district levels.

“*Be still, and know that I am God*” (Psalm 46:10).

Allen Anderson, *President*

R3-03-28

SELC District

The SELC District rejoices in the privilege our Lord has given to be in mission and ministry. Our district pastors enjoy a strong collegial bond built on trust that comes from spending quality time with one another in circuit and district gatherings that last two and three days at a time. These gatherings allow significant time for sharing in scriptural and confessional studies, book reviews, guest speakers, worship, sharing in Holy Communion, casuistry, meals and fellowship time, and relationship building. Our special trust level allows for the mutual encouragement of the brotherhood in dealing with issues of casuistry and for the ability to express both agreement and disagreement on adiaphora while both maintaining and deepening personal relationships between and among the brothers.

The congregations of the SELC enjoy a special sense of freedom and independence (because most are separated by miles from one another), while at the same time they find unity in the Scriptures and Confessions and build on the assurance of mutual support and the availability of assistance from district officers, circuit counselors, and sister congregations.

The SELC encourages and supports congregations to seek out ways to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, upholding our chosen SELC tagline: “**Showing Everyone Life in Christ; Showing Everyone the Love of Christ!**”

The administrative structure of the SELC District continues to be both blessing and challenge. The part-time district presidency, no paid professional staff, no ownership of property, no rental expenditures, and all administrative functions carried out by pastors and

laypeople who continue serving “where they are” has been the workable, good stewardship administrative model for all 111 years of the SELC’s existence (first as the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church, then the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and since 1971, the SELC District, LCMS). The challenges the SELC faces are maintaining a cohesive “family” with a nongeographic character along with the effects of social and economic change among many of our SELC “northern tier, industrial area” congregations.

Most SELC congregations are involved in a variety of social ministry and mercy ministry endeavors that demonstrate Christ’s love for the world by establishing, supporting, and volunteering in food pantries, crisis pregnancy centers, homeless shelters, free meal programs, free medical clinics, and community ride programs. Many SELC congregations have recognized the opportunities for outreach into the changing neighbors around our long-established congregations, using English-as-a-Second-Language classes and hospitality ministries to break down barriers for the Gospel. The district has subsidized Hispanic ministries in Chicago, IL, Whiting, IN, and Tampa, FL; Asian Indian ministries in Clark, NJ, and Chicago, IL; and Chinese ministries, plus hospitality ministry to Middle Eastern immigrants, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Short-term mission trips are sponsored regularly within the United States to assist in areas devastated by storms and to “foreign lands” to teach Vacation Bible School, repair damaged homes, or to help build culturally appropriate buildings for worship, education, or group dwellings.

Our larger SELC congregations have recognized a special role in planting missions, using the satellite model to take advantage of centralized resources of people and finances to meet the spiritual needs of people in areas of population growth.

The SELC is unique in that we “own and operate” the Lutheran Haven, an independent-living adult retirement community in Oviedo, FL. It also includes an assisted living facility and a skilled nursing facility. The Lutheran Haven has also begun a home health care agency, seeking to help both our Haven residents and residents of Seminole and Orange Counties (FL) to receive medical and rehabilitative services that allow them to remain in their own homes longer as they age.

The SELC strives to be good stewards of the resources that God has provided through congregational pledges and offerings, individual gifts, interest, and LCEF positive operating results. In the past, because of financial reserves, the SELC has been able to utilize 90 percent of congregational receipts in the support of the Synod, our two LCMS seminaries, SELC students in the Concordia University System, our SELC seminarians, and our own district mission endeavors, with the full district administration funded by financial reserves. The year 2013 has brought the challenge of a balanced budget, wherein cuts in historic funding practices have been needed—however, always keeping outreach, evangelism, and mission funding as our SELC District’s highest priorities. With mission outreach as our focus and with a balanced budget, the SELC District holds onto Christ’s promise—“I will build My Church” (Matt. 16:18)—praying that He would use us in effective ministry for the growth of His kingdom, both in time and in eternity. To God Alone Be All Glory!

Carl H. Krueger Jr., *President*

R3-03-29

South Dakota District

The theme for the 2012 South Dakota District convention was “Called Into Partnership: For WITNESS” based on Acts 1:8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” This theme highlights one part of the threefold

emphasis of “WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER: IN CHRIST, FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.”

Oftentimes when Christian people hear the word “witness,” their first thought is *something that we are to do*. That is Law. Wonderfully, however, the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8 speak first and foremost of *who we are* as a result of God’s gracious action in the giving of His Holy Spirit. We are redeemed children of God and, as such, witnesses of Christ. That’s grace and Gospel! The Holy Spirit not only has made us God’s people through Baptism and God’s Word, but He has also empowered us as witnesses to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

The congregations and their members, the schools, and the missions and ministries of the South Dakota District truly are in partnership for witness, both for “FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.” In the combined total of 117 congregations and preaching stations, the witness of God’s Word and Sacraments is regularly given so that through these means, the Holy Spirit is given “who works faith, when and where He pleases, in those who hear the Gospel” (AC V). In turn, pastors and members of congregation are witnesses of the Gospel to those who are outside of their congregations. Likewise, in our combined total of 23 early childhood centers, preschools, elementary schools, middle schools, and high school, children and young people both grow in God’s Word and are equipped as witnesses to others. Many of these children come from non-Lutheran and even non-churched backgrounds. Two days before I wrote this report, I was told of a non-Lutheran child at one of our schools who has asked to be baptized!

In 2012, nearly 80 percent of our district’s work program was directed toward witness and mission endeavors. Honoring the commitment that was made at the Synod’s fiscal conference in 2007, 32 percent of all “missions receipts” the district receives from congregations directly support the national and international mission and ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In addition, the district continues partnership with Synod’s Together In Mission (TIM) program, with support over the past 20 years for a missionary in Kazakhstan and the commitment to ongoing TIM support.

South Dakota has nine American Indian reservations and designated tribal land areas—more than any other state. The American Indian population of South Dakota makes up nearly 9 percent of the state’s population and is one of the highest nonchurched populations. The district supports a full-time missionary on the Rosebud Reservation, a part-time specific ministry pastor (SMP) missionary on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and is exploring the possibility of a missionary on the Cheyenne River Reservation.

Another largely non-churched population is that of persons who are deaf or severely hearing impaired. The state School for the Deaf was located in Sioux Falls for 130 years but closed as a residential school in 2010. The closing of the school resulted in the exodus both of deaf students who are now mainstreamed in their own communities and of families who lived in Sioux Falls and were associated with the school. For decades, the district supported a full-time missionary to the deaf who also served as the pastor of a deaf congregation. Much of his work was with students and families associated with the school. Yet God had a plan so that ministry with the deaf can continue. Our deaf congregation has joined with a hearing congregation to form a two-point parish, and together they have called the former missionary to be their pastor.

Sioux Falls is the largest city in South Dakota and continues to be a regional hub for receiving immigrants, including many from African nations. A Sudanese group and two Ethiopian groups hold services in three Sioux Falls congregations and are served by a called Sudanese pastor and an Ethiopian man enrolled in the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) program. A fourth congregation has an active

African Immigrant Outreach Program, reaching out to first- and second-generation African immigrants. Jesus spoke of being witnesses to the end of the earth. Our congregations and people are witnessing to those who have come to South Dakota from many parts of the earth.

A large portion of the northwest corner of South Dakota has large ranches, few towns, and sparse population. There are no LCMS congregations and few congregations of other denominations. In Romans 10:14, the apostle Paul asks, "How are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?" Our district's circuit rider ministry, "Hitchin' Post Ministry," brings the witness of the Gospel by on-site visits by a pastor who brings his own horse and trailer to give a hand to the ranchers and a witness as well. He also covers that area through ads and interviews broadcast over the radio waves.

Nearly every parish pastor in the district participates in the opportunity to bring the message of the Gospel to people over every part of South Dakota and into some neighboring states through our television outreach program, "Main Street Living." In addition to a weekly half-hour Divine Service, the program includes a half-hour children's program called "Kids' Crossing." All of the work for these programs is done by pastors and members of congregations who volunteer their time and talents. The program brings a solid Gospel witness to a wide variety of viewers, including those who are homebound, shift workers, and many adults and children who, as yet, do not have a church home. But the Holy Spirit is at work!

Jesus said to "pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:38). In order that men and women of our district may prepare for professional church-work vocations, our district provides generous student aid grants both at the undergraduate and seminary levels. While we recognize that not all of these students will return to serve in South Dakota, these individuals will be witnesses of the Gospel whether they serve here or to the ends of the earth. In addition, the district helps subsidize campus ministries at three of our state universities, serving students who are preparing for nonchurch vocations but who will be witnesses both to other students on campus and to others beyond their graduation.

We continue to work with congregations to start new mission congregations, especially in our larger population areas. At the same time, we recognize the importance of keeping the Gospel proclamation and witness present in our less densely populated areas. Well over half of the congregations of our district are located in country or rural settings surrounded by farms and ranches in towns with dwindling populations of less than 1,000, including 20 congregations in communities of less than 100. Two-thirds of our congregations are in multiple-point parishes, mostly in rural settings and some with long distances between churches. Two congregations have closed during the last triennium, in part because their membership could no longer support even part-time ministry. Our district encourages alternate ways of serving some of these challenging settings so that the witness of the Gospel can continue while being faithful to the Scriptures and our Lutheran Confessions. During the past triennium, three men have been trained and ordained as specific ministry pastors, two of whom are now serving in locations that otherwise would be unable to sustain a full-time pastor. These men are proving to be a special blessing.

The congregations, schools, and saints who are part of the South Dakota District thank God that by His grace, we have been baptized for this moment in time. And as His redeemed and baptized children, we thank Him that we have been "Called Into Partnership: FOR WITNESS."

Dale L. Sattgast, *President*

R3-03-30

South Wisconsin District

The theme for the 2012 South Wisconsin District convention was *Koinōvía ... Life forgiven, Life together ...* It is all part of the reason why our district tagline is "*Passionate Believers Changing Life*" as we (1) maximize resources, (2) multiply ministries, and (3) magnify partnerships. So much good is being accomplished as we work together in the church.

1. Maximizing Resources

At the completion of our last fiscal year, which ended Jan. 31, 2012, our auditors reported that not only did we close out the year once again well into the black, but also that our financial team was to be commended for the fine work they are doing keeping track of the precious gifts which we receive from our various congregations and other donors. Another very positive financial item that needs to be noted is that back in 2006, our capital indebtedness was \$5.5 million. This last Thursday, Tim Dittloff informed me that our capital indebtedness is now down to \$2.38 million. In the last six years, we have more than cut that indebtedness in half.

2. Multiplying Ministries

Three years ago, at the 2009 convention, the district with Resolution 3-03A adopted a goal of starting 50 new missions and/or ministries in the next five years. Current count puts us at somewhere just over 30 at reaching that goal; but it has not been easy, especially in light of our financial limitations. One of the things we have learned along the way is that it is not about brick and mortar, not about buildings; rather, it is about Word and Sacrament; it is about relationships: ***Koinōvía ... Life forgiven, Life together ...***

3. Magnifying Partnerships

Where to begin? Koinonia is the key to all that we are accomplishing for our Lord in His kingdom: 214 congregations, 120,000 people, 58 elementary schools, preschools, 6 high schools, CUW ... sharing a common faith, sharing a common purpose, aimed at a common goal of making a difference with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have so many resources: people resources, financial resources, resources that come from the Gospel news of forgiveness and peace because of our Lord Jesus.

Many of our district's mission stories are about those of other cultures, not necessarily in faraway places, but in places like Racine and Milwaukee, in Franklin and Waukesha. The fastest growing demographic group in south Wisconsin is no longer Pomeranian; it is Hispanic. There are also Asians like the Karenni and Hmong. There are those from the Middle East: Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim. There are African immigrants from Nigeria and the Congo. As we reach out to these new cultures in our midst with the Gospel, they become part of our ***Koinōvía ... Life forgiven, Life together ...*** And that is a fantastic blessing from our Lord!

In his opening remarks to the 2012 South Wisconsin District convention, President Wille offered the following comments on the convention theme:

"Fellowship, partnership, sharing. *koinōvía* is a word that reminds us that we are part of something much larger than ourselves, something even much larger than our local congregation, something even much larger than the South Wisconsin District. We are part of a much larger church. We are part of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, part of the Holy Christian Church, part of God's family of believers.

"Dr. Martin Luther writes on this about *koinōvía*:

This fellowship consists in this, that all the spiritual possession of Christ and his saints [i.e., believers] are shared with and become the common property of him who receives this sacrament. Again all sufferings and sins also become common property; and thus love engenders love in return and [mutual love] unites. (LW 35:51)

"For each of us that fellowship, or that relationship, begins at a very personal level, when our Lord Jesus claims us to be His own in the Sac-

rament of Holy Baptism. There in those precious sacramental waters, our Lord washes away our sin and adopts us into His family of believers. That relationship is lived out as we become members of a local congregation, as we gather for our Lord's blessing of Word and Sacrament at the altar of that congregation."

In South Wisconsin, there are 214 congregations with such an altar. The altar is the place where we come for God's blessing. The altar is the place where we bring our offerings. The altar is the focal point of our *κοινωνία* with our Lord and Savior. It is also the symbolic focal point of our fellowship with each other; with those in our local parish; with those who gather at the other 214 congregations that make up the South Wisconsin District of the LCMS; and with the approximately 6,000 congregations that make up the LCMS throughout our country.

As part of that relationship, each of our congregations have responsibilities and accountabilities to their sister congregations in the Church at large and especially to sister congregations in the LCMS. Our *κοινωνία* is not merely about one altar; it is rather about and with every altar in the LCMS. Each and every congregation, large or small, is a precious member of that fellowship.

Among the resolutions adopted by the 2012 South Wisconsin District convention:

- **RES 3-02**, "To Realign SWD Circuits"
- **RES 4-02**, "To Encourage 'Life Together' in the South Wisconsin District through the Unity of Practices Regarding the Lord's Supper (Closed Communion)." This resolution was passed overwhelmingly by the delegates.
- **RES 5-01**, "To Appoint a Task Force to Develop a Process for the Support of Missions"
- **RES 5-02**, "To Continue District Partnership in the Dominican Republic."
- **RES 6-02**, "To Retain the Significance of Overtures and Resolutions Submitted by Individual Congregations"
- **RES 6-04** "To Commend the Roman Catholic Church for Its Stance on Religious Freedoms and Defense of the Rights of the Unborn." Resolution 6-04 was presented to Archbishop Listdecki during the confessional symposium hosted by Peace, Sussex. The archbishop expressed his appreciation for this.

May our Lord continue to bless our confession of His name as we witness to this sinful world! May He continue to grant us faithful pastors who stand solidly on our Holy Scripture and Lutheran Confessions. Serving our Lord and His Bride, the Church—

John C. Wille, *President*

R3-03-31

Southeastern District

Till All Have Heard describes the call to mission that the 218 congregations, 89 schools, and 45 missions are answering as they seek to connect people with Jesus.

Throughout the last triennium, the Southeastern District (SED) continued working toward the goals based on Acts 2:42, that is, to be disciple-making communities of teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer and of God's kingdom growing daily as His people boldly proclaim the love of Jesus Christ in word and deed (Acts 2:47).

This is being accomplished through intentional efforts in the following areas:

- Spiritual Formation
- Faith Sharing
- New Mission Development
- Congregational Vitality
- Leadership Development

This is most clearly seen in the area of spiritual formation. It is not by accident that this is at the top of goals. A growing team of Mission Prayer Partners prays regularly for mission starts and leadership on the front line. Congregations are establishing prayer teams. Spiritual formation retreats are being held throughout the district. The answers to prayers that God is providing, moreover, are often astounding. Obstacles are overcome! Doors once closed are opening!

Sharing the faith, bearing witness to Jesus, is an act in which our congregations and schools are already engaged. Encouraging growth and confidence in faith-sharing is a goal that will enable the district to record 2.5 million faith-sharing conversations by 2017. We give thanks to God for the 1,234,699 conversations that have taken place. We continue to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to turn these conversations into heart-changing experiences in the lives of all.

What is motivating the SED, however, is not the counting or the numbers of these events. Rather, it's the Word of God: "As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). The planting of 100 new ministries and congregations in many different settings throughout the five-state region, and the resourcing of these efforts, has occupied much time and energy during this triennium. Since the setting of this goal, 70 new mission starts have been initiated and are at one stage or another of development. We are currently working with a LINC ministry in Baltimore, MD, and preparing to launch a second in Washington, DC.

"Renewal" is the term used for established congregations that are interested in church transformation or revitalization. While 46 congregations have initiated renewal conversations, 23 congregations (or 10 percent) are in the process.

As we begin the next triennium, we are challenged to create new networks that bring together creative partnerships that cross circuits and regions. We will be intentional about linking opportunities for learning, serving, and resourcing leaders for ministry and mission. One of the exciting new partnerships will be that with the LCMS mission in Peru. This mission effort will be supported with prayer, presence, and funds. Members of the SED look forward to the Peruvian partnership, which will be a blessing to the work of the Gospel in Peru as well as to local congregations as they seek to reach out to immigrants within their own communities.

SED ministries are also involved in supporting the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, and our schools have led the way through their Hearts for Jesus projects. Every congregation is encouraged to step forward and support this effort to end malaria throughout the world.

While several initiatives coming from the 2012 district convention were global in nature, the strong encouragement to support local Gospel outreach, new ministry development, and compassionate service was affirmed.

To God be the glory! He has taken the work and gifts of His people and multiplied them for ministry in ways we could not have anticipated. We pray for the continued work of the Gospel within the communities of the Southeastern District, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the world.

John R. Denninger, *President*

R3-03-32

Southern District

The 73rd convention of the Southern District of the LCMS was held at Atonement Lutheran Church and School in Metairie, Louisiana, beginning Thursday, June 14, 2012, under the theme "It's Time—That They May Know Jesus" (John 17:3).

The Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray, Fifth Vice-President of the LCMS, preached at the opening worship service under the title, "It's Time to Know God in Christ" (John 17:1–5). The service included expressions

of diverse worship styles with a liturgical dancer, traditional, gospel, praise, and Spanish choral groups from district congregations.

Friday was dedicated to mission education. Dr. Kurt Senske of Lutheran Social Services of the South spoke on our vocation to live as God's missional people. The Rev. Tony Cook, Concordia Seminary professor, spoke about the society and culture in which we are living and have our mission. The lunch hour included a shortened Lifetree Café experience. The Rev. Greg and Susan Finke of Dwelling 1:14 introduced the idea of missional communities.

The president's report began with the theme for the next triennium. "It's not time to focus on buildings, elections, resolutions, reports, or doing business. It's Time—That They May Know Jesus! It's time we follow the ministry example of Jesus which we find in His Word. Not waiting for people to come and meet us, but going to connect with people where they are gathered."

The report concluded with the following priorities to support the people of the Southern District in fulfilling their mission: Support the planting of new starts to ensure the best possible place, plan, and person for the mission; Assist congregations in focusing/refocusing their mission work; Practice good stewardship in our operations to increase the resources available for the mission; Transition staff from program providers to mission facilitators who connect our congregations to the best mission practices; and Utilize a form of governance which enables the leadership to focus on the mission and be accountable to its work.

The official business session began Saturday with elections, and concluded after 3 hours and 30 minutes. All resolutions presented were adopted, the most significant being:

TO ENCOURAGE THE GROWING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT AND THE ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL
CHURCH MEKANE YESUS

WHEREAS, LCMS World Mission began work in Ethiopia in 2000 as part of a larger East Africa strategy for training leaders among several people groups in East African countries; and

WHEREAS, LCMS World Relief and Human Care began mercy work in Ethiopia in 2001 by supporting a garden at the Baro Bethel Bible School and has sponsored other projects including garden for Christian schools, a women's micro-enterprise project, wells, clinic repairs, and food assistance; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS, working with various synods (which are similar to the LCMS districts) of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), signed a partnership agreement with the EECMY in January 2010 that formalized the relationship for mutual mission as church bodies and provided a framework for the exploring each other's understanding of our Lutheran identity; and

WHEREAS, In the midst of the influence of many other church bodies in Africa, the relationship between the LCMS and the EECMY is to help convey a confessional witness based upon the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions (Cf. Synod Constitution Art. II); and

WHEREAS, The congregations of the Southern District have been richly blessed by its many connections with the EECMY through the president as well as other staff members of the Concordia College Alabama, the translation of the Book of Concord into Amharic by one of our district pastors, the Southern District Pastors' Conference support of the Master Builders Center, and the sharing of the best mission practices though PLI and the travel of Southern District pastors to Ethiopia; and

WHEREAS, we believe that even greater blessings await the Southern District congregations, church workers, and Concordia College Alabama by a strengthened relationship with the congregations of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southern District express its strong desire for greater mutual conversation, encouragement, learning, and support between the congregations of the Southern District and the congregations of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Southern District be encouraged to commit to lifting up the people of Mekane Yesus that they may become even greater confessional witnesses to the love of Jesus Christ so that more may come to know God's amazing grace; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Southern District commit to building a relationship with congregations of Mekane Yesus so that we can study their best mission practices and become more effective instruments of reaching people in Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana, and beyond who do not yet know the love of Jesus Christ, and also provide support resources for a strong Lutheran confessional witness in the congregations of Mekane Yesus; and be it further

Resolved, That the leadership of the Southern District explore ways in which its congregations together may provide confessional support for the congregations of Mekane Yesus; and be it further

Resolved, That the people of the Southern District be encouraged to commit to support the work of Mekane Yesus congregations by asking the children, men, women, professional church workers, churches and schools to support the brothers and sisters in Mekane Yesus with their prayers and gifts; and be it further

Resolved, That 50 percent of the 2012 convention offerings be first fruits toward a goal of 1,000,000 Birr (approximately \$60,000) of support for the work of Mekane Yesus; and be it further

Resolved, That the offering be used for doctrinal materials that are in accord with Article IV of Synod's Constitution to assist with the proclamation of pure Gospel among their people; and be it finally

Resolved, That being empowered by the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel and blessed beyond our wildest expectations, we give God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all praise and glory.

Kurtis D. Schultz, *President*

R3-03-33

Southern Illinois District

The Southern Illinois District (SID) comprises 96 congregations, 22 parochial schools, 3 Lutheran high schools, and 18 freestanding preschools and daycares. This emphasis on Christian education continues to be a blessing. Fully three-fourths of SID congregations are classified as rural or small town. The challenge is doing ministry in areas with both declining and aging populations.

East St. Louis is a blighted inner city with numerous challenges. A decade ago, the district started a parochial school in connection with Unity Lutheran Church. Unity Lutheran Christian Elementary School has exceeded all expectations. The first eighth-grade class graduated in 2012. The majority of the graduates attend Metro East Lutheran High School in Edwardsville. Unity Lutheran Church has a revitalized ministry with an enthused laity doing acts of mercy in the community.

Prison ministry is a significant outreach of the district. Some 27 prisons, jails, and institutions are visited weekly by pastors and laity.

A new campus ministry was opened at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville. Another is at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville. The district's flagship campus ministry is at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

The staff and congregation at Our Savior Lutheran Church also do intentional outreach to the Chinese Community in Carbondale. Zion Lutheran Church in Belleville sponsors a Korean congregation that meets in their facility and is served by one of Zion's assistant pastors, the Rev. Jin O. Jeong. There is a growing Hispanic population

throughout all parts of the district. The Mission Board is exploring ways that it can do urban and ethnic ministry better.

The district enjoys a partnership with the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane/Pretoria. Now in its fourteenth year, district task force members have made four trips to South Africa and Botswana in the last triennium. The partnership is working with the Rev. David Tswaedi and his congregation at Mofolo North to begin a parochial school in Soweto, a community of some three million people.

The 2010 LCMS convention brought a significant change to the Southern Illinois District. The Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller Jr. was elected the First Vice-President of the LCMS. He had been district president since 1994. The Rev. Timothy Scharr was installed as district president on August 29, 2010, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Nashville. The Rev. Scharr was elected to his first full term at the 2012 district convention.

The Southern Illinois District is well served by Mr. Roger Sprengel as the schools and general executive (SAGE). Mrs. Donna Wiesen is the administrative assistant, and Mrs. Leslie Sramek is the bookkeeper. Mr. Dennis Klusman is the LCEF vice-president. He is assisted by Mr. Dan Roth, who handles the promotion of LCEF. The Rev. Michael Walther of Good Shepherd, Collinsville, is the first vice-president, and the Rev. Bruce Keseman of Christ Our Savior, Freeburg, is the second vice-president. The Rev. Dr. George Gude is the district secretary, and Mr. Gary Hemmer serves as treasurer.

Moving into the future, we remain confident that the Lord Jesus Christ rules over all things on behalf of His people, the Church. We are baptized for this moment that we may be faithful confessors of the faith in these latter days.

Timothy Scharr, *President*

R3-03-34

Texas District

The mission of the Texas District is to strengthen congregations to reach the lost, disciple the saved, and care for people—locally and globally.

The population growth of the state of Texas continues its rapid pace. The government says that pace is at 500,000 net growth every year. About half of this growth comes from immigration as people from other nations seek out work and stability in Texas. The state economy remains strong, with more and more companies moving their operations to Texas.

One of the *Ablaze!* goals set by the district in 2004 was to start 200 Word-and-Sacrament ministries by 2017. Through 2013, God has blessed us with 80 new Word-and-Sacrament congregations. Fewer than 10 percent have failed. We thank God for these blessings and look forward to His blessings as we move closer to 2017.

Over the last three years, a number of “mission networks” have formed to plant multiple new congregations. These “mission networks” are made up of a number of congregations or individuals committed to sharing the Gospel with the new people arriving each year. Through these networks and other congregations in Texas, 80 additional new starts are on the drawing board. We plant and pray for God to give the growth.

The president’s office, our four mission and ministry facilitators, and the director of congregation and worker care work together to encourage and support the mission work carried out by congregations and “mission networks.” Other district office workers are on board with the vision of reaching people with the Good News of Jesus. We are truly blessed to have a unified staff.

Our deployed staff and elected vice-presidents and circuit counselors continue to bless local congregations with more personal

connections with the district. Both the staff and officers actively serve and support congregations and professional church workers and their families.

The funding model for new starts established by the mission board is proving to be a blessing for the Texas District’s mission efforts. The amount of dollars repaid by our new starts has increased to over \$100,000 each year. These dollars are used to begin new congregations across Texas.

The district was blessed to add a third Lutheran Inner City Network Coalition (LINC) in the last three years. The new LINC is located in San Antonio and joins LINC Houston and LINC North Texas in their efforts to bring the message of Jesus to the city, and especially to the immigrants coming from other countries.

The Texas District’s Church Extension Fund continues its healthy growth in investments, loans, and capital funding. This ministry has been a huge blessing in supporting expansions of established congregations as well as new mission starts. They also partner with Synod’s Lutheran Church Extension Fund in providing services beyond Texas.

Even though the population boom is a blessing, it is also one of our biggest challenges. The Texas District has not been able to keep up with the growth. We thank God for the growth He has blessed the district with and are confident that He will anoint our feeble human efforts to expand His kingdom in Texas through the ministry of the district and its congregations. We keep our eyes on the cross and ourselves open to the guidance of His Holy Spirit.

Kenneth M. Hennings, *President*

R3-03-35

Wyoming District

The Wyoming District was formed from the former Northern Nebraska and Southern Nebraska Districts on Sept. 30, 1970. It includes all of Wyoming and the panhandle of Nebraska with one congregation in Colorado (part of a dual parish), covering over 100,000 square miles of sparsely populated farm, ranch, and mountainous terrain. It includes 61 congregations, one mission station at an American Indian reservation, two campus ministries (one full time), six circuits, 13 preschools, four kindergartens, and four classical education elementary schools.

Although smaller in numbers, with over 13,000 baptized members and 10,000+ communicant members, we are spread across the entire district with congregations in every community of 1500+ except one. The sparse population, long distances between towns, and smallness of cities (largest is 58,000) make ministry a challenge, long travel normal, and gatherings precious.

One of those gatherings held for the last 12 years has been an evangelism convocation (Tell the Good News about Jesus Convocation), which has consistently brought laypeople and pastors (180–280) together annually for worship, study, and preparation to engage others and reach out with the story of Jesus Christ.

The strong interest in taking the Gospel out to as many people as possible is shown by the support of district work to the American Indian tribes near Riverton, Wyoming; receiving of a new congregation in 2011 south of Jackson, Wyoming; and support of a full-time campus pastor at the University of Wyoming, Laramie. In addition, mission offerings of all congregations not only support the Synod and district missions but also help five other congregations annually to support their ministries locally. These mission offerings also provide generous gifts to assist students preparing for full-time church work through district grants or repayment of student indebtedness.

Teaching and equipping congregations for stewardship continues with an emphasis started several years ago to present it in every congregation. To date, one-half of all congregations have benefited from

a special district presentation of “Faithful Stewards,” which emphasizes giving from blessings for the Lord’s work.

Another responsibility that is taken seriously and is carried out faithfully is the practice of “visitation” of every congregation and pastor during the triennium. For over 25 years now, these are directed (and done) by the district president with the assistance of three vice-presidents and six circuit counselors (“visitors”) to benefit congregations and pastors by keeping us in close communication and walking together in doctrine and practice for the sake of the Gospel.

After the district convention in May 2012, the district administrative team met to adopt a new emphasis for the next triennium (2013–2015): “Witness Always, Mercy Forever, Life Together,” which focuses district efforts and the involvement of congregations.

Pastors and congregations faithfully proclaiming the truth of God’s Word, faithfully administering the Sacraments, gathering in worship, going forth into communities to share Christ in their vocations—these continue to be the joy and strength of our district.

The Lord has truly blessed us through His Son, that God may be glorified through the worship and activities of those who are His in the Wyoming District and the many people served. To God be all glory!

Richard O. Boche, *President*

R4-01

Commission on Theology and Church Relations

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has three primary functions: to “assist the President of the Synod at his request in discharging his constitutional responsibilities for maintaining doctrinal unity within the Synod” (Bylaw 3.9.5.2) and “for maintaining doctrinal integrity as he relates to other church bodies” (Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2); to “provide guidance to the Synod in matters of theology and church relations” (Bylaw 3.9.5.2.1); and to assist the members of the Synod in their witness regarding “societies, lodges, cults, or any organizations of an unchristian or anti-Christian character” (Bylaw 3.9.5.3). Additional responsibilities of the CTCR include responding to expressions of dissent (Bylaw 1.8), approving church body requests for altar and pulpit fellowship (Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2), and rendering official theological opinions as requested and as mandated by Synod Bylaws.

The CTCR consists of sixteen voting and four advisory members. The voting membership consists of two parish pastors, one parish teacher, and two laypersons elected by conventions of the Synod; two pastors (one of whom is a district president) and two laypersons elected by the Council of Presidents (COP); four seminary professors, two appointed or elected by each seminary faculty; and three additional members appointed by the President of the Synod, in consultation with the vice-presidents (one of these appointees is a Concordia University System [CUS] professor). The advisory members are the President and First Vice-President of the Synod and the presidents of the two seminaries. Advisory members have no term limits on their service. CTCR members elected in convention serve a six-year term and may be reelected once. Members appointed by the President or elected by a seminary or the COP serve three-year terms and may be reappointed twice. For the sake of efficiency, the commission operates with an Executive Committee and three working committees. The Executive Committee includes the CTCR’s officers, the chairmen of the three committees, and the executive staff. While not rigidly defined, one committee focuses on matters of church relations, the second on doctrinal matters, and the third on church and society issues. All official reports, opinions, or documents of the CTCR are finally approved before their release or publication by the entire commission meeting in plenary.

Current commission members and the dates their current terms expire are: Rev. Dr. Andrew Bartelt (2013), Rev. Terry Cripe (2016), Rev. Thomas Egger (2013), Mr. Kirk Farney (2013), Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher II (2013), Rev. Dr. Charles Gieschen (2013), Mr. Timothy Hardy (2016), Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison (adv.), Rev. Walter Lehenbauer (2013), Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer (adv.), Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller Jr. (adv.), Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Oschwald (2013), Rev. Dr. Philip Penhallegon (2013), Dr. Andrea Pitkus (2013), Rev. Arlo Pullmann (2016), Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast (adv.), Rev. Dr. Robert Rosin (2013), Mr. Jeffrey Schwarz (2016), Dr. Jesse Yow Jr. (2013), and Rev. Dr. Roland Ziegler (2013). The Rev. Dr. Albert B. Collver III, the assistant to the President for church relations (Director of Church Relations), regularly attends CTCR meetings and reports to the commission regarding matters of church relations which are under the purview of the President’s Office. CTCR officers during the past triennium were: Dr. Rast, Chairman; Dr. Bartelt, Vice-Chairman; and Dr. Rosin, Secretary. In the past triennium there were several changes in CTCR membership. Dr. Jean Garton, a convention-elected lay member of the commission, resigned in 2011 for personal reasons. Dr. Garton had served the LCMS in a variety of significant roles on the national level for over 40 years. Dr. Pitkus was appointed by the Board of Directors to fulfill her term. Dr. Jon Diefenthaler, who as president of the Southeastern District was serving as the COP’s District President representative at the beginning of the triennium, retired in 2012. Rev. Cripe, president of the Ohio District, was appointed by the COP to replace him. Rev. Dr. Korey Maas, appointed by the President, took a teaching position which made him ineligible to continue as a CUS representative on the CTCR and was replaced by Dr. Penhallegon.

The CTCR is currently served by two full-time executive staff members. The Rev. Dr. Joel D. Lehenbauer, who served the commission as Assistant and/or Associate Executive Director since 1991, has been executive director since 2008. The Rev. Larry M. Vogel has served as Associate Executive Director since 2009.

I. Theology

A. Assignments Completed

1. *Cooperation in Externals with Integrity* (2010 Res. 3-03)

In Res. 3-01A the 2010 LCMS convention commended responses by an LCMS task force and by the International Lutheran Council (ILC) to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly’s recognition of certain same-gender sexual relationships and its decision to authorize the ordination into pastoral ministry of individuals living in such relationships. Furthermore, 2010 Res. 3-03 noted that the ELCA 2009 actions threatened various aspects of cooperative endeavors involving the LCMS and the ELCA. Res. 3-03 then asked that the CTCR prepare “more in-depth theological criteria for assessing cooperative endeavors, determining what would necessitate termination of such cooperative efforts.” This was to be done in consultation with the Praesidium, who would then “provide an assessment of the current state of cooperation in externals and a full report of criteria for ongoing assessment of the same by July 13, 2011.” The CTCR adopted the statement, *Principles for “Cooperation in Externals” with Theological Integrity* (2010 Res. 3-03) at its December 2010 meeting and submitted it to the Praesidium. In July of 2011, the Praesidium endorsed the theological criteria outlined in this CTCR statement and resolved that they be used in evaluating LCMS Registered Service Organization (RSO) activities. The CTCR statement is included in Appendix II of the *Convention Workbook*. Both the CTCR statement and the Praesidium’s assessment are available online at www.lcms.org/ctcr.

2. Responses to 2010 Omnibus Resolution A

Omnibus Resolution A of the 2010 convention included nine overtures for referral either in whole or in part to the CTCR (see 2010 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 173). At its December 2010 meeting, the commission approved various ways of responding to the issues raised in these overtures: “Pursue Official Theological Talks with WELS” (Ov. 3-13); “Encourage Participation in Interfaith Dialogues” (Ov. 3-15); “Declare Fellowship with the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church” (Ov. 3-17); “Request Study on Certain Theses from Walther’s Church and Ministry” (Ov. 3-25); “Restudy Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events” (Ov. 3-26); “Unambiguously Renounce Syncretism and Unionism” (Ov. 3-27); “Offer Biblical Rationale for Opposing Combat Roles for Women” (Ov. 3-29); “Prepare Study on Practice of Cremation” (Ov. 3-32); and “Denounce ‘Hate Crimes Legislation’ and Advocate Christian Freedom” (Ov. 6-08).

3. Theological Dialogue with Other Christian Church Bodies

In the Fall of 2010, President Matthew Harrison requested that the CTCR staff draft a theological concept paper on the subject of dialogue with other churches. The document was to provide an explanation of why and how the LCMS might engage in dialogue with other Christian church bodies—including non-Lutherans—in circumstances where there might be both areas of mutual agreement (e.g., the authority of Scripture, natural law issues) and also long-standing theological disagreement (e.g., the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper). The staff prepared a document that was reviewed by various Synod leaders and both seminary faculties. At its September 2011 meeting, the commission adopted *Theological Dialogue with Other Christian Church Bodies* as a resource for the Synod in current and future conversations with other church bodies. The document is included in Appendix II of the *Convention Workbook* and is available online at www.lcms.org/ctcr.

4. Theology and Practice of Prayer: A Lutheran View

A long-standing project of the CTCR culminated in the CTCR’s adoption of *Theology and Practice of Prayer: A Lutheran View* in November 2011. President Ralph Bohlmann had initially requested the study and President Alvin Barry renewed the request. The Confessions emphasize the importance of teaching about prayer, “what it should be like and that everyone may be completely certain that it is efficacious and is heard” (Ap XV 43). The report seeks to provide such teaching, addressing both the biblical understanding of prayer and also prayer practices that are (and are not) consistent with such an understanding. The document is included in Appendix II of the *Convention Workbook* and is available online at www.lcms.org/ctcr.

5. Christian Response to Immigration Issues (Proposed 2007 Res. 6-05)

In June 2006, because of widespread, often acrimonious debates in the U.S. about the issue of immigration, then-President Gerald Kieschnick and current President Matthew Harrison (who at the time was Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care) issued a joint letter expressing theological and practical concerns with regard to this contentious matter. On the basis of a proposed resolution (Res. 6-05 “To Petition CTCR to Provide Guidance re Immigration and Ministry to Immigrants”), which the 2007 convention did not have time to consider, President Kieschnick later requested the CTCR to prepare a report on this issue. In September 2011, a consultation was held involving immigrants, immigration officials, attorneys, historians, ethicists, and church leaders active in ministry to immigrant communities. At its November 2012 meeting, the commission adopted the report: *Immigrants Among Us: A Biblical Framework for Considering*

Immigration Issues. The report does not seek to provide policy recommendations to government or to resolve societal immigration debates. Rather, it considers immigration issues in light of important Lutheran theological concepts such as the love of neighbor and the doctrine of vocation. The report is available in Spanish as well as English and both are available online at www.lcms.org/ctcr. The documents are also included in Appendix II of the *Convention Workbook*.

6. Response to 2009 ELCA Sexuality Social Statement (2010 Res. 3-05)

Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust is the title of the social statement by the ELCA that provided the theological foundation for the ELCA’s 2009 Churchwide Assembly affirmation of same-gender sexual relationships for Christians, the liturgical blessing of such relationships, and the ordination into the ministry of candidates who are engaged in such same-sex relationships. At its 2010 convention, the LCMS approved Res. 3-05, which requested a theological analysis of the ELCA social statement by the CTCR, in consultation with seminaries, particularly with respect to the concept of “the bound conscience.” The CTCR’s response, titled *CTCR Response to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, was adopted at its April 2012 meeting and subsequently published in an online version on the CTCR Web site (www.lcms.org/ctcr). The document is included in Appendix II of the *Convention Workbook*.

7. Implications of the Natural Knowledge of God (2007 Res. 3-04A)

In response to contemporary confusion regarding the distinction between what human reason can know of God and the full revelation of God in Christ Jesus through the Holy Scriptures, the 2007 LCMS convention adopted Res. 3-04A “To Call for Study of the Natural Knowledge of God and Its Implications for Public Witness.” The resolution reaffirmed the truth that salvation is not given apart from faith in Jesus Christ and charged the CTCR to consult with both seminary faculties to “prepare a study of the natural knowledge of God, and especially its implications for our public witness.” At its January 2013 meeting, the CTCR adopted in principle the report: *The Natural Knowledge of God in Christian Confession and Christian Witness*, subject to final review and editing to be completed at its April 2013 meeting. When completed, the report will be published and mailed to rostered workers and congregations of the LCMS. It will also be available online at www.lcms.org/ctcr.

B. Studies in Progress

1. Bible Study on Prayer

Due to a number of specific requests and positive comments about its report, *Theology and Practice of Prayer* (see IA 4 above), the commission is preparing a Bible study based on the report.

2. Continued Study of 1989 Res. 3-05B

In December 2005, the commission approved a plan to engage in ongoing “consideration and discussion of 1989 Resolution 3-05B.” In ensuing years this study proceeded, with the CTCR hearing theological papers and engaging in discussion of issues related to the Synod’s position on church and ministry, specifically questions related to the matter of laymen exercising functions of the pastoral office in certain circumstances. In its January 2013 meeting, the commission resolved to continue this discussion and to bring a report (with possible recommendations) to the 2016 Synod convention toward the goal of seeking greater unanimity in the Synod on these issues.

3. Guidance for Responsible Communion Practice (2007 Res. 3-09)

The 2007 convention of the LCMS asked the CTCR to “continue to provide practical guidance for responsible pastoral care in the administration of the Sacrament of the Altar.” In September of

2012, President Matthew Harrison requested the CTCR to provide a selection of communion statements, including statements in use in LCMS congregations, that could be used to assist pastors and congregations in their own communion practice. The statements might include both good and bad examples, with explanations of what is necessary to retain a confessional Lutheran practice of admission to the Lord's Supper. The assignment is being addressed by a CTCR committee at this time.

4. Guidelines for Inter-Christian Relationships (1981 Res. 3-03A; 2010 Res. 8-30B)

The commission continues its work on an assignment of the Synod originating in 1981. The Synod requested that the CTCR prepare "practical guidelines . . . to assist officials, pastors, teachers, congregations, and individuals in the Synod in determining which practices and activities are appropriate to the various levels of inter-Lutheran and inter-Christian relationships in which the Synod is involved" (Res. 3-03A). In the intervening years, the CTCR completed a number of documents relating to the subject of relationships with other churches and Christians. These include *Inter-Christian Relationships: An Instrument for Study* (1992), *The Lutheran Understanding of Church Fellowship: Study Materials* (2000), *The Lutheran Understanding of Church Fellowship: Report on Synodical Discussions* (2001), *Policy for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Declaring Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with Another Church Body* (2009), and *Church Relations in the 21st Century* (2009). In addition, in the past triennium, the commission adopted *Principles for "Cooperation in External" with Theological Integrity and Theological Dialogue with Other Christian Church Bodies* as noted above (IA 1.; IA 3).

In a letter dated September 12, 2012, President Matthew Harrison requested that the study attend in particular to Walther's *Kirche und Amt*, because it represents the formally endorsed position of the LCMS on church and ministry (see 2001 Res. 7-17A).

2010 Res. 8-30B, "To Study Article VI of Synod's Constitution," added a particular focus that fits within the general purview of the previous assignment. It asked that "the President of the Synod in consultation with the Council of Presidents, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, and the Commission on Constitutional Matters make provisions for the preparation of materials (a study) that explain the biblical, confessional, and historical basis for Article VI of the Synod's Constitution."

The Commission is currently completing a historical study of the understanding of unionism and fellowship in confessional Lutheran theology and is planning to do an exegetical treatment of the same matters. A third facet of the study will be a document that approaches the same topic from a systematic and practical standpoint.

5. Hostility toward Christianity

A December 23, 2008, letter from an LCMS pastor requested the CTCR to develop "a solid Scriptural directive that will greatly assist our congregations" in understanding the sources and nature of rising hostility toward Christianity in our day. The commission does not normally accept requests for assignments from individual pastors and congregations, but after deliberation, the CTCR chose to accept this request and assigned it to one of its working committees. The CTCR hopes to have the assignment completed in the next triennium.

6. Infant/Child Communion

During the November 2012 meeting of the CTCR, President Matthew Harrison requested a CTCR statement on the propriety of communing infants and/or small children in light of the advocacy of such practices in some Lutheran circles. This assignment is being addressed by a CTCR committee at this time.

7. Ordained Diaconate

On May 29, 2012, President Matthew Harrison asked for a CTCR opinion on the theological propriety of the LCMS establishing an ordained diaconate. This assignment is being discussed by a CTCR committee at this time.

8. The Priesthood of All Believers (2007 Res. 1-03)

2007 Res. 1-03 directed the CTCR "to prepare a comprehensive study document which clearly presents the biblical teaching of the royal priesthood and Luther's teaching on vocation in light of the mission challenges of today." The committee given responsibility for this has engaged a drafter who is currently working on the assignment.

9. The Relationship between Science and Theology

In May 2009, a consortium of science and theology professors from the Concordia University System met together to discuss the relationship between science and theology under the theme, "Two Books, One Truth." One result of the conference was a request to the CTCR to "develop a study on the relationship between science and theology." A committee is currently at work on this assignment and expects to have a completed draft for the consideration of the plenary commission in the next triennium.

10. Relationship of Man and Woman (1995 Res. 3-10; 2010 Res. 3-06)

In commending the 2009 CTCR report, *The Creator's Tapestry* (prepared in partial response to 1995 Res. 3-10), the 2010 convention also asked the CTCR "to publish the results of the study to the church at large and to address additional questions and issues." A CTCR committee is continuing work on various aspects of the topic of "the relationship of man and woman" as requested by 1995 Res. 3-10 and 2010 Res. 3-06.

11. Statement on "Guidelines" for Service of Women

On September 12, 2012, President Matthew Harrison requested that the CTCR provide clarification regarding the matter of the service of women in congregations. He referenced "Guidelines for the Service of Women in Congregational Offices," a section of a document distributed in 2005 titled *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices with Guidelines for Congregations* (online at www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=312). This assignment is under discussion by a CTCR committee.

12. Studies on Biblical Interpretation (2010 Res. 3-07)

The LCMS has an unambiguous position affirming the inerrancy of Holy Scripture and rejecting unbiblical higher critical assumptions about the Bible. At the same time, the 2010 convention recognized that "[t]here are new hermeneutical challenges facing the Church in this postmodern era." Consequently, it asked the CTCR in consultation with the faculties of our seminaries to provide studies "addressing the question, 'How to Read the Bible' that also address 'current trends in interpretation.'" A CTCR committee is at work on this assignment.

13. Study Resources for 2017 Celebration of the Reformation (2007 Res. 3-02)

2007 Res. 3-02 resolved that the CTCR, in consultation with the International Lutheran Council, work to prepare materials to encourage the study of the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran Confessions in preparation for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Current plans include development of a multimedia Web site with information on the Reformation in various formats—text, video, and sound. Materials will focus on the importance of Luther and other reformers, with emphasis on the ongoing importance of Lutheran theology in today's world. Plans call for the Web site to be multilingual, with

historical and theological resources available in several languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, and German.

14. Women Teachers of Theology

In correspondence dated March 15, 2012, President Matthew Harrison requested a CTCR opinion on the matter of “women serving as members of theological faculties.” This assignment is being addressed by a CTCR committee.

C. Theological Conferences

1. International Model Theological Conference on Confessional Leadership in the 21st Century (2010 Res. 3-02A)

2010 Res. 3-02A, “To Support Confessional Lutheranism at Home and Abroad,” emphasized the continuing need for biblical and confessional Lutherans to support and encourage one another both in the U.S. and worldwide. Among its specific requests were “That the CTCR ... continue to develop plans for confessional leadership (cf. 2007 Res. 3-03) by sponsoring an international model theological conference on confessional leadership in the 21st century” and “[t]hat the LCMS through the Office of the President and the CTCR continue to explore ways together with the ILC to bring together Lutherans for the purpose of promoting confessional Lutheranism throughout the world.”

Thanks to the generous support of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation, an international gathering of some 120 Lutheran church leaders from around the world, representing over 20 million Lutherans, gathered October 31–November 2, 2012, near Atlanta, Georgia. This International Conference on Confessional Leadership focused on the theme: “The Lutheran Church in the 21st Century: How does it look? Why does it matter?”

Major speakers included Dr. Alister McGrath of King’s College, London; the Rev. Dr. Jobst Schoene, retired bishop of Germany’s Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK); LCMS President Matthew Harrison; and the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). Some twenty other church leaders from North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia also gave theological presentations regarding the cause of confessional Lutheranism in their regions.

2. Other Conferences

The Director of Church Relations, The Rev. Dr. Albert Collver, has been instrumental in facilitating international theological conferences in the past triennium, including one in Prague, Czech Republic and another in Ghana, and has kept the CTCR informed regarding these conferences.

D. Other Matters

1. Spanish Translation of CTCR Reports

Due to continuing requests for Lutheran theological literature in Spanish, both in the U.S. and in Central and South America, the commission continues to facilitate the translation of its reports into Spanish. Six reports are currently available in Spanish in electronic formats and preliminary translations of a number of other CTCR reports are being examined for theological accuracy and future publication. The CTCR’s report, *Immigrants Among Us*, is available in a Spanish print edition. Copies of CTCR translations are shared with Synod’s Spanish-speaking partner churches throughout the world.

2. Christian Stewardship of the Environment (2007 Res. 3-06)

2007 Res. 3-06 asked the CTCR to prepare a report on Christian stewardship of the environment “for use by Synod entities including our schools and churches as they develop resources for the church-at-large.” The CTCR report *Together with All Creatures: Caring for*

God’s Living Earth was adopted by the commission at its February 2010 meeting in both a full and a condensed version. (Both versions are available at www.lcms.org/ctcr.) Subsequent to the publication of *Together with All Creatures*, the CTCR has engaged in plans for a series of workshops on the care of creation for the benefit of congregations, CUS campuses, and others. One workshop was held in 2012. Additional presentations on this topic are being considered by a committee of the CTCR.

3. Chinese Translation of CTCR Report

Tentative arrangements have been made with LCMS missionary personnel in Hong Kong for the translation of the condensed version of *Together with All Creatures* into Chinese.

E. Requests for Theological Opinions

1. Response to Request for Opinion on “Unilateral Excommunication”

In September 2007, a request for a theological opinion was directed to the CTCR in behalf of the President and Praesidium of the Northwest District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The specific question posed to the commission was whether “a pastor, on his own and unilaterally, can excommunicate a person.”

This question embraces questions of ecclesiology, the office of the ministry, and church polity—questions that have been formational in the Lutheran experience in America generally and in the experience of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod specifically. The church is the entire “congregation of the saints” whom the Holy Spirit has called through the Gospel and to whom God gives the Keys principally and immediately. The ministry is the divinely established office of service to which is committed the public exercise of the Keys on the congregation’s behalf.¹ The manner and mode in which church discipline is exercised on the congregation’s behalf falls into the adaphoral realm of polity, which is not disassociated from the doctrines of church and ministry, but neither is it absolutely established by Scripture. The baptized priesthood and the office of the public ministry both exist according to God’s will. As such, they should be seen as complementary and not competitive realities. Nonetheless, historical circumstances have at times suggested different modes of the carrying out of church discipline.

In Lutheran Germany “the church” often referred to the territorial church and/or a portion thereof (the consistory), which represented the congregations of that church. As such, church discipline/excommunication was carried out by “the church” as represented by the bishop/pastor, but often with little direct input from the congregation. This is what is described in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: “bishops have the power of the order, namely, the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. They also have the power of jurisdiction, namely, the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty of public offenses or to absolve them if they are converted and ask for absolution.”² Commenting and expanding on this point, the CTCR of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has stated:

In specifying that bishops have the right of jurisdiction, the confessors hasten to add that this is not a power given to bishops alone. “It is certain that the common jurisdiction of excommunicating those who are guilty of manifest crimes belongs to all pastors. This the bishops have tyrannically reserved for themselves alone and have employed for gain” (Treatise, 74). Furthermore, when speaking of the power of bishops, the Confessions warn against “violent use of the ban” (AC XXVIII 2) and complain about the “unjust excommunication” of kings and “especially of the emperors of Germany.” (Treatise, 35)³

Because of the relationship between church and state in Reformation-era Germany, statements describing the excommunication by bishops/pastors must be understood in their historical context as descriptive rather than prescriptive. They do not establish

a dominically-mandated polity, but rather reflect the practice of the church in a particular place and time.

In the United States, where Lutheranism established itself independent of the state, the historical circumstances demanded a different mode of application/polity. Lacking pastors in many cases, the priesthood of all believers was forced at times to exercise church discipline on its own apart from a pastor. For example, Hopeful Church in Boone County, Kentucky (founded 1806), sought to articulate a biblical manner of applying church discipline in a context where a pastor might only be present briefly over the course of a year or not be present at all.

It shall be the duty of each one belonging to this congregation to lead an orderly, Christian, and virtuous life; to abstain from all gross sins; such as cursing, swearing, card-playing, drunkenness, and all such ungodly actions.

Should anyone be guilty of either of the above sins, which, may God in his mercy prevent, then the remaining brethren shall have the power, and it shall be their duty to deal with him according to the directions of our Savior; Mat. 18:15–17.⁴

In so doing, the members of Hopeful Church simply carried out their responsibilities as baptized priests.

When the Saxon immigrants who later helped form the Missouri Synod came to the United States (1838/39), they first established the office of bishop, which they believed was the biblically mandated polity. To the bishop they promised to “submit with Christian will- ingness” in respect to “the ordinances, decrees, and measures of His Reverence in respect to both ecclesiastical and community affairs and not to regard them as an irksome yoke, but as the means of promot- ing our temporal and eternal welfare.”⁵ Excommunication would be carried out solely by the bishop. After the bishop’s deposal for immorality, calls were made for a form of radical congregationalism, which largely disestablished the office of the public ministry. Only at the Altenburg Debate in 1841 did C. F. W. Walther restore a biblical and confessional balance to the community.⁶ When the LCMS was formed in 1847, it affirmed the biblical and confessional position of Walther.

For example, at the first convention of the LCMS (Chicago, 1847), one of the orders of business was the question of false doctrine on the part of Pastor L. F. E. Krause. Among the many charges against him—most of which centered in an arbitrary exercise of ministerial authority apart from the congregation and of which he was found guilty—was the following:

Concerning excommunication, he has revealed false doctrine; for he imposed the ban upon a man named M. Krücher because that man did not immediately believe a report of Pastor Grabau, which was called “Church Acts,” and has refused the Lord’s Supper to those who had not consented to the ninety dollars for him, which he absolutely demanded, without considering otherwise cheap suggestions, for the acquisition of a horse. In addition in every case he put the ban into effect without the pronouncement of judgment by the congregation;—he also excommuni- cated people who did not even belong to his congregation.⁷

From its inception the LCMS has seen excommunication as an act of the entire church, carried out in the context of the local congregation.

In the United States, “the church” specifically takes the form of the local congregation independent from the state. When C. F. W. Walther expanded on his earlier Altenburg Theses at the request of the Synod, he produced a series of theses that affirmed both the church as the priesthood of all believers and the divine establishment of the office of the public ministry. How church discipline is practiced in this setting was part of Walther’s burden in *Church and Ministry*. In Thesis IX Walther writes: “To the ministry there is due respect as well as unconditional obedience when the pastor uses God’s Word. But the minister must not tyrannize the church. . . . He has no right to inflict and carry out excommunication without his having first informed the whole congregation.” Walther expands on this thesis as follows:

It is certain that the office of the keys in a more narrow sense, name- ly, the power publicly to loose and bind, is also entrusted to the incum- bents of the ministry of the Word. Nevertheless, it does not lie within the power of the minister to excommunicate a sinner without his having first informed the congregation. Otherwise the congregation would have to obey the minister blindly, even in matters pertaining to salvation. Here he deals not merely with a clear doctrine of the divine Word but with a judgment of a person’s spiritual condition. And this judgment is of such a nature that it closes heaven to the person in question and forbids him brotherly fellowship with Christians, and vice versa. Therefore, al- though the public enforcement of excommunication belongs to and must remain with the incumbents of the ministry of the Word, according to the Lord’s command and sacred institution, nevertheless, it must be car- ried out according to the Lord’s express command and order only after the whole congregation (that is the minister and the hearer) has consid- ered and made the final judicial decision on the matter.

Walther concludes, “Here Christ gives the supreme jurisdiction to the church or congregations.” Thus it is the responsibility of the holder of the office of the public ministry to ensure that church discipline is carried out on behalf of the congregation, but any excommunication “is valid and legitimate if only it is accomplished with the knowledge and consent of the church members.”⁸

On the basis of the biblical and confessional witness, the CTCR has affirmed Walther’s articulation of the question of whether a pastor may “unilaterally” excommunicate. While it recognizes that in some cases the congregation may delegate the responsibility of excom- munication to a Board of Elders and/or pastor to act in its behalf, it cautions against such a practice.⁹ Excommunication, therefore, is not a power conferred upon the individual pastor to exercise apart from “the church.” Rather, the called servant of the Word will announce the judgment of the church on its behalf only after the matter has been brought to and adjudicated by the church (Matthew 18:15–18).

The opinion, therefore, of the CTCR remains this: “We ought not interpret these confessional statements regarding the power of bishops and pastors as teaching that those who have been given authority over the churches thereby have the right to excommunicate unilaterally.”¹⁰

Adopted by the CTCR
April 23, 2010

2. Response to Question Regarding Augsburg Confession Article XIV

In a letter dated August 26, 2010, the CTCR was asked to assist the South Wisconsin District president in answering two questions (quoted verbatim with original emphasis):

1. In light of our Lutheran understanding of Church and Ministry would you please address the appropriateness of a lay man *regularly* carrying out the functions of the pastoral office, viz. the public pro- clamiation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments?
2. In light of Holy Scripture and the Confessions would you please ad- dress the appropriateness of a *lay man or a lay woman* proclaiming the Word and/or administering the Sacraments in a house church, small group, or cell group setting?

Response

With respect to the first question, the commission’s answer is that “regular” public preaching and public administration of the Sacraments by a lay man is not appropriate.¹¹ Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession (which is grounded in the teaching of Holy Scripture) forbids such a practice, because it would deny the neces- sity of a rightly ordered public ministry. Based on this understanding, a 1981 CTCR report addressed the question: “Are certain functions in the church limited to the office of the public ministry?” In its answer the commission stated the following:

Functions that are essentially exercises of the ministry of Word and Sacrament should be performed by those who hold the office of the pub- lic ministry. Thus, preaching in the worship service, leading in public prayer, celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar, Baptisms, weddings

and funeral services should be carried out by those who hold the office of public ministry. However, in exceptional circumstances or in emergencies (as when a pastor is incapacitated), members of the auxiliary offices or other qualified individuals may temporarily be called upon to perform, under proper supervision, functions that are otherwise performed by the pastor and that are not for other reasons precluded (e.g., women teachers or deaconesses preaching in the public service).

In this matter there needs to be a concern for order in the church. The indiscriminate assignment of functions of the office of the public ministry breeds confusion and disorder in the church. A disregard of uniformity of practice is contrary to the very reason for the existence of the Synod.¹²

Two matters require clarification regarding the second question. First, the CTCR understands the phrase “proclaiming the Word” to refer to public preaching and teaching within this “house church” setting. Second, the CTCR understands that “administering the Sacraments” is not speaking of any exceptional circumstance, such as the Baptism of someone who is dying. Rather, it is understood to refer to the regular, public administration of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in and on behalf of this “house church.” According to these understandings, the Commission’s answer to the second question is that this refers to public preaching and public administration of the Sacraments by a lay person and is not theologically appropriate. Article XIV would forbid such a practice because it is a denial of the public ministry. Moreover, a lay woman exercising these responsibilities would also violate the scriptural teaching that women are not publicly to teach and preach on behalf of the church and are ineligible to be candidates for the public ministry (see 1 Cor. 14:33–34 and 1 Tim. 2:12).

Background

Only when the Word of Christ’s forgiving Gospel is being proclaimed and His Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord’s Supper) are being administered can people come to faith and become part of His Body, the church. Therefore Christ sends His people, the church, to preach His Gospel and to administer His Sacraments (Matt. 28:18–20). It is clear that the church itself possesses the Word and Sacraments of forgiveness (the Keys of Christ, see Matt. 18:18, note the plural). By virtue of Baptism, each Christian is a member of the priesthood of believers (1 Pet. 2:9). It is therefore appropriate for individual Christians in their daily vocations to witness to Christ, confessing Him before men (Matt 10:32–33) and, in cases of necessity, to baptize and to absolve.

The scriptural foundation for a public “office of ministry,”¹³ distinct from the priesthood of believers, is also clear. Paul asks rhetorically in 1 Corinthians 12:29, “Are all apostles . . . prophets . . . teachers?” to make the point that not all are called into public ministry in the church. The public office of the ministry is not a matter of pragmatism, a mere human arrangement to “get things done” which is adjusted or established however and wherever a group of Christians wills it. Rather, the office of the ministry is instituted by God. Christ Himself ordained the preaching and sacramental ministry by calling the twelve apostles and giving specific responsibilities to them, apart from the rest of His followers (Mark 3:14–15; Luke 6:13–16; see also John 4:2). While the original apostles were distinctive from all others in the public office of ministry by virtue of being eyewitnesses of our Lord, the call into public ministry did not end with them. As Peter indicates by calling himself a “fellow elder” (1 Pet. 5:1), both apostles and later pastors or preachers (often called “elders” in the NT) were equally holders of the office of the public ministry.

The New Testament indicates that as the church moved into the future, it continued this divine institution of calling men to serve the church by preaching the Word and publicly administering the

Sacraments (see Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Cor. 4:1; 2 Cor. 5:19–20; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:2).

This is the understanding of the “office of preaching” that is affirmed explicitly in the Confessions. Augsburg Confession (AC) Article V (par. 1) says that “God has instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments” (Kolb-Wengert [KW] 40). The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (AAC) Article XIII (par. 11), referring to the ordained ministry simply states that “the ministry of the Word has the command of God and has magnificent promises like Romans 1[:16]” (KW 220). AC XIV then asserts that “[C]oncerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call” (KW 46). The office of the ministry, then, is understood as a divinely mandated office with the responsibility to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments publicly for the church. It is the *public* responsibility which is essential to this understanding so that the office of the ministry is viewed in opposition to the sharing of the Gospel that takes place in the “private” lives of individuals—at home, at work, with friends, etc. The latter is the responsibility of the priesthood of *all* believers. The public teaching and preaching done in and on behalf of the church, however, is the responsibility only of those who have been rightly and publicly called to that work.

It is worthwhile to note that the Lutheran Confessions were written without any desire to introduce anything “new” into Christian teaching (see for e.g., AC XX, par. 12–13; KW 54). Rather, the Reformers wished to show that the same biblical teachings they were emphasizing were also consistently present in church history and in previous generations of teachers. That includes its teaching on the necessity of the ministry. The church has always set aside (“called and ordained”) men to carry out the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Melancthon defends the AC’s view of the ministry by indicating that the Reformers fully recognized the legitimacy of the ordained ministry but could not recognize the Roman Catholic claim that only Roman Catholic bishops could authorize that ministry (AAC XIV).

This same understanding carried through in the heritage of the LCMS. C. F. W. Walther, in *Church and Ministry*, carefully distinguishes between the church as priesthood of all believers and the divinely instituted ministry of the Word and Sacraments, just as Luther and Melancthon did before him. Thesis II on the Ministry says: “The ministry of the Word or the pastoral office is not a human institution but an office that God Himself has established” (St. Louis, 1987, p. 21 and pp. 177ff.). CTCR reports have consistently affirmed the same understanding.¹⁴ The Synod in 2001 (Res 7-17A) emphatically reaffirmed this understanding. And as recently as 2003, the CTCR report *Theology and Practice of “the Divine Call”* (*Divine Call*) observed “that the church could no more be deprived of pastors than it could be deprived of preaching, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, or any other gift that the Lord intended for the church (pastors and means of grace go together).”¹⁵

It is very clear, then, that Lutheran Christians believe that there is both a priesthood of all believers, which includes all the baptized, and also a particular, dedicated office of the ministry, which includes only those men who are rightly called into that office. Both priesthood and public ministry exist by divine mandate and are not mere human arrangements. They are not in competition with one another and neither may be used to negate the other. Lutheran congregations therefore, by virtue of their subscription to the Scriptures and Confessions, do not view the pastoral ministry as an option. Rather, they take care that a pastor who is rightly called preaches, teaches, and administers the Sacraments.

What is perhaps less clear, however, is how a pastor is “rightly called.” In *Divine Call* the CTCR addresses the matter of how to understand the stipulation of AC Article XIV that only those who

are “rightly called” may publicly preach and teach and administer the Sacraments in the church. The Commission points out that the understanding of being “rightly called” is dependent upon other confessional statements, such as those by Melancthon in the Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope (Tr).

After addressing the unitary character of the office and the equality in authority of pastors with bishops (Tr 60–65), Melancthon turns to the issue of obtaining pastors for the churches (Tr 66–78). Repeatedly he uses several terms in order to describe the process: the right of calling (*jus vocandi*), the right of choosing (*jus eligendi*), and the right of ordaining (*jus ordinandi*). At times he refers to all three together, “call, elect, and ordain” (Tr 67), and at other times he simply uses two expressions, “elect and ordain” (Tr 67, 70, 72). The terminology here indicates that the entire church is involved in obtaining pastors, people through election and pastors through ordination. Moreover, Melancthon describes those who are called, elected, and ordained as competent (*tuchtige Personen*, German text of Tr 72)—which presumes some form of determination of their fitness.¹⁶

It is particularly important to emphasize that “the entire church”¹⁷ is involved in a right call. Our Synod has put this into practice by establishing an orderly practice of training, certifying, ordaining, and calling men into the pastoral office in a way that is recognized by the entire Synod. For the most part, those who serve in the public ministry in the LCMS are prepared and certified by the Synod’s seminaries, called (placed), and ordained by means of the cooperative work of the Council of Presidents and congregations (or other entities), and receive any later calls again by means of cooperation between district presidents and congregations/entities. However, because of a combination of factors, including regional pastoral shortages, growing ethnic and linguistic diversity in the U.S., and growing numbers of congregations that cannot support a pastor, other means of providing for public preaching and teaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments have developed in the LCMS, especially in recent years (e.g., SMP, EIIT, district diaconal programs). Such programs have sought to meet the vital need for the public administration of the Word and the Sacraments while recognizing that our traditional seminary training is not able to meet that need completely. There have been vigorous debates about pastoral preparation and about the validity, necessity, and propriety of certain practices and programs seeking to provide pastoral care in exceptional circumstances. Still, the very fact that Synod deals with these issues in a Synod-wide process of debate and decision-making illustrates that the LCMS is committed to maintain an orderly process of preparing ministers that all can affirm.¹⁸

As noted above in this response (see above), the circumstances described in the request from the district president do not indicate an emergency or exceptional circumstance. A congregation that is served by a rostered pastor has chosen to delegate duties which only the pastor (as the one who has been placed into the office of the public ministry) is to fulfill, namely, preaching and teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments on behalf of the congregation to groups within the congregation. This is the very essence of the work of public ministry (AC VII, XIV) and not the work of the priesthood of believers. By appointing individuals to carry out these responsibilities, the congregation has, in effect, appointed them to the office of the public ministry apart from the confessional fellowship of the Synod. In 1981, the CTCR affirmed the necessity that churches which are bound together in a common confession not act unilaterally in admitting individuals to the pastoral office.

We stress the fact that ordination is the declaration of the whole confessional fellowship. In the end, a single congregation or an agency representing larger segments of the church does issue the call. Nevertheless, in a synod of congregations bound by a common confession and loyalty, good order demands that admission into the

pastoral office or into its closely allied auxiliary offices is not the act of a single congregation or agency.¹⁹

Adopted by the CTCR
December 18, 2010

3. Response to Request for an Opinion Regarding an LCMS Institution Indicating Concurrence with a Statement of Faith of a Non-LCMS Organization

The CTCR has received a request for advice regarding an LCMS institution signing a statement of faith in its relation to a non-Synod entity. Specifically, Concordia University Ann Arbor, in developing certificate and A.A. programs in biblical studies, would like to seek accreditation from the Association for Biblical Higher Education. The ABHE requires “subscription” to its “Tenets of Faith.” It is the opinion of the CTCR that indicating concurrence with such a statement is acceptable as long as the statement does not conflict with the Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions.

Adopted by the CTCR
February 19, 2011

4. Response to Request from Synod President for an Opinion on Communion Participation (9/8/11)

In a letter of September 8, 2011, President Matthew Harrison posed the following question to the LCMS CTCR: “I request that the CTCR provide a clear, brief and forthright answer (‘No’ would suffice) on whether or not it is proper for an LCMS clergyman to be communing at an ELCA altar.”

In response to this question the CTCR refers President Harrison to its opinion of February 12, 2010, where it stated the following:

The CTCR has addressed the matter of a Lutheran communing at the altar of a church with which his or her church body is not in doctrinal agreement. On page 25 of its 1983 report *Theology and Practice of the Lord’s Supper* the CTCR asks: “Is it proper for a Lutheran to attend the Lord’s Supper at the altars of churches not in doctrinal agreement with the church body of which he/she is a member?” It responds:

In accordance with the confessional nature of participation in the Lord’s Supper (cf. pp. 19–23), and in agreement with Lutheranism’s historic position, it is inappropriate to attend the Lord’s Supper at non-Lutheran altars. Since participation in Holy Communion, Scripturally and confessionally understood, entails agreement in the Gospel and all its articles, it would not be appropriate to attend the Lord’s Supper in a church with which such agreement is not shared.

Adopted by the CTCR
September 16, 2011

5. Response to Request from Rocky Mountain District President (9/8/11)

On September 8, 2011, President Randall Golter posed the following question to the CTCR: “In light of our Lutheran understanding of the doctrine and practice of church fellowship and close communion, is it appropriate for a rostered LCMS pastor (active, emeritus, candidate, or noncandidate) to commune regularly at the altar of a congregation of a heterodox (ELCA) church body?”

In response to this question the CTCR refers President Golter to its opinion of February 12, 2010, where it stated the following:

The CTCR has addressed the matter of a Lutheran communing at the altar of a church with which his or her church body is not in doctrinal agreement. On page 25 of its 1983 report *Theology and Practice of the Lord’s Supper* the CTCR asks: “Is it proper for a Lutheran to attend the Lord’s Supper at the altars of churches not in doctrinal agreement with the church body of which he/she is a member?” It responds:

In accordance with the confessional nature of participation in the Lord’s Supper (cf. pp. 19–23), and in agreement with Lutheranism’s historic position, it is inappropriate to attend the Lord’s Supper at non-Lutheran altars. Since participation in Holy Communion, Scripturally and confessionally understood, entails agreement in the Gospel and all

its articles, it would not be appropriate to attend the Lord's Supper in a church with which such agreement is not shared.

President Golter also posed a second question: "In light of our Lutheran understanding of the doctrine and practice of church fellowship and close communion, is a rostered LCMS pastor that is communing regularly at the altar of a congregation of a heterodox (ELCA) church body engaging in acts of unionism and/or syncretism?"

In response to this question the CTCR notes first of all the statement of its February 12, 2010 opinion (p. 3) that, "our Synod is clearly on record that we do not consider the ELCA to be an orthodox Lutheran church body, and is therefore heterodox (2001 Res. 3-21 A)." Further, the CTCR refers to the official definition of "unionism" given in *A Brief Statement* (1932):

28. *On Church-Fellowship*.—Since God ordained that His Word only, without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church, 1 Pet. 4:11; John 8:31, 32; 1 Tim. 6:3, 4, all Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church-bodies, Matt. 7:15, to have church-fellowship only with orthodox church-bodies, and, in case they have strayed into heterodox church bodies, to leave them, Rom. 16:17. We repudiate unionism, that is, church-fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command, as causing divisions in the Church, Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9, 10, and involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely, 2 Ti. 2:17–21.

Because "communions regularly at the altar of a heterodox (ELCA) church body" is "church fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine," such action is unionism.

Finally, the CTCR also notes the statement from its February 12, 2010, opinion that points out that "the commission is currently continuing to work on a longstanding assignment to give guidance concerning inter-Christian relationships" (p. 4), an assignment that includes a careful examination of the history and usage of such terms as "unionism" and "syncretism" in the history of the LCMS and how they might be applied in the context of today's church. This task will address a broad set of questions, but the specific question raised by President Golter is already answered in the affirmative by the *Brief Statement* as quoted above.

Adopted by the CTCR
September 16, 2011

F. Expressions of Dissent

1. CTCR Response to Matthew Becker Dissent of 6/29/11

In June of 2011, Rev. Dr. Matthew Becker brought to the attention of the CTCR (in accordance with Bylaw 1.8) his formal dissent to LCMS positions on the doctrine of creation and the ordination of women as pastors. A response to Dr. Becker's dissent was adopted by the commission at its November 2011 meeting. After follow-up correspondence from Dr. Becker, the Executive Committee reaffirmed the commission's response. The CTCR response to Dr. Becker is included in Appendix II of the *Convention Workbook* and is also available online at www.lcms.org/ctcr.

2. ACELC Expressions of Dissent

The Association of Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Churches (ACELC) is a group of LCMS congregations that have expressed concerns with certain practices and teachings in the LCMS. The ACELC has submitted to the CTCR three expressions of dissent from LCMS positions relating to the service of women in the church, unionism and syncretism, and lay ministry. The Executive Director of the CTCR has been in contact with the chairman of the ACELC Board of Directors regarding requests by the Commission for clarification of the ACELC's concerns, and the CTCR has devoted considerable time (in plenary and in each of its three committees) studying and

discussing these expressions of dissent. At its January 2013 meeting, the CTCR approved replies to the ACELC in which the Commission (1) raised specific questions and concerns about the content and clarity of the ACELC's expressions of dissent and its characterization of certain aspects of the Synod's position on each of these issues; (2) attempted to distinguish concerns related to Synod's doctrinal positions from concerns related to ecclesiastical supervision, noting that the CTCR has been given no authority or responsibility by the Synod for matters of ecclesiastical supervision; and (3) urged the ACELC to receive the CTCR replies as acknowledgments of its concerns, but not as formal responses to its expressions of dissent and to hold its dissents in abeyance in view of the ongoing work of the CTCR and the President's office (e.g., the Koinonia Project) on issues directly related to the ACELC's concerns.

II. Church Relations

A. Inter-Lutheran Relationships

1. International Lutheran Council

The International Lutheran Council (ILC) was established in 1993. It is a worldwide association of 35 independent Lutheran church bodies (31 full members, 4 associate members) that confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions contained in The Book of Concord as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God. The ILC exists for the purpose of encouraging, strengthening, and promoting confessional Lutheran theology and practice centering in Jesus Christ. To this end, the ILC provides opportunities for the study of contemporary theological issues; gives mutual support and encouragement for the heads of member churches in planning for mission outreach; strengthens theological education through conferences of theologians and seminary teachers; facilitates communication between confessional Lutheran churches of the world through the publication of *ILC News*; and, facilitates the preparation and publication of confessional Lutheran literature.

Serving as officers of the ILC at the present time are: Rev. Hans-Jörg Voigt, Bishop of the Independent Evangelical—Lutheran Church in Germany (SELK), chairman; Rev. Robert Bugbee, President of the Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC), vice chairman; and Rev. Gijbertus van Hattem (President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium), secretary. Also serving on its executive committee are Rev. Christian Ekong, President of The Lutheran Church of Nigeria; Rev. James Cerdeñola, President of The Lutheran Church in the Philippines; Rev. Jon Ehlers, President of the Lutheran Church of England; and Rev. Egon Kopereck, President of the Lutheran Church of Brazil. Current editor of *ILC News* is Rev. Dr. Reginald Quirk (Evangelical Lutheran Church of England). Dr. Albert Collver was appointed to serve as the ILC executive secretary at the 24th Conference of the ILC, held in September 2012 in Niagara Falls, Canada. The theme of the conference was *What Does This Mean? How Do the Scriptures Speak to Crises Facing Confessional Lutherans Today?*

The ILC regularly sponsors a conference of representatives from member churches who lead seminaries or other schools for training pastors. The most recent World Seminaries Conference was held June 3–6, 2010 in Fort Wayne, Indiana on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary. The theme of this conference was "Confessional Lutheran Identity in a World of Changing Religious Demographics." Dr. Philip Jenkins was the keynote speaker.

Additional information about the members and work of the International Lutheran Council is available at www.ilc-online.org.

2. Lutheran World Federation

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is not a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The LCMS is regularly invited to bring greetings to the LWF at its assemblies. Dr. Albert Collver joined Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt (SELK) and Ralph Mayan (LCC) representing the ILC in a meeting with LWF leadership March 27–29, 2012. Another meeting between leaders of the ILC and the LWF is planned for the fall of 2013.

3. Lutheran Churches in North America

a. American Association of Lutheran Churches

The 2007 conventions of both The Association of American Lutheran Churches (AALC) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) declared the two church bodies to be in altar and pulpit fellowship on the basis of agreement in doctrine and practice. The protocol document signed by the leaders of the church bodies called for a Commission on AALC-LCMS Fellowship “for the purpose of monitoring relationships between our two church bodies.” The commission met regularly over the next several years and developed several operating agreements pertaining to movement of pastors and congregations between church bodies and other matters.

Candidates for the holy ministry from the AALC now receive training at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The church’s national office is also housed on the campus of the seminary in Fort Wayne. During the past triennium, representatives of the AALC and LCMS have met and communicated as necessary in order to continue to facilitate day-to-day relationships and cooperation between the two church bodies relating to issues such as ecclesiastical supervision and temporary pastoral service.

b. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

In past years, the Executive Director of the CTCR has served as one of the representatives from the LCMS meeting together regularly with representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) on the Committee on Lutheran Cooperation (CLC). The purpose of CLC meetings was to share and discuss matters of mutual interest and concern, to monitor areas where common work was taking place, and to engage in some level of theological dialogue.

Much of the focus at these meetings in recent years has been on the increasing theological divergence between the LCMS and the ELCA. The LCMS continues to seek to uphold biblical and confessional doctrine and moral norms, while the ELCA has publicly affirmed doctrinal positions and moral perspectives that the LCMS finds to be contrary to Scripture and the Confessions. During the past triennium, meetings between the LCMS and ELCA have proven to be increasingly unfruitful in terms of identifying common ground for meaningful theological dialogue or carrying out cooperative endeavors with theological integrity. 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly decisions opening the ministry to non-celibate homosexual pastors and allowing congregations to recognize and support same-gender sexual relationships led the LCMS in 2010 to adopt resolutions that reaffirmed the biblical tradition that such same-sex relationships are contrary to God’s kind and gracious will for humanity and that called the Synod to re-examine its cooperative endeavors with the ELCA (see IA 1 above with regard to 2010 Res. 3-01A and 2010 Res. 3-03).

The growing separation between the churches has led to questions among LCMS leadership about the purpose and value of the CLC. At the present time, no definite plan has been developed for the continuation of meetings between LCMS and ELCA leaders.

c. North American Lutheran Church

Representatives of the LCMS and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) have met three times in this triennium. Preliminary

meetings occurred December 15–16, 2011, and July 19–20, 2012. Formal conversations began with a discussion of Gospel and Scripture, December 13–14, 2012. LCMS representatives include President Matthew Harrison, Dr. Albert Collver, Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, Rev. John Pless, and Rev. Larry Vogel, while the NALC was represented by Bp. John Bradosky, Em. Bp. Paull Spring, Dr. James Nestingen, Rev. Mark Chavez, and Dr. David Wendel. Dr. Robert Bugbee (LCC) also participates in the meetings because of NALC presence in Canada. The discussions have been extremely cordial and mutually beneficial. Subsequent discussions planned for 2012–2014 will address the relationship of the Gospel to God’s Law, church fellowship, the church’s mission and ministry, and the church’s witness in the public square.

d. Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Fifteen leaders from the LCMS, WELS, and ELS met for informal dialogue on December 4–7, 2012. The group consisted of seven men from the WELS, seven from the LCMS, and one from the ELS. While none of the participants anticipate impending formal doctrinal discussions toward fellowship, the meetings were viewed as helpful in dispelling certain caricatures, learning of challenges faced by each synod, and taking a look at what currently unites/divides the church bodies of the former Synodical Conference in their respective efforts to pursue confessional Lutheranism. A similar meeting is planned for 2013.

4. International Sister/Partner Lutheran Churches

The LCMS has sister or partner church arrangements involving altar-pulpit fellowship with many churches throughout the world (see ILC, section II A 1 above). The Director of Church Relations, Dr. Albert Collver, visited no less than thirty-five churches in the 2010–2013 triennium. Relationships with only two of these churches are specifically reported below due to particularly noteworthy circumstances.

a. Japan Lutheran Church

The Missouri Synod’s partner church in Japan, the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC), grew out of LCMS mission work in Japan beginning in 1948. It was organized as an autonomous church in 1968 and became an LCMS partner church in 1971. The JLC received a proposal at its 14th General Convention in May 2008 to ordain women to the pastoral office. LCMS leaders asked for meeting between the two churches to discuss this issue, “since a decision to ordain women would have serious implications for a relationship which our two churches have enjoyed for so many years.” In response, the JLC Convention resolved to discuss the issue with the LCMS before making a decision. Since that time, representatives of the Synod and the JLC have met on four occasions, in February and September 2009 and in February and August of 2010. To date, the JLC has not changed its practice of ordaining only qualified men to the pastoral office.

On March 11, 2011, northern Japan was devastated by a massive earthquake and tsunami. LCMS churches and individuals responded through LCMS World Relief. Significant aid from the LCMS was provided to victims of the devastation working in cooperation with the JLC. Since the earthquake, much of the focus on relations between the LCMS and JLC has been on needs in the area of human care. The JLC has requested further conversations with the LCMS.

b. Lutheran Church—Canada

The LCMS and the Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) enjoy a vibrant, multi-faceted relationship. Representatives of the LCMS and LCC meet a minimum of one time each year to discuss areas of mutual interest and cooperation as partner churches and neighbors in North

America. The LCC hosted the most recent triennial meeting of the International Lutheran Council (see II A 1 above). As noted above, President Bugbee of the LCC participates in the ongoing theological discussions between the LCMS and the NALC (see II A 3 c). A representative of the LCC is also a full participant in the theological discussions between the LCMS and Anglican Church in North America (see II B 1 below).

5. Relationships with Other International Lutheran Churches and Confessing Movements

a. Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus (EECMY) is the largest Lutheran church body in Africa with over 6 million members. Although the LCMS and the EECMY are not in altar and pulpit fellowship, in recent years a mutually beneficial relationship has developed between our two church bodies. Ethiopian students have studied at LCMS seminaries and several EECMY pastors have become members of the Synod through colloquy and serve in various capacities and locations—including Dr. Tilahun Mekonnen Menedo, formerly a pastor of the EECMY and now a rostered LCMS pastor serving as President of Concordia College in Selma, Alabama. Dr. Berhanu Ofgaa of Ethiopia has served as an LCMS pastor and was elected by the EECMY in 2010 to be its general secretary. In this position he is responsible for the administration of the church-at-large, serving next to the president of the EECMY, Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa.

The 2009 sexuality decisions of the ELCA have been deeply troubling to the EECMY and to other African Christians. In January 2010, representatives of the LCMS and EECMY signed a document titled “Partnership Agreement Between the Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus and the Department of World Missions Representing The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” which outlines the basis for cooperation and mutual support in certain areas as well as a common commitment to work toward doctrinal agreement as the basis for altar and pulpit fellowship. Dr. Albert Collver and Dr. Joel Lehenbauer visited Ethiopia in the fall of 2012 where they were cordially received and found a great willingness on the part of the EECMY to establish even closer ties with the LCMS. President Idosa represented the EECMY at the International Conference on Confessional Leadership (I C 1 above) hosted by the CTCR and the President’s Office October 31–November 2, 2012, where he delivered a paper on the EECMY’s work.

b. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia

2010 Res. 3-04A, “To Amend Bylaw 3.9.6.2.2 re Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with Small, Formative, or Emerging Confessional Churches,” commended the CTCR report “Church Relations in the 21st Century,” which recognized that in the case of “small, formative, or emerging confessional Lutheran churches” a stream-lined approach to altar and pulpit fellowship would be beneficial. Res. 3-04A then resolved “[t]hat the President, following consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the CTCR, be enabled to declare recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with such formative confessional Lutheran church bodies, subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention” and amended the Bylaws accordingly.

At its April 2012 meeting, the Commission considered a request for church fellowship from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia (ELCL). The ELCL’s roots are in missionary efforts by the LCMS. During the Liberian civil war, the church suffered greatly, divisions occurred, and many Liberian Lutherans fled the fighting. While in exile, however, the Lutheran remnant renewed its mission efforts, baptizing, teaching, and studying the Word and Lutheran confessional literature. Converts were added and divisions were healed to such a point that after the Civil War, the ELCL was established as an

independent church body with its own leadership. After contacts and visits from the ELCL’s bishop, Amos Bolay, Dr. Albert Collver and Dr. Joel Lehenbauer traveled to Liberia in December 2011/January 2012 to visit churches, meet with ELCL leadership, and examine the ELCL constitution, theological statements, and working documents. After consideration of their report to the Commission indicating that there were no obstacles to altar and pulpit fellowship between the LCMS and ELCL, the Commission affirmed the unity of doctrine which exists between the churches and recommended a declaration of church fellowship to President Harrison in compliance with 2010 Res. 3-04A. President Harrison’s consultation with the Praesidium and declaration of fellowship followed. The CTCR is submitting an overture to this (2013) convention asking the Synod to endorse this declaration of church fellowship with the ELCL in accordance with Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (c).

c. Indonesian Lutheran Churches

The LCMS has had a number of contacts with the Indonesian Lutheran Christian Church (GKLI), including letters and visits by LCMS personnel. In this past triennium, the GKLI asked the LCMS to consider altar and pulpit fellowship. Bishop Aladin Sitio of the GKLI was a participant in the International Conference on Confessional Leadership (see section I C 1 above). Discussions with the GKLI are continuing.

In addition to the GKLI, the LCMS has had a number of cordial contacts with the Batak Christian Protestant Church (HKBP) of Indonesia. Dr. Collver and other LCMS leaders have visited with representatives of HKBP and Bishop Nelson Siregar of HKBP was a participant in the International Conference on Confessional Leadership (see section I C 1 above).

d. Lutheran Church in Norway

The Lutheran Church in Norway, a small, emerging confessional church, has requested altar-pulpit fellowship with the LCMS. A CTCR committee is presently examining this request.

e. Mission Province of Sweden and Finland

The Mission Province of Sweden and Finland is a free and non-geographical province of pastors and congregations in the Lutheran Church in Sweden. The Mission Province seeks to remain faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, opposing the Church of Sweden’s decisions to ordain women to the pastoral office, to bless and to perform gender neutral “marriages,” and to ordain non-celibate homosexual persons. In recent years, the Church of Sweden has sought to mute the voices of those who dissent from its unbiblical theology and practices. As a consequence, seminarians who share the Mission Province’s beliefs have been denied ordination, some of its pastors have been defrocked, and the Province has been denied the right to have a bishop officially recognized by the Church of Sweden. Representatives of the LCMS and Mission Province have met on a number of occasions in recent years both in the U.S. and in Sweden. Bishop Roland Gustafsson represented the Mission Province at the International Conference on Confessional Leadership (see section I C 1 above), where he delivered a paper on the efforts of confessional Lutherans in Sweden and Finland.

f. Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church

In January 2010, representatives of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) met for discussions toward the goal of formal altar and pulpit fellowship. In 2010, Drs. Albert Collver, Timothy Quill, and Joel Lehenbauer conducted an on-site visit to the SELC, hosted by SELC Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin and other SELC leaders. Bishop Lytkin expressed appreciation for his church body’s relationship with

the Missouri Synod, which began in the 1990s. The SELC was officially licensed by the Russian government in 2002 and that same year Bishop Lytkin was consecrated. In 2007, the church formally took the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church as its name. The SELC has about 2,000 parishioners, 22 parishes and mission stations, and 17 clergy, but it covers a geographical area that extends 5,000 miles from east to west. The on-site visit was very productive and, while there are differences in emphases between the LCMS and SELC, no obstacles to altar-pulpit fellowship were identified.

At its December 2010 meeting, the CTCR formally recommended church fellowship with the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) to the Synod President in keeping with the newly constituted Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (c) (see II 5 b above). President Harrison declared fellowship that same month after consultation with the Praesidium. Necessary protocol documents guiding interactions between the LCMS and SELC were reviewed at the February 2011 CTCR meeting. The CTCR is submitting an overture to this (2013) convention asking the Synod to endorse this declaration of church fellowship with the SELC in accordance with Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2 (c).

g. Tanzanian Lutheran Churches

The LCMS has cooperated in several projects with the East of Lake Victoria Diocese (ELVD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). The ELVD is one of 20 dioceses of the ELCT, a Lutheran church body of more than three million members, and the diocese is led by Bishop Andrew Gulle. Bishop Gulle represented the ELCT at the International Conference on Confessional Leadership (see section I C 1 above) and Dr. Collver, Director of Church Relations, as well as Dr. Lehenbauer, have travelled to Tanzania and met with ELCT leaders in the past triennium.

Dr. Collver has also had conversations with an independent Lutheran church in Tanzania, The Lutheran Church in East Africa (LCEA). This group, a break-away from the Northern Diocese of the ELCT, consists of 10,000 members, 20 pastors and a seminary with 13 students. Thus far, it has grown without the involvement of any foreign missionaries.

B. Meetings and Discussions with Other Churches

1. Anglican Church in North America

A four-part series of meetings with the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) commenced on November 10–11, 2010, at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Additional meetings were held at Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, and at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. The fourth meeting occurred on March 29–30, 2012 at Nashotah House (Nashotah, WI). Topics for the meetings were the two churches' respective history and background (I), understanding of authority (II), contemporary challenges and opportunities (III), and worship and catechesis (IV). The meetings have been open and cordial, with the churches' representatives learning from one another and discovering many important areas of common ground, but also differences in doctrine and practice that require further discussion.

LCMS representatives have included President Matthew Harrison, Dr. Collver, Director of Church Relations, Dr. Lehenbauer and Rev. Vogel of the CTCR, Dr. Lawrence Rast, President of CTSFW, and Dr. Frederick Baue. In addition, the LCMS delegation has been joined by Dr. John Stephenson of the LCC because the ACNA has a number of congregations in Canada. A joint statement by the participants, approved by Archbishop Robert Duncan and President Matthew Harrison as well as President Robert Bugbee of the LCC, was released May 26, 2012 (see www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1443).

A second round of discussions began with a meeting in St. Louis, October 18–19, 2012. Among other topics, the second round will

focus on specific ways in which our churches can cooperate without theological compromise.

2. LCMS and Roman Catholic Relations

There have been a number of contacts between representatives of the LCMS and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in the past triennium. Both churches have cooperated together and with other religious groups in drafting and issuing public statements and open letters with regard to social-cultural issues, pending legislation, and governmental decisions on national, state, and local levels. Discussions continue between the LCMS and USCCB with regard to matters of mutual concern. A meeting of ILC and LCMS leaders with Father John Crossin, executive director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the USCCB, is planned for the spring of 2013 at the International Center in St. Louis.

C. National Council of Churches

The LCMS is not a member of the National Council of Churches (NCC). Over the years and also in the past triennium, the executive director of the CTCR has participated in the NCC's Faith and Order Commission as a representative from a nonmember church body.

III. Religious Organizations and Movements

The CTCR is charged with assisting "congregations and ordained and commissioned ministers of religion in fulfilling their commitment to witness publicly and privately to the one and only Gospel set forth in the Holy Scriptures" (Bylaw 3.9.5.3, "Fraternal and Other Organizations"). This bylaw includes the Synod's longstanding provisions for dealing with the lodge issue as well as other organizations which may be of concern to LCMS members. In keeping with this responsibility to provide resources and information to the members of the Synod regarding organizations, philosophies, and religious movements, the CTCR includes a section of its Web site designated "Evaluations" (see www.lcms.org/ctcr). Evaluations fall into two categories, Lodge Organizations and Religious Organizations and Movements. The evaluations consider, from a Lutheran theological perspective, a broad range of religious practices, organizations, and movements—both Christian and non-Christian. In addition to material previously available, during the past triennium the Commission has provided evaluations on the topics of Churchless Christianity, Emergent Church, Enneagram, God's Learning Channel, Seventh-Day Adventism, The Center for Progressive Christianity, and Transhumanism. The current listing of topics in its entirety includes the following:

- Baha'i Faith
- Center for Progressive Christianity
- Christian Identity Movement
- Christian Science
- Church of Scientology
- Churchless Christianity
- Cults—An Overview (also available in Spanish)
- Cursillo Movement
- Elks Lodge
- Emergent Church
- Enneagram
- Fraternal Order of Eagles
- God's Learning Channel
- Human Potential Movement
- International Church of Christ (ICOC)
- Islam
- Jehovah's Witnesses

- Judaism
- Kabbalah
- Latter Day Saints
- The Lodge
- Membership in Certain Fraternal Organizations: A Pastoral Approach
- Moose International
- New Age Movement
- The Occult
- Rastafarians
- Reiki
- Restorationism
- Salvation Army
- Satanism
- Seventh-day Adventism
- Theophostic Prayer Ministry
- Transhumanism
- Unification Church
- Unitarian-Universalist Association (UUA)
- United Pentecostal Church International
- Unity School of Christianity
- Vineyard Ministries
- Wicca
- Word-Faith Movement
- Yoga

The Commission through its staff continues to respond to a large number of inquiries, making use of resources accumulated in its library and files and information available on the Internet.

Lawrence Rast, *Chairman*
Joel D. Lehenbauer, *Executive Director*

Notes

1. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry: Witnesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry*, J. T. Mueller, trans. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1987), 19, 22, 220.
2. Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XVIII, 13 (Kolb/Wengert).
3. Commission on Theology and Church Relations, *Church Discipline in the Christian Congregation* (1985), 10.
4. David Harbaugh, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Hopeful Church, Boone County, Kentucky. Being a Discourse Delivered at Its Forty-Eighth Anniversary, on the 6th Day of January, 1854* (Cincinnati: S. V. Crossman, Printer, 1854), 5-6.
5. "Pledge of Subjection to Stephan;" in Walter Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839-1841* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1953), 294.
6. For the text of Walther's "Altenburg Theses," see Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 523-25.
7. 1847-01, "Rejection of L. F. E. Krause's Teaching," *Erste Synodal Bericht*, pp. 11b-13a.
8. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 321-22.
9. CTCR, *Church Discipline in the Christian Congregation*, 25: "Is it proper for a congregation to delegate to the elders, to the church council, and/or to the pastor the authority to excommunicate? The question is probably prompted by the desire to give as little publicity to the sin or error as possible (see question 10 on legal considerations). It should be noted that a kind of delegation has already taken place when the voters' assembly, as is generally the case, is authorized to act in the name of 'the church.' It is no doubt within the power of the congregation to ask the Board of Elders and/or pastor [to] act in its behalf. Whether it is wise to delegate authority in such a serious matter may well depend on the circumstances, but in general this is a questionable practice." The CTCR, however, does recognize that pastors have the responsibility in certain cases to suspend

individuals from communion: May a pastor suspend a person from communion? Although a pastor may not himself excommunicate without the congregation, he may, in the interest of a person's spiritual welfare, refuse to commune one whose presence at the altar would be a source of offense to other members of the congregation, or one living in unrepentant sin who is still being dealt with on a personal basis by himself or others. If, for example, a member has embezzled church funds and the matter is known but the problem has not been resolved (there has been neither absolution on the one hand nor excommunication on the other), the pastor may insist that the party involved absent himself from the table of the Lord. This suspension must always be temporary, however, until the matter has been resolved in one way or the other. Any appeal from such suspension must be acted on properly by the congregation, with the party involved, by virtue of the appeal thereby forfeiting any privacy that may have previously been his" (CTCR, *Church Discipline in the Christian Congregation*, 21).

10. CTCR, *Church Discipline in the Christian Congregation*, 10.

11. It is clear from background information in the District President's correspondence that this request does not pertain to questions about the service of "licensed lay deacons," but about lay men "commissioned" by the congregation to carry out certain functions of pastoral ministry, such as public preaching and regular sacramental administration.

12. *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, p. 35. Available online at www.lcms.org/ctcr (p. 31 in online version).

13. Various other terms are also used, such as pastoral office, pastoral ministry, public ministry, office of the public ministry, preaching office. As for scriptural terminology, see *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature*, p. 13-14 (p. 6 in online version).

14. See *The Ministry in Its Relation to the Christian Church* (1973); *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature* (1981); *Theology and Practice of "the Divine Call"* (2003). All are available online at: <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=509>.

15. Pages 11-12. Available online at <http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CTCR/divinecall.pdf>.

16. *Divine Call*, 13-14.

17. *Ibid.*

18. This was illustrated recently by 2007 Res. 5-01B, which sought to address both a pressing need for pastors and the Synod's "doctrine of the ministry and our commitment to high standards of pastoral education and formation."

19. *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (1981), available on CTCR Web site, p. 25.

R4-02

Commission on Doctrinal Review

Along with the undersigned, the Commission on Doctrinal Review consists of four additional members: Dr. Gerhard Bode (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis), Dr. Walter A. Maier III (Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne), Dr. Naomichi Masaki (Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne), and Dr. Steven Mueller (Concordia University—Irvine). During the 2010-2013 triennium, the commission rendered two decisions regarding material already in print and four decisions in response to appeals from the authors or publisher. In keeping with the Bylaws of the Synod which govern the doctrinal review process, the commission seeks to ensure that all books, tracts, devotional materials, worship resources and articles published by the Synod through its official organs or its publisher, Concordia Publishing House, are clearly in agreement with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Prof. John T. Pless, *Chairman*

R5-01

Concordia University System



Statement of Mission and Purpose

The Concordia University System (CUS) builds national identity, enables cooperative endeavors, and enhances the strengths of the colleges and universities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as they engage students of diverse ages and cultures in quality Christ-centered, value-oriented, Lutheran higher education for lives of service to church and community.

Concordia University System National Office Profile

The national office ensures that the resolutions of the Synod’s conventions and directives of the Synod’s Board of Directors and Concordia University System Board of Directors, as they pertain to college and university education, are faithfully discharged. It works through the boards of regents of the colleges and universities and their executive officers to ensure that the highest quality education is offered to students preparing to be professional church workers and to those wishing to prepare for secular vocations in a Christian academic community. It is the oversight agency for the LCMS for authorization of new academic programs. Through consultation and campus visits, it ensures that the curricula and campus lifestyle reflect, with utmost fidelity, the teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and also the teachings and practices of the Synod. It promotes good management; successful recruiting of students, staff, and faculty; and cost effectiveness at the institutions.

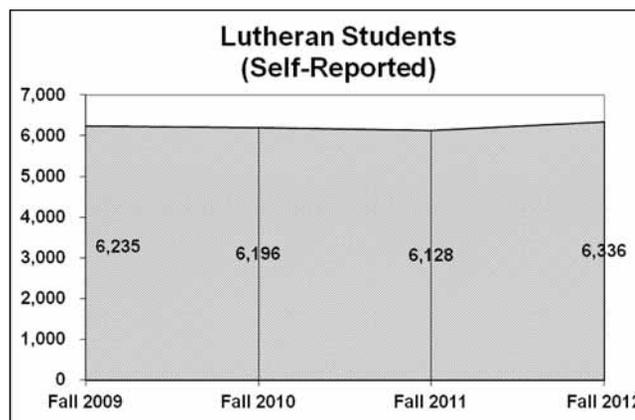
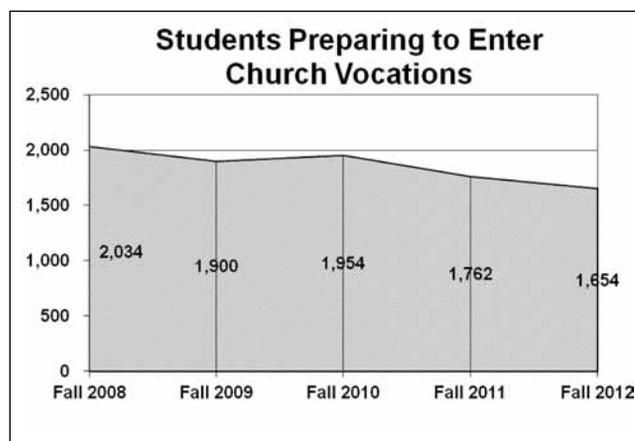
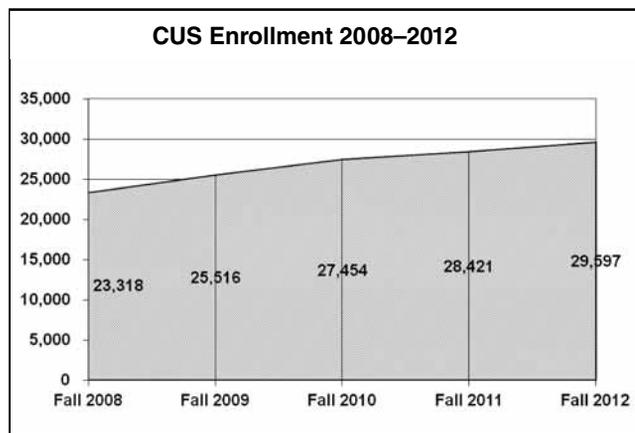
The Concordia University System

- Over 29,500 students
- Over 1,500 full- and part-time faculty
- Over 200 academic programs and majors

Degrees Awarded

- Associate Degrees
- Bachelor Degrees
- Masters Degrees
- Doctoral Degrees
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificates

Enrollment Trends



Placement of Ministers of Religion—Commissioned 2009–2012

Category	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12
Teacher	225	206	257
DCE	33	40	30
Lay Minister	4	17	8
DCO	1	4	1
Deaconess	18	21	13
Parish Music	6	3	4
Family Life	4	1	9
Totals	291	292	322

Major Achievements: Concordia University System

- Facilitated and supported the affiliation of Concordia University, Ann Arbor, MI, with Concordia University Wisconsin.
- Provided ongoing leadership development for the system through five cohorts of the CUS Leadership Institute.
- Increased *For The Sake of The Church* endowment fund contributions and pledges from \$197 M to \$223 M (cumulative fund totals from the 10 CUS campuses).
- Continued the ongoing strategic planning process for coordination of the Concordia University System.
- Facilitated the CUS effort to provide study abroad opportunities from a uniquely Lutheran perspective for CUS students through the Concordia International Studies Consortium.
- Enhanced efforts to identify and recruit Lutheran faculty to serve as professors in the diverse academic programs on the CUS campuses.
- Reviewed and approved all new academic programs and majors at CUS institutions.
- Initiated the *Concordia Choice* partnerships between CUS institutions and Lutheran high schools through which graduates fulfilling specific criterion are guaranteed admission and a \$1000 scholarship.
- Promoted cooperative endeavors with the presidents and administrative leaders on the CUS campuses.

**Annual Operating Budgets by Institution
For The Five Years Ending June 30, 2012**

Institution	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ann Arbor	\$16,279,178	\$13,692,134	\$10,418,836	\$10,901,616	\$11,299,449
Austin	24,134,473	26,027,069	29,827,325	34,033,103	35,384,454
Bronxville	16,818,875	17,049,572	18,570,569	18,560,379	19,871,124
Irvine	40,833,648	38,726,924	40,200,144	46,618,505	51,398,870
Mequon	46,242,073	51,248,978	66,016,066	75,929,397	85,998,628
Portland	21,763,666	24,109,148	29,308,131	38,347,279	44,362,375
River Forest	42,519,034	46,092,121	52,146,442	55,377,410	58,441,669
Selma	7,173,585	8,456,856	8,679,372	10,900,443	11,410,017
St. Paul	33,181,875	35,244,637	38,344,083	39,129,514	38,192,991
Seward	23,283,767	23,950,575	26,924,387	28,467,744	28,895,593
Total	\$272,230,174	\$284,598,014	\$320,435,355	\$358,265,390	\$385,255,170

**Scholarships and Financial Aid by Institutions
For Five Years Ending June 30, 2012**

Institution	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ann Arbor	\$4,029,661	\$3,937,591	\$4,181,385	\$4,764,540	\$5,522,838
Austin	5,876,806	6,757,649	8,231,263	9,281,911	11,127,952
Bronxville	5,287,743	5,123,181	5,062,720	5,402,515	6,040,399
Irvine	10,989,550	12,100,000	13,321,955	13,413,114	14,168,785
Mequon	13,820,983	15,460,626	17,334,080	19,864,612	21,656,856
Portland	7,969,662	8,119,994	9,328,587	10,277,173	11,308,479
River Forest	8,522,522	13,119,147	11,706,239	13,365,976	14,405,375
St. Paul	1,349,045	1,179,120	1,373,809	1,411,173	1,368,798
Selma	8,119,994	8,916,180	9,627,985	10,621,514	12,014,355
Seward	9,082,873	9,880,753	11,026,713	12,081,466	13,264,290
Total	\$75,048,839	\$84,594,241	\$91,194,736	\$100,483,994	\$110,878,127

**Church Worker Financial Aid by Institution
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2012**

Institution	FY 2011 Total	FY 2012 Total	FY 2012 # of CW	FY 2012 Aver. Aid
Ann Arbor	818,208	1,450,400	138	10,510
Austin	1,318,733	1,272,097	90	14,134
Bronxville	159,165	95,000	6	15,833
Irvine	1,588,667	1,200,300	98	12,247
Mequon	3,459,033	3,045,395	271	11,237
Portland	425,490	290,675	26	11,179
River Forest	1,685,242	3,330,096	242	13,761
St. Paul	12,511	26,495	4	6,623
Selma	3,177,941	1,403,362	86	16,138
Seward	4,599,990	5,045,510	422	11,956
Total	\$17,244,980	\$17,159,330	1,383	\$12,362

Institutional Operations Summary

The CUS Board of Directors has focused its attention on the ten colleges and universities of the Concordia University System (CUS). That attention is centered in four “Quality Standards,” which define the ways that CUS institutions continue to fulfill their mission as academic institutions and entities of the LCMS. These Quality Standards provide guidelines to ensure that the Concordias remain Christ-centered and Lutheran; that they provide strong liberal arts and professional programs for all students, while continuing to offer and support church vocational programs; that they strive constantly for academic quality; and that they achieve and maintain financial strength.

During the last three years, total CUS enrollment has risen to nearly 30,000. The largest growth is seen in graduate programs. Concordia University Wisconsin is the largest Lutheran university in the nation, followed closely by Concordia University Chicago. While overall growth has been up, the number of students preparing for professional church work professions declined.

The CUS Board of Directors has continued strategic planning as it seeks to support the collective aspirations of the ten campuses. As small, faith-based institutions, the Concordias value similar mission statements but frequently face unique challenges. The transformational power of the Gospel and the impetus it provides for compassionate service to others are fundamental to the existence of the campuses within the System. Quality in academic programming, faculty/staff/students, and facilities must be maintained and enhanced. The ability of each campus to meet and surpass established fiscal benchmarks is imperative to institutional survival. With the collective vision for identity, quality, and viability, the CUS Board is working on the means through which campus leadership is enabled to seize opportunities for the individual campuses and/or CUS and mobilize people to achieve their goals.

Believing that much can be achieved through cooperation and consultation, the CUS office strengthened efforts to foster collaboration among the ten Concordias. The presidents as well as the chief officers in the areas of academics, enrollment management, finance, student services, and information technologies meet at least annually to discuss topics of mutual interest and develop collaborative projects that are mutually beneficial. Teams of experts are often utilized as consultants on other campuses to provide training or offer advice.

The networks created through the collaboration enhance communication and support across the system.

Because higher education in the U.S. is so competitive, in the last three years, CUS institutions have increased their efforts to raise scholarship dollars and grow their endowments, to offer programs which appeal to traditional and non-traditional students, and to position themselves strategically in local and regional markets. To remain competitive and to continue to produce outstanding graduates, CUS institutions must continue to identify talented, dedicated faculty, administrators, and regents who understand the complexities of higher education and who are able to work together to achieve the mission of the colleges and universities of the LCMS.

CUS Goals for the Next Triennium

- Assist CUS institutions in the identification and recruitment of highly qualified Lutheran faculty.
- Assist CUS institutions in recruiting LCMS students and church work profession students.
- Support efforts of the CUS institutions to increase *For The Sake Of The Church* endowment fund contributions, pledges, and estate-designated gifts.
- Intensify efforts to identify and train individuals for positions of leadership at CUS institutions.
- Provide for education and training of regents, especially in the areas of finance and higher education administration.

Significant Achievements: Individual Campuses

**Concordia University Ann Arbor (CUAA), Ann Arbor, MI—
Patrick T. Ferry, Interim President**

Concordia University Ann Arbor was dedicated as a junior college in 1963. Fifty years later, the university’s dedicated and caring faculty continue to espouse ethics and values in the classroom, reinforcing what students, faculty, and staff hear in the Chapel of The Holy Trinity every day.

With that in mind, listed below in no particular order are some of the accomplishments at CUAA over the past 30 months.

- Expansion of the Haab School of Business and Management resulted in nine new undergraduate programs and eleven concentrations in the M.S. in Organizational Leadership degree.
- The university received a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education in October 2010 to aid in student retention. Three new positions were created by the grant that was to be paid out in \$400,000 installments over a 5-year period.
- The university’s Web site was totally redesigned beginning in the spring of 2012. The project was nearing completion by the time the first semester began in late August.
- The Lady Cardinals basketball team won its first-ever Concordia Invitational Tournament championship in February 2011 and followed that a month later by qualifying for the NAIA Division II Tournament for the first time in school history.
- A new program in Liberal Arts, Business, and Entrepreneurship was initiated in 2011 to enhance the experience of those students majoring in Liberal Arts.
- In May 2012, extensive landscaping and major renovations to the residence halls and cafeteria got under way. New sidewalks and parking lots, along with an outdoor patio, were in place by the time students arrived on campus in August.
- The university marked its 50th academic year on August 27, when Acting President Randall W. Luecke officially opened school during the traditional Opening Service. Luecke served in that important capacity until February 15, 2013, when he and his wife moved to Florida.

- On May 18, 2012, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Board of Directors and the Board of Regents of both Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) and CUAA approved an academic alliance to revitalize the 187-acre Ann Arbor, Michigan, campus and its academic programs. This new relationship will position CUAA for even greater ministry opportunities than ever before.
- On December 4, 2012, Lonnie Pries was named new Athletic Director and Head Football Coach. Pries was named 2012 Northern Athletics Conference Coach of the Year in November while at Concordia University Chicago.
- In December 2012, Frankenmuth and Dearborn, MI, were announced as locations for the University’s new Accelerated Learning Centers.

**Concordia University Texas, Austin, TX
Thomas Cedel, President**

Concordia University Texas' mission is to develop Christian leaders. Since its founding in 1926, Concordia has sought to prepare students for lives of service in the church and community. In 2008, the university moved from its original campus in downtown Austin to a new location that has allowed it to expand that mission to even more students.

- Enrollment has reached nearly 2,600 students in all areas including undergraduate, graduate, and online programs, an increase of approximately 20 percent since the fall of 2009.
- In November 2011, Concordia University Texas (CTX) completed its latest strategic plan “Toward 2020.” Over one hundred members of the faculty and staff were involved in six committees. The plan supports Concordia’s mission of developing Christian leaders and the desired outcome for our graduates to be men and women who transform communities by seeking out leadership opportunities and influencing people for Christ.
- Concordia responded to the growing demands of the health care field in 2010 when it launched its nursing program at full capacity. In May 2012, the university graduated 100 percent of its first nursing class. All of those students passed their licensing exam and were offered employment.
- The Concordia Master’s in Business Administration enrollment has tripled since its inception in Fall 2010, adding cohorts in San Antonio, in Fall 2011, and Dallas-Fort Worth, for Spring 2013. The first cohort graduated in August 2012.
- Concordia provides scholarships to students on merit and need-based criteria. Eighty percent of students receive some kind of financial aid including scholarships and grants; and Concordia students graduate with student loan debts that average 11 percent lower than peers at area public schools and 30–40 percent lower than peers at area private institutions.
- Concordia’s graduates across all programs meet or exceed national peer benchmarks in academic core competencies based on a nationwide assessment using the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency.
- Concordia offers overseas studies through several consortia and partner institutions in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Central America.
- Three athletic teams (cross country, women’s basketball and baseball) earned American Southwest Conference championship titles, ranking second for the most championship titles earned in a year among the 15-member institutions.
- Concordia is the proud steward of the 285-acre Concordia Preserve and the Friesenhahn Cave site in San Antonio. The preserve is home to 28 archeological sites, 13 of which have been included within the National Register of Historic Places. The university holds the distinction as the only university in the United States whose campus is adjacent to a nature preserve.

- A record 71 student athletes were named to the American Southwest Conference Academic Honor Roll in 2011–2012, with two students being named as Distinguished Scholar Athletes.
- Four coaches were named as Coaches of the Year by the American Southwest Conference in 2011–2012.
- A vibrant service learning community has raised funds to build three fresh water wells in rural Ethiopia through Water2Thrive. Goals were increased for 2012–2013, and a campaign is underway to fund three wells this year alone.
- Concordia supported the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* project with 120 volunteers working more than 750 hours on site in Smithville after the Bastrop County fires of 2011. More than 2,100 hours were logged by university volunteers over a yearlong period, aiding in recovery efforts throughout Bastrop County. The university received recognition on national television during an episode of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, where President Cedel presented three scholarships to family members.

**Concordia College—New York, Bronxville, NY,
Viji D. George, President**

Founded in 1881 in lower Manhattan as the New York Progymnasium, Concordia College has consistently sought to prepare students for service to church and community in accordance with its mission statement: “Concordia College—New York, a college of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, engages and nurtures a diverse student body in a Christ-centered, value-oriented liberal arts education for lives of service to church and community.”

- Concordia College—New York (CCNY) marked a major accomplishment in March 2011, with New York State approval of a charter amendment that allows the college to grant graduate degrees for the first time.
- In 2011, Concordia also received state approval of its first two graduate programs—both leading to the Master of Science degree in Childhood Special Education—and enrolled its first students. The college offers significant tuition discounts to Lutheran school teachers and aides.
- In September 2012, Concordia’s third graduate program, a Master of Science in Business Leadership, received state approval. A hybrid online and on-campus model, it is scheduled to begin in August 2013.
- In 2012, Concordia completed a major investment in facilities—a \$5.6 million energy conservation and infrastructure improvement project that enhanced, to one degree or another, 25 of the college’s 27 campus buildings.
- *US News & World Report* ranked CCNY in the top tier of regional colleges in the North Region for 2012.
- *US News & World Report* also ranked Concordia as one of the most diverse regional colleges in the country. The college was ranked fifth among regional Liberal Arts colleges in the North Region (out of four national regions) based on the overall mix of ethnic groups in its 2011–2012 student body. Concordia was ranked the ninth most diverse regional Liberal Arts college in the country.
- In 2011, CCNY established Campus Christian Ministries (CCM). CCM is headquartered in an off-campus residence hall, which is home to the campus pastor and student leaders, all of whom head an active, Christ-centered community of students. As the hub of spiritual life on campus, CCM offers students ample opportunities to engage in ministry.
- Graduates of Concordia’s Accelerated Nursing Program scored well above national first time pass rates on the National Council Licensure Examination for registered nurses in 2011 (90.91%) and 2012 (97%).
- Concordia strengthened financial aid for LCMS students by increasing the minimum amount of its Fortress Grants by 20 percent and by creating a new *Vocatio* scholarship, which provides up to full tuition for those who are pursuing church vocations.
- During the past three years, 100 percent of Concordia’s full-time faculty has been trained on computer-assisted educational technology; 55 percent of its courses now have online delivery components.
- A Concordia nursing student was named the 2012 winner of the National Gerontological Nursing Association Undergraduate Student Leadership Award.
- In Fall 2010, Concordia enrolled its first incoming students in new undergraduate programs in nursing, health studies, and healthcare administration.
- Concordia was selected for inclusion in the 2012–13 edition of *Colleges of Distinction*. Included colleges must excel in four measures: engaged students, great teachers, vibrant communities, and successful outcomes.
- In Fall 2012, Concordia enrolled its largest student body on record. In the past three years, full-time student enrollment has grown by 17 percent.
- 2012 marks the 100th year of organized music ensembles at Concordia. Celebratory festivities during the year include eleven on-campus concerts, performances at many area churches, and tour choir visits to 17 states. The culminating event will be an Alumni Reunion Concert conducted by former President and Choir Conductor Dr. Ralph C. Schultz.
- CCNY significantly increased its recruitment of international students. As of Fall 2012, 19 percent of all students were international. In 2010, Concordia established a full-time student recruiting outpost in southern India.
- In each of the past three years, Concordia’s Men’s and the Women’s Tennis Teams have won the CACC Conference Championships and qualified for the NCAA Div. II National Championships, where twice the men’s team reached the semi-finals. Both teams are nationally ranked, currently, and are regularly highly ranked in the East Region (the men’s team has been number 1 in the East for eight consecutive years). Both teams were named ITA Academic All-American teams in 2012.
- In 2012, CCNY alumni were re-elected as presidents of the Eastern District and the Florida/Georgia District.
- In the past three years, Concordia has sponsored several trips abroad for both area residents and students. Countries visited included Bhutan, Cambodia, Canada, China, England, Germany, Greece, Italy, India, Ireland, Israel, Korea, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand.
- In 2012, Concordia renovated its oldest structure, the 1830s Stein Hall, to bring it into ADA compliance, and at the same time, built a new parking lot nearby. Stein Hall houses the Concordia Conservatory of Music & Art, which serves nearly 1,000 students. In 2011, Concordia developed and sponsored a well-attended “One Day Seminary,” bringing together prominent LCMS speakers to address provocative church topics.
- In fiscal year 2012, Concordia marked its tenth consecutive year with a positive change in unrestricted net assets.

**Concordia University, Irvine, CA
Kurt Krueger, President**

Concordia University was founded in 1976 as Christ College Irvine. Since its founding, Concordia has aspired to serve the church and the world by providing an excellent Lutheran liberal arts education. Our aspirations are summarized in our mission statement: “Concordia University, guided by the Great Commission of Christ Jesus and the Lutheran Confessions, empowers students through the

liberal arts and professional studies for lives of learning, service, and leadership.” Acknowledging that all good things come from our gracious God, we note the following accomplishments since the last Synod convention.

- Concordia University (CUI) is the fifteenth fastest-growing private Master’s Degree-granting university in the US, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education.
- Concordia’s enrollment grew from 2,500 in 2009 to 3,500 in 2012.
- Concordia added the following academic programs:
 - BA in Economics
 - BA in Graphic Design
 - BA in Health Care Management
 - BA in Organizational Psychology
 - BA in History & Political Thought
 - BS in Athletic Training
 - RN-to-BSN program in Nursing
 - MA in Educational Specialist with an emphasis in Mild/Moderate Disorders
 - MA in School Counseling, including a Pupil and Personnel Services credential
 - MA in Educational Technology
 - MA in International Studies with an emphasis in International Development
 - Minor in Global Cultural Studies
- CUI will offer its first doctoral program, a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership, in 2013.
- Concordia expanded the reach of its Master’s Degree programs in Education throughout California, offering face-to-face instruction at eight regional centers—including two in the San Francisco Bay area—and in over 30 off-campus sites to over 700 students annually.
- A core curriculum was implemented as part of its general education for all undergraduates. This innovative curriculum, which combines study of great works with emphases on interdisciplinary study, critical thinking, intensive writing and global awareness, has been praised by both the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) and the Association for Core Texts and Colleges (ACTC).
- The Office of Global Programs was established to provide stronger support for mission trips, study-abroad experiences, and international students attending the university.
- In Fall 2010 and again in Fall 2012, CUI offered its groundbreaking Around-The-World Semester®, in which two faculty and two staff led approximately 25 students on an 18-week study tour that literally circumnavigated the globe, earning a semester’s worth of college credit and engaging in mission and service projects on four continents. During the Fall 2012 semester, students studied, served, and witnessed to the Gospel in Mongolia, China, Vietnam, Thailand, India, Ethiopia, Austria, Hungary, Bolivia, and Peru.
- In 2010, Concordia completed and began implementing a strategic plan with four main emphases: (1) strengthening academic rigor; (2) communicating institutional identity; (3) enhancing the student experience; and (4) improving institutional operations and finances. In 2012, with many of the original initiatives accomplished, the university updated its strategic plan, adding an emphasis on expanding graduate, adult, and online education.
- Concordia’s Theatre Department continues to receive accolades from the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival. The department’s 2010 production of *The Cover of Life* was invited to KC/ACTF’s annual regional festival, as were scenes from *Hamlet* (2010) and *Beau Jest* (2012). In 2012, the department launched Looseleaf Theatre Company, in which local professional actors perform alongside Concordia students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Its production of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* was enjoyed by nearly 1,500 people.
- Concordia’s forensics program has achieved national prominence in speech and debate competitions in the last three years. Since 2010, the team has placed first or second at numerous national tournaments, competing successfully against schools such as Texas Tech, Oregon, and the University of California-Berkeley.
- CUI’s athletic programs, competing in NAIA Division I, have enjoyed unprecedented success in the last three years. Our baseball team won its first national championship in Spring 2011; our men’s basketball team won its second national championship in Spring 2012 (the first was in 2003); our women’s volleyball team posted a perfect 38-0 record in Fall 2012 and won its first national championship, after going 37-2 and reaching the national title game in 2011.
- Concordia hosted its first-ever Teen Entrepreneur Academy, which drew 40 high school students from Asia and the United States to learn more about starting their own businesses while incorporating biblical principles in their business plans.
- Concordia is engaged in a campus master planning process. The new master plan will help determine construction priorities for building out the Irvine campus to capacity. Anticipated future campus additions include a science and nursing building, performing arts space, a residence hall, expanded student union space, and an aquatics center.
- The Center for Public Policy was established to provide a venue for bipartisan discussions of critical issues affecting those who live in Orange County and California.
- CUI continues to strengthen its financial position. The university recently refinanced its debt and secured favorable financing for a five-year term, paying down debt to approximately 20 percent. Unrestricted net assets grew by 52 percent in the last several years, and Concordia achieved the maximum U.S. Department of Education financial composite score of 3.0.
- Last May, Concordia’s annual Gala of Stars netted \$550,000 for student scholarships. During the Gala, Concordia presented its Lifetime Achievement Award to Louis Zamperini, Olympic champion, WWII prisoner of war, and subject of the best-selling book, *Unbroken*.
- On July 1, 2010, Dr. Kurt Krueger began his service as the University’s fourth president.

Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, WI
Patrick T. Ferry, President

Concordia University Wisconsin, founded in 1881 on Milwaukee’s near west side in the basement of historic Trinity Lutheran Church, has always espoused the integration of Christian faith and higher learning in the classroom. The University’s mission statement, in part, aspires to “*help students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the world.*”

With that in mind, listed below in no particular order are some of the wonderful accomplishments at CUW over the past 30 months.

- In early summer of 2010, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the \$15 million School of Pharmacy, making CUW only the second university in Wisconsin to offer a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. The focus of the pharmacy school is to prepare pharmacists as practitioners for rural and urban Wisconsin. On September 16, 2011, the building was officially dedicated.
- In September 2011, a new Accelerated Learning Center opened in Waukesha, bringing to four the number of such centers in the metro-Milwaukee area; the other three being Mequon, Midtown, and Miller Park Way.

- A 28-year upward enrollment spiral continues, as 7,751 students were enrolled at our main and satellite campuses at the beginning of the 2012–2013 academic year.
- An announcement that The Lakeshore Chinooks would be the newest member of The Northwoods Wooden Bat League took place during a press conference featuring minority owner Robin Yount (Hall of Fame shortstop for the Milwaukee Brewers) on November 1, 2011. The Chinooks played their 35 home games at Kapco Park during the summer of 2012, following a VIP Dedication of the stadium on May 2. Concordia's baseball team plays its home games at the park.
- On October 1, 2012, the new \$4 million Student Services Center opened, providing undergraduate students a number of new dining options, along with recreational lounges and private study areas.
- The School of Business and Legal Studies introduced a new program in 2011, Sport and Entertainment Management. A year later, the name of the school was formally changed to The School of Business Administration. On July 1, 2012, The School of Nursing became the sixth school at the CUW, with more than 1,100 students enrolled.
- On May 16, 2012, a Physician Assistant program was officially approved by the University's Board of Regents, with the first class of 30 students set to begin classes in May 2013. The 26-month, full-time, year-round program trains PA's with an emphasis on primary care and preventative medicine.
- The University's School of Pharmacy surpassed the \$1 million mark in federal research grant funding, marking a historic achievement for the University. A three-year, \$380,000 federal grant by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases that began June 1, 2012, will help Concordia Professor Daniel Sem explore new ways to treat TB.
- On May 18, 2012, the University's BOR accepted an invitation from Concordia University Ann Arbor to form an alliance to revitalize its Michigan campus and its academic programs. This new relationship will position CUAA for even greater ministry opportunities than ever before. Last summer, remodeled buildings and new landscaping enhanced the educational experience for new and returning students.
- On Sunday, October 7, 2012, a challenge took place between marathon "teams" from Concordia and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee during the annual Lakefront Marathon that travels through campus.
- A new, 750-vehicle parking structure (the first in the City of Mequon) was constructed on the west side of campus, along with a new press box for the football stadium. An expansive landscaping renovation took place on the 200-acre campus over the past two years.
- Student enrollment at all levels has more than doubled in the past decade to more than 3,500 students, making us the fastest-growing university in Oregon. The most recent 23 percent annual enrollment growth can be attributed to a clear 2020 Vision, the strength of our academic programs, experienced faculty, selectivity of new academic programs, rapid expansion of our online M.Ed. degree, and growing athletics, all in an environment that fosters spiritual growth.
- New academic programs at the undergrad and graduate level were launched, most notably a juris doctorate (J.D.) and educational doctorate (Ed.D.). For a full listing of academic programs, visit www.cu-portland.edu/academics/programs.
- The university was recently recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* for offering one of the top online Master of Education (M.Ed.) programs in the nation in the first-ever ranking of online graduate programs.
- Meanwhile, our foundation is growing and raising more scholarship dollars than ever before. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we were able to continue to assist the 97 percent of our students who need tuition support.
- Our partnership with congregations throughout the Pacific Northwest is over 100 years old, and it continues to grow and deepen, as evidenced by a 60 percent increase in congregational giving this past year.
- Concordia's commitment to campus spiritual life led to calling Rev. Greg Fairrow to serve as our campus pastor beginning in January 2011, and Rev. Dr. Paul W. Mueller was called to be the first executive director of the Art & Carol Wahlers Center for Applied Lutheran Leadership (CALL) in 2011.
- Recognizing the importance of modern learning environments and the need for expanded classroom space, we fund-raised, financed, constructed, and opened the new George R. White Library & Learning Center in 2009, which received LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.
- We opened the Concordia University System's first law school. The Concordia University School of Law in Boise, Idaho, is located in this state capital's vibrant downtown, a few blocks from the Idaho State Supreme Court and Capital Building. An inaugural class of 75 students began in Fall 2012.
- Hilken Community Stadium for baseball and soccer, with a capacity for 1,000 spectators within the three-city-block facility, opened on the Portland campus in Spring 2012. Recycled shoes make up the Nike grind rubber turf infill, and the stadium is dedicated 50 percent to Concordia student-athletes and 50 percent to use by local community groups.
- In athletics, Concordia continues to place nationally in the NAIA: the women's track and field team won the 2011 NAIA National Championship; and the women's soccer team competed in the title game of the 2011 NAIA National Championship, among other successes.
- Concordia continues to make an even more concentrated commitment to community engagement and community partnerships, both locally and globally, especially in North and Northeast Portland. We published our first Community Engagement Report at www.cu-portland.edu/community. External and media recognition of these and other efforts has expanded significantly to include:
 - U.S. President's Community Service Honor Roll has recognized Concordia Portland for the past four years.
 - *Washington Monthly* magazine recognized Concordia University Portland as number 1 in the nation in 2010 for its community service hours. The university was number 7 in the nation in 2011.

Concordia University, Portland, OR
Charles Schlimpert, President

Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, and its community of students, faculty, staff, neighbors, and partners were blessed in so many ways these past three years. We know these blessings flow powerfully from God's grace to us in Jesus Christ. Thank you for allowing us to share some of the following highlights with you.

Concordia Portland's growth in all areas—from students and facilities, to academic, spiritual, and athletic programs, to community partnerships—was tremendous and remains centered in Christ and the university's mission.

By God's grace, as a campus community, we affirmed our mission, core values, and where we are headed in the next decade in the form of our Vision 2020 (www.cu-portland.edu/vision). Our mission is to prepare leaders for the transformation of society.

- Our community engagement focus has led to a powerful partnership with our adjacent neighborhood public school, Faubion School, a pre-K–8 Title I school serving 432 students, many of whom are economically and academically challenged. On a solid foundation of four years of joint programming, we will launch “3toPhD” in Spring 2013. Age “3toPhD” acknowledges and supports the full educational continuum, creating an educational corridor and “culture of college” in our own backyard, and will develop a new model for replication anywhere in the world. Stay tuned.

We are incredibly grateful for the manifold blessings of God’s grace and for the overwhelming support of our university friends, alumni, donors, church partners, and community. Thank you for your partnership in ministry, for being such a valued part of our Concordia family!

Concordia University Chicago John Johnson, President

The mission of Concordia University Chicago (CUC) is to equip men and women to serve and lead with integrity, creativity, competence, and compassion in a diverse, interconnected, and increasingly urbanized church and world.

Among the highlights significantly contributing to the advancement of this mission during the past triennium were:

- Concordia continued to achieve record enrollments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Total enrollment for this past fall reached 5,454 students. The 2011 almanac issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* identified Concordia as the second fastest growing liberal arts college in the United States!
- The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities and Concordia University Board of Directors granted approval for the Ph.D. degree.
- Significant partnerships with other educational institutions were established to meet the increasing demand for flexibility in the path toward earning degrees. An example is the joint Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree with Resurrection University School of Nursing in Chicago. Students in the program are simultaneously enrolled in Concordia and Resurrection and will earn a degree bearing the name of both universities. Also, Concordia developed a partnership with the College of DuPage in Illinois enabling students to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Healthcare Management, Sports, and Recreation Management, or Visual Arts Administration from Concordia. All classes are held at the College of DuPage, the nation’s largest single campus community college.
- The Center for Global Outreach was established to provide leadership and support to the CUC community in order to connect, collaborate, and experience international cultures. The Center also initiates international degree programs including the recent joint MBA program with the Hebei School of Economics in Beijing, China.
- The National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education awarded reaccreditation for all education programs without condition. This distinction puts Concordia in the top two percent of schools in the country.
- The Early Childhood Education Center was awarded exemplary status from the National Lutheran Accreditation Commission. The Center was one of seven schools nationwide recognized for demonstrating innovative leadership through the implementation of “Best Practice” techniques.
- The music performance wing of Kretzmann Hall was renovated with funds from the recently completed “Build, Grow, Inspire” funding campaign.

As Concordia University Chicago marks the 100th anniversary of its campus in River Forest and anticipates the celebration of the 150th anniversary of its founding next year, we rejoice in the blessings of

God and give Him thanks for all of those in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who support our mission. Together, we maintain a community rich in tradition and strong in purpose.

Concordia University St. Paul, MN Thomas Ries, President

The mission of Concordia University, St. Paul, a university of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is to “prepare students for thoughtful and informed living, for dedicated service to God and humanity, for enlightened care of God’s creation, all within the context of the Christian Gospel.”

- In May 2011, Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP), celebrated the retirement and 20-year presidency of the university’s eighth president, Robert Holst. In September 2011, Concordia inaugurated Thomas Ries as the university’s ninth president.
- CSP developed a Promise Statement, articulating what is differentiating, compelling, and true about the University: *Concordia University, St. Paul empowers you to discover and engage your purpose for life, career, and service in a dynamic multicultural urban community where Christ is honored, all are welcome, and Lutheran convictions inform intellectual inquiry and academic pursuits.*
- Concordia completed a strategic planning process giving direction to the university for the next five fiscal years (2014 through 2018). In support of the university’s mission, the plan calls for growth in enrollment, increased rates of persistence to graduation, measurable improvement in student transition to employment or graduate school, and growth in the university’s net assets, all while integrating the core values of the Concordia Promise into the overall life of the University.
- Enrollment reached an all-time high of 2,941 students in the Fall of 2012, with growth in all three student populations: traditional undergraduate, adult undergraduate, and graduate.
- Concordia announced a reset of tuition beginning Fall 2013 for all new and returning traditional undergraduate students, reducing the published price from \$29,700 to \$19,700.
- Even under the newly reset tuition plan, CSP strengthened its financial aid program. Included in financial aid offerings is a 50 percent church work assurance, which ensures qualified students preparing for church vocations in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod receive grant aid totaling half the published tuition price, and a Lutheran heritage scholarship for both traditional-age and adult students who are members of LCMS congregations.
- CSP hosted the 4th biennial International Conference on Hmong Studies in 2012.
- Concordia adopted a new marketing focus with the tagline “Responsive, Relevant, Real,” which appears in print media, and on radio and television, social media sites, billboards, and the sides of a Metro Transit bus.
- CSP launched the following new degree programs:
 - BA in Health Care
 - BA in Public Policy
 - BS in Orthotics and Prosthetics
 - BS in Pulmonary Science
 - BS in Radiological Science
 - BS in Applied Mathematics (leading to BS in Engineering from the University of Minnesota)
 - MA in Education with emphasis in Educational Technology
 - MA in Human Services with emphasis in Forensic Mental Health
 - MA in Human Services with emphasis in Health Care Aging
 - MA in Human Services with emphasis in Public Policy
 - MA in Special Education with emphasis in Autism Spectrum Disorders

- MA in Special Education with emphasis in Emotional/Behavioral Disorders
- MA in Special Education with emphasis in Learning Disabilities
- Education Specialist with credentialing for principals and/or superintendents
- Doctorate in Education (in approval process)
- Doctorate in Physical Therapy (in approval process)
- Concordia students were instrumental in the passage of the Kyle Herman Bill of 2010. The state legislation, which received strong bipartisan support, paved the way for parental notification of child abuse when it occurs in a school facility. Concordia students submitted the proposal to selected legislators and saw the process through to final enactment.
- Seventy-one Concordia students visited the State Capitol in 2012 to personally thank legislators for supporting the Minnesota State Scholarship and Grant Program, which benefits students at both public and private Minnesota colleges and universities.
- Concordia expanded the footprint of its campus by adding a 2.68 acre commercial property contiguous to the campus.
- CSP's women's volleyball team, led by Head Coach Brady Starke, won an astonishing sixth straight NCAA Division II National Championship in 2012. In addition to volleyball, Concordia captured three other Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC) titles and qualified for eight NCAA Division II Tournaments, reaching the "Sweet 16" five times. Twenty Concordia athletes were named All-American. Four were named Academic All-Americans, including Brian Lippincott ('12), who was named for two consecutive years as the Capital One NCAA Division II Academic All-American of the Year for baseball and for all Division II sports in his senior year.
- Market value of Concordia's endowment grew by 33.6 percent and permanently restricted net assets grew by 19.5 percent during the three most recent fiscal years.

Concordia College Alabama, Selma, AL
Tilahun M. Menedo, President

Concordia College Alabama was founded in 1922 as Alabama Lutheran Academy and Junior College. Since its founding, Concordia College Alabama has embraced its mission "to prepare students through a Christ-centered education for lives of responsible service to the Church, community, and the world." Concordia College Alabama aspires "to be a diverse, global institution of excellence, and a leader in developing intellectual, spiritual, and moral leaders of Christ-centered justice."

- Concordia College Alabama (CCA) expanded from approximately 22 acres to more than 59 acres with the acquisition of property fronting the east campus in 2010. The purchase almost triples the size of the campus and adds seventeen additional structures. The purchase positions the college for unprecedented growth as is detailed in its 2025 Master Plan and its strategic plan, "Vision for the Future: Concordia College Alabama 2011–2016."
- Concordia hosted "Dare to Dream Awards Ceremony," sponsored by Alumni and Friends in the spring of 2010. Dr. Robert Bentley, the Governor of the State of Alabama, was the keynote speaker at the event. The occasion marked the first time in the history of the institution that a sitting governor visited the campus.
- Concordia rebranded as Concordia College Alabama (CCA) in the spring of 2011. This completed the first phase of the college's branding initiative. A new logo was adopted featuring a white cross inlaid with Dr. Martin Luther's seal that declares that the Good News of Christ goes into the entire world, never being restricted to one time or place. The design expresses the evangelical nature of the college and its ongoing mission to prepare students through a

"Christ-centered education for lives of responsible service in the church, the community, and the world."

The swirl around the cross communicates the ever expanding aspect of the kingdom of God and, therefore, the ever-expansive work of Concordia College Alabama. The swirl and cross together communicate dynamic movement and ageless stability through the past, present, and future as the changeless truth is expressed in contemporary ways.

- Concordia's accreditation was reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in June 2011.
- Phase One of the Master Plan, the capital campaign "A Time to Build," was implemented. Revenues from the capital campaign will be used to renovate existing facilities, construct new facilities, and provide scholarships for students. Renovations included the repurposing of Peay Hall into an interactive student learning center and cafe, "The Hornet's Nest," that opened January 2013, the first such center on campus. Ten brick cottages on the west campus were renovated for student housing.
- Sunday worship services are held in Christ Chapel, since February 2011, in addition to campus chapel worship services during the week in Bakke Hall. This service has attracted the Selma community and is actively raising lay servant leaders through informal education. Beginning Fall 2012, catechism classes are offered on campus for all interested students, faculty, and staff. Praise Worship services are held twice a month, attracting a wide student audience, and Bible studies are offered in each dorm.
- Outreach activities enable Concordia's Christ-centered mission to serve as a beacon to others as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is shared in the community and the church. The Spiritual Life Team members mentored students at Edgewood Elementary School and visited and interacted with residents of the Lighthouse Senior Citizens Nursing Home. The Concordia choir traveled throughout the Southern District proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through song and music. The students from the Spiritual Life Committee and the Men and Women Centers donated food to the local food pantry in Fall 2011 and Fall 2012. The campus community rallied around a student and her family whose home was destroyed in Hurricane Isaac.
- Concordia's staff and students partnered with the City of Selma for a "Kaboom" playground for children in a poor neighborhood. Staff and students helped build it.
- Concordia's faculty and staff symposiums are held monthly. The symposiums encourage the sharing of pedagogy and research on campus and in the community. Faculty and staff members as well as invited guests serve as facilitators.
- In 2012, Concordia celebrated its 90th Founder's Day celebration. Founded in 1922 by Dr. Rosa Young, Concordia's origins identify it in the annals of American history as a Historically Black College/University (HBCU). Rev. James Wiggins Jr., a second generation graduate of our school, was keynote speaker.
- Beginning Fall 2013, the Department of Education will offer a baccalaureate program in Preschool Education.
- The Concordia Women's Basketball team won the USCAA 2012 National Championship.
- The 2012 Concordia Soccer Team participated in the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) National Championship playoffs. More than eleven nations are represented in the soccer team.
- Four Hornet football team members were selected to play in the USA Football Holiday Bowl in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The Bowl features top players from the NCCAA, NAIA, USCAA, and Independents.
- Concordia's football coach, Don Lee, was named the 2012 United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) Coach of the Year.

- Football and soccer players cleaned up the neighborhood at a local housing project during the Fall of 2012.
- CCA, partnering with Wheat Ridge Ministries, launched its first health and wellness program (ConcordiaCares) for faculty and staff on campus in 2012.

Concordia University, Nebraska, Seward, NE
Brian Friedrich, President

Mission: "Concordia University, Nebraska is an excellent academic and Christ-centered community equipping men and women for lives of learning, service, and leadership in the church and world."

Vision: "By 2015 Concordia University, Nebraska will grow and expand its influence to diverse populations by fostering collaboration and adapting to our changing environment while remaining faithful to our mission of excellent Christian education."

- Concordia University, Nebraska (CUNE) served more than 2,000 students each of the past three years and recorded the largest enrollment in its 118-year history in 2011, marking the fifth year in a row Concordia has seen an increase.
- Concordia was the highest ranked of all schools in the Concordia University System by *U.S. News & World Report*.
- Concordia conferred the largest number of graduate degrees, 116, in its history during commencement in May 2011.
- The first class of MBA students graduated in 2011.
- The College of Graduate Studies and Adult Education expanded its offerings of fully online degree programs to include a Master of Human Services and a Master of Public Health, and expanded its degree completion program to include a B.A. in Professional Studies.
- The university expanded graduate education offerings to include endorsements in early childhood education and special education, and early childhood and secondary graduate teacher certification.
- Concordia expanded the following majors and programs: environmental science, art therapy, Mandarin, B.S. in physics, Christian educational leadership, and a Christian Teacher diploma.
- Concordia expanded the following majors and programs: environmental science, art therapy; BS in Physics, Christian educational leadership, and a Christian Teacher diploma, Mandarin.
- The University expanded the degree completion program to include an RN to BSN.
- Concordia introduced the Concordia Graduation Commitment, a program to help students graduate within four years or on a timeline they help set.
- An increase in participation by students who play string, woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments led to the formation of the University Chamber Orchestra. Concordia has had smaller string ensembles in recent years, but it has been nearly 30 years since there's been an orchestra.
- Concordia Nebraska continues to hold the highest number of NAIA Scholar-Athletes in the country all-time.
- In honor of President Emeritus Orville C. Walz, the Health, Human Performance, and Athletic Center was renamed the Walz Human Performance Complex in 2011.
- The Janzow Campus Center underwent a \$1 million renovation in 2012, which included the addition of a grill-style dining area, named the Dog House Grill.
- Renovations to the PE Building completed in 2012 included the addition of a wrestling practice facility created by filling in the old swimming pool, as well as updated locker rooms and weight room, areas for athletic equipment and athletic training, and new space for classrooms and offices.
- A survey of CUNE graduates found a 96 percent job placement rate six months after graduation.
- As of Jan. 1, 2013, through the Blessed to be a Blessing campaign, more than \$27.7 million has been secured through cash, pledges, and deferred gifts to support endowment, capital projects, scholarships, and operations.
- As of Jan. 1, 2013, the university's total endowment was \$38.3 million.
- Concordia invested approximately \$10.5 million in the renovation and enhancement of 59 capital and technology projects campus wide.
- CUNE established a \$20,000 rural health leadership endowment to help identify and nourish new leaders to address community health issues in rural areas.
- The women's cross country team finished in the top 20 at the NAIA National Championships in 18 of the past 19 seasons following its 15th-place finish at the 2012 Outdoor Championships.
- Phi Epsilon Kappa, a health and human performance honor society, was established at Concordia Nebraska.
- The Center for Liturgical Arts at Concordia has continued to produce art and furnishings for churches in cities all over the country, including Indianapolis, IN; Ft. Meyers, FL; Madison, CT; Ankeny, IA; Arlington Heights, IL; and Omaha, NE; as well as creating and installing a nine-foot stained glass window for The Lutheran Center in Baltimore, MD.
- Concordia University, Nebraska, along with St. John Lutheran Church, co-hosted a national LCMS worship conference in July 2011, bringing to Seward the President of the LCMS, Rev. Matthew C. Harrison, as one of its presenters.

Concordia University Education Network (CUEnet), Bend, OR—Ray Halm, Senior Director

On behalf of the Concordia University System, Concordia University Education Network (CUEnet) provides an online colloquy program to public university graduates serving as teachers or other workers in Lutheran schools and congregations. This program provides the theological training necessary for such personnel to be called as a commissioned minister in the LCMS. Over 1,800 students have applied to the online colloquy program since the program's launch in 2001. To date (December 2012), over 1,000 of those have completed the program and have received their first call.

- CUEnet continues to gather significant grants and donations for colloquy scholarships and collaborative projects. From 2010 to 2012 (December), over \$730,000 was raised through the generosity of individual donors and foundations.
- CUEnet has taken significant steps toward a more flexible and responsive solution for streaming video in order to address a growing demand for access to colloquy material on mobile devices. CUEnet will be utilizing a media server platform which allows both on-demand and live streaming of H.264 video to any device and operating system, including iOS and Android.
- CUEnet has upgraded its equipment for high-definition filming. It has also significantly improved audio capture in its studio and has added green screen technology to its techniques in video recording.
- CUEnet has finished work with a significant donor foundation and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, on a multimedia confirmation program called *Images of Faith*. These confirmation program materials are intended to supplement a church's existing confirmation program or to stand alone as a confirmation curriculum. Distribution of this curriculum material will commence in the summer of 2013. It will be available to any congregation which requests it, free of charge.

- CUENet has begun work on an innovative new curriculum for churches and schools called *Gemstones of Faith*. These high-definition videos will utilize music, photography, art, lecture, story and many other means to introduce major doctrines and detailed theological nuggets. Pastors, teachers, and lay Bible study instructors will be able to use these videos to enhance their work in LCMS congregations.
- In parallel with the creation of *Gemstones of Faith*, new colloquy materials are being crafted so as to better utilize current video techniques, standards, and technologies. Once again, CUENet will use outstanding theologians from the CUS institutions and the seminaries to help produce the “video textbooks” used in the online colloquy program.

Alan Borcharding, *Interim President*

R5-02

Report and Recommendations: 4-04A Task Force January 2013

The 64th Regular Convention (2010) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod adopted Res. 4-04A, which resolved:

That the Synod in convention charge the Board of Directors of the Synod, in consultation and concurrence with CUS and seminary leadership, to appoint an eleven-member task force possessing qualifications in higher education and finance (including two members from the LCMS Board of Directors as well as persons from the CUS institutions and seminaries, other institutions of higher education, and the LCMS at large), to research the efficiency of cooperative interaction for the fiscal strength of the LCMS system of colleges, universities, and seminaries, to make recommendations that could be immediately implemented by the respective institutions and continue to enhance those current programs already in place with the seminaries and CUS schools, and to bring recommendations which require convention action to the 2013 LCMS convention for further implementation.

As instructed by this resolution, the Board of Directors appointed the following members:

Mr. John Behrendt, Chairman, former LCMS Board for Pastoral Education

Rev. Ralph Blumenberg, Pastor, Immanuel, Seymour, IN; Chair, Board of Regents, St. Louis

Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, President, Concordia University, Nebraska

Mr. Keith Frndak, Member, LCMS Board of Directors

Rev. Dr. Robert Kuhn, Chairman, LCMS Board of Directors

Rev. Dr. David Maier, President, LCMS Michigan District

Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer, President, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Dr. Gerhard Munding, Member, Concordia University System Board

Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast, President, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

Dr. Mary Scott, Provost, Concordia University, Irvine

Rev. Dr. Dien Taylor, Pastor, Redeemer Evan. Lutheran Church, Bronx, NY

Rev. Dr. Dean Wenthe, President Emeritus, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

Dr. Dennis Witte, VP for Administration, Concordia University, Chicago

Resource persons from the International Center included:

Rev. Dr. Alan Borcharding, Interim President, Concordia University System

Mr. Ron Schultz, LCMS Chief Administrative Officer

Rev. Dr. Glen Thomas, Executive Director, LCMS Office of Pastoral Education

The task force elected as its officers Dr. Dean Wenthe, Mr. John Behrendt, and Dr. Dennis Witte.

The task force, assisted by staff from the International Center, has found in the fulfillment of this assignment reason for optimism and encouragement. We now wish to share with the Synod in convention the fruits of our work in keeping with the three-fold assignment given.

(1) *To research the efficiency of cooperative interaction for the fiscal strength of the LCMS system of colleges, universities, and seminaries:*

In many ways, the Concordia University System and the Concordia seminaries are great blessings in the Synod. While membership within the congregations of Synod continues to decline, shrinking the pool of LCMS students from which our universities and seminaries often draw students, enrollment in our CUS schools has shown remarkable growth, as shown by the following graph:

Our task force understands that “efficiency” can be understood in different ways, and even in ways that suggest “cheap” or “cut-rate.” These are not adjectives that should go with our system of higher education and preparation of church workers. Our schools have pursued efficiencies of operation not through shrinkage or consolidation but by offering excellent opportunities for education while retaining their Lutheran confessional identity. Though the pool of potential church-work students is smaller, our schools have worked even harder to attract them.

Some have suggested that consolidation or shrinkage of our schools to provide education only for the shrinking pool of church-work students would be more efficient, but the facts seem to indicate differently. While the primary mission of our system of LCMS higher education remains the preparation of faithful and well-prepared church workers, the secondary mission of preparing lay men and women for a variety of vocations in a distinctively Lutheran Christian context actually supports this mission by providing the financial support needed for economies of scale. Through competition with community-based, other private, and state colleges and universities as well as the rigors of accrediting agencies, our schools have become models of efficient operation, collaborating and innovating in degree programs and other activities.

There are many good examples of CUS collaboration. CUS has operated the Concordia Administrative Information System (CAIS) since 2000, providing eight of the campuses with services to operate a common, industry leading, higher education administrative software system. CUENet was formed in 1996, initially to share courses between the CUS schools and Lutheran high schools, and since 2001 has been the provider of the very successful online teacher colloquy program for the Synod. The CUS schools share a number of national contracts, some in cooperation with LCMS General Services and some on their own. Despite the challenges of accreditation across different regions of the nation, there are also numerous examples of academic collaborations such as the joint online MA in Education developed by Irvine and Portland, a new joint MBA program developed by Mequon and Seward, and cooperative international study activities.

The funding model for our system of higher education has changed and continues to do so. Shrinking resources sent to the national Synod curtail the subsidy that can be provided to our schools, while direct support of donors, growth of tuition income from increased enrollment, development efforts under the direction of the local boards of regents of the seminaries and CUS schools, and support of initiatives such as “For the Sake of the Church” have helped to keep the schools on a solid fiscal foundation. The transition has not been painless, but it is working. The Synod continues to fund its institutions, but in a different way. Rather than seeking to centralize this support, or to recommend shrinking our system in a time of great growth, we are

convinced that local boards of regents, most of whom are elected by the Synod, are best positioned to continue to move our schools forward while retaining their identity as LCMS schools.

(2) *To make recommendations that could be immediately implemented by the respective institutions and continue to enhance those current programs already in place with the seminaries and the CUS schools:*

Our task force reports that there is a strong desire among various entities of the Synod to further strengthen and support our system of higher education and church worker preparation. We have specifically recommended the following steps for implementation well prior to the 2013 convention of Synod:

- a. Board of Directors: We strongly recommend continued subsidy for seminaries and CUS schools from the unrestricted budget of Synod. Although the decline in unrestricted income to the national Synod means this cannot now equal what it once did, this subsidy continues to signal support for our schools and assists in their fiscal stability.
- b. Concordia University System: We endorse the efforts of the restructuring in the last convention to add efficiency to the governance of our seminaries, and we endorse the current efforts of CUS to add efficiency to our CUS schools by streamlining its method of governance. The Synod in convention elects and holds responsible boards of regents to maintain the fiscal health of the institutions while also assuring that they retain a clear LCMS identity. Accreditation agencies also require clear governance channels from the boards of regents. The CUS has prepared revised bylaws that will add efficiency to the governance of our CUS schools.
- c. BOD-CUS: We strongly recommend that they review and strengthen the system to manage the risk exposure of our CUS schools and seminaries.
- d. CUS: We strongly recommend even greater cooperation among CUS schools in church worker preparation, with the intent of keeping costs more affordable and providing more efficient peer-groups across the campuses of the CUS, including the sharing of programs, technology, and staff.
- e. CUS-Seminaries: We strongly recommend that the seminaries work closely with the pre-seminary directors of our CUS in an effort to provide a clearer and efficient path toward pastoral formation, one that takes full advantage of the learning that takes place in the pre-seminary experience.
- f. CUS-Seminaries: We strongly recommend strengthening and enhancing the selection of members to boards of regents and to provide detailed training for boards of regents members through such entities as the Association of Governing Boards or IN Trust so they are well-prepared to serve.
- g. President-BOD: We strongly encourage the President of the Synod to explore the feasibility of a special effort to retire the historic higher education debt of the LCMS (\$16 million).

(3) *To bring recommendations which require convention action to the 2013 LCMS convention for further implementation:*

To increase the strength and efficiency of our CUS schools and seminaries, there remain several items that require the Synod in convention to address.

- a. Debt Elimination: We recommend that the convention instruct the President of the Synod to authorize a feasibility study to determine if the capacity exists to eliminate the historic higher education debt of the Synod through a special campaign. This debt of approximately \$16 million costs the CUS \$2.5 million annually, which the corporate Synod funds through its subsidy to the CUS. If the capacity is determined to exist, the convention authorizes the President to appoint a committee to plan and oversee this project.
- b. Districts: We call upon the Synod in convention to encourage each district to continue, or create, a plan to assist church workers with educational debt to receive assistance in retiring their educational debt and to increase efforts to recruit and send church-work candi-

dates to our schools.

- c. Congregations: We call upon the Synod in convention to encourage each congregation to identify and send students to our CUS schools and seminaries, to pray regularly for them, and to add a line item to their budget including financial assistance for one or more of the CUS schools or seminaries, or to participate in adopt-a-student programs, in accordance with its ability. Through this broad-based and regional support, the financial and other needs of the schools may be more adequately addressed by our congregations “walking together” (Synod).
- d. Individuals: We call upon the convention to encourage everyone at the convention to pray for and assist with financial support one or more of the CUS schools or seminaries, and to encourage others to do the same, since the potential of more than two million individuals contributing above and beyond their support to their local congregation to the work of preparing church workers is enormous. We encourage continued support for “For the Sake of the Church” and endorse the efforts of CUS schools and seminaries to build endowment and scholarship funds through development efforts.
- e. Finally, we call upon the convention to pray fervently that the Lord of the harvest send forth laborers into His harvest, and that we implore Him to equip us with all things needful to carry out His work.

Resolution 4-04A Task Force

R5-03

5-05A Task Force Report and Recommendations

Background

Res. 5-05A (“To Support Pastoral Formation”), adopted by the 2010 LCMS convention, addresses the concern for pastoral formation. The resolution recognizes that pastoral formation encompasses important aspects of pre-seminary education, seminary education, and post-seminary continuing education. It also recognizes that “necessary growth” in pastoral formation—whether at pre-seminary, seminary, or post-seminary levels—should occur in a broad range of areas, including “biblical languages, mission training, leadership development, disability awareness, relationship and equipping skills, etc.”

The first of two “*Resolved*” sections of Res. 5-05A affirms twelve “Themes for Pastoral Education” which have been developed by the Board for Pastoral Education.¹ While these “themes” were developed to “provide a planning and guiding focus for the *recruitment and preparation* of pastors for the LCMS” (*italics added*), in a wider sense they pertain to all levels of pastoral formation.

The second of the two “*Resolved*” sections of Res. 5-05A states: “That the 2010 LCMS convention direct the Council of Presidents and the administration and faculties of the Synod’s seminaries and universities to continue to study how best to certify clergy and hold them accountable for continuing education; and . . . [t]hat their recommendations be presented at the next Synod convention.” This report is presented primarily in follow-up to this second section.

During the past triennium, meetings were held to discuss Res. 5-05A. Included were representatives of the Council of Presidents, administration and faculty members of both seminaries of Synod, and representatives of the Office of Pastoral Education and the Concordia University System. In addition, joint meetings of the entire Council of Presidents and the faculties of each of the seminaries of Synod were held to discuss Res. 5-05A and the topic of pastoral formation, qualification for first calls, and the importance of continuing education in the process of career-long pastoral formation.

This report addresses the outcome of those meetings under two headings which represent the concerns of Res. 5-05A: (1) Clergy Certification and (2) Accountability for Continuing Education.

1. Clergy Certification

Certification/Declaring Candidates Qualified for Their First Call

The wording of the second *Resolved* section of Res. 5-05A calls for the study of “how best to certify clergy.” Rather than speaking of certification, however, the existing LCMS bylaws use the specific wording that an individual must be “declared qualified for a first call.”² The process by which this occurs has changed over Synod’s history.

From its outset in 1847, the Synod required a formal examination process before declaring candidates qualified for their first call into the pastoral ministry. Initially, an Examining Commission was formed by two “theologians” and the Synod President. In 1853, with the formation of Synod’s first four districts, the Examining Committee was made up of the president of the seminary and the president of the district in which the seminary was located. The examinations included both written and oral components. In 1947, the Synod’s new constitution and bylaws placed the responsibility of examining and endorsing candidates upon the faculty of each seminary.³ Currently, each seminary issues a “Certification of Eligibility for Ordination-Installation,” noting that the student “has fulfilled all requirements for graduation” from the respective seminary and “has been endorsed by the faculty for the office of the holy ministry, has been officially assigned a Call . . . , and formally accepted that Call.” With this endorsement, the student becomes eligible for ordination and installation.

In the course of the work of this 5-05A Task Force, two concerns arose concerning the process of declaring candidates qualified for their first call. The first of these is that the current agency for declaring candidates qualified is the same agency which is responsible for the training the candidates receive, namely the faculty of the seminary.⁴ Unlike other professional organizations which require a certification or licensure process by a board or agency independent of the educational institution from which the individual graduated,⁵ there is no independent “certifying agency” provided by the current Bylaws of the Synod. While there is the understanding that the faculty with which the candidate has been associated would know if he is “qualified for a first call,” there is also a possible conflict of interest. Each seminary appropriately desires that a first call should be assigned to each of its graduates who desire to be placed in a congregation or agency of Synod. Because LCMS Bylaw 2.9.1 states that “the Council of Presidents, acting as the Board of Assignments, shall regularly assign to qualified graduates of educational institutions of the Synod” their first calls, the Board of Assignments struggles when it is tasked with assigning a call to an individual who may, in its opinion, not seem qualified. While there is certainly validity to the knowledge that a faculty has of its students, consideration should be given to a process of declaring candidates qualified for their first call which does not give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

The second concern is that once a candidate is declared qualified for a first call and is ordained and installed, the Bylaws of the Synod make no provision for that person being qualified for subsequent calls other than being a member of Synod who is on neither restricted nor suspended status.⁶ Later in this report, under the heading of “Accountability for Continuing Education,” this matter will be further addressed. However, recognizing this concern, it seems logical that following Bylaw sections 2.8 “Qualification for First Call,” 2.9 “Assignment of First Calls,” and 2.10 “Ordination, Commissioning, and Initial Installation,” a new Bylaw section 2.11 “Qualification for Subsequent Calls” should be added (with the corresponding renumbering of the remainder of Bylaws chapter 2. “Membership”).

Pre-Seminary Pastoral Formation

Basic to pastoral formation but beyond the scope of Res. 5-05A is the candidate’s home of origin and his home congregation. A high

percentage of seminarians indicate that a pastor was influential in their decision to enter the ministry.⁷ It is likely that the example of the candidate’s home pastor has bearing on the candidate’s view of the pastoral office and also serves as an example for that candidate’s future pastoral ministry. Every pastor would do well to set an example for pastoral ministry which those from the congregation who train for this vocation would desire to emulate.

A significant shift in pre-seminary pastoral formation has occurred over the years. Historically, there have been routes which have accommodated accelerated entry into the pastoral ministry or entry after experience in a different vocation. However, a majority of candidates for the pastoral ministry were “system men,” whose pastoral formation had begun at pre-seminary levels and in residential programs on campuses where the majority of students were preparing for professional church-work vocations. These residential programs, involving four to six years of pre-seminary education, provided not only academic training but also a great deal of collegiality which contributed toward pastoral formation, especially when the nonmarried pre-seminary students lived on campus. That collegiality continued for the majority of students as they attended the seminary as single, residential on-campus students. Moreover, the collegial attitude extended beyond the seminary for many.

With the change from Synod’s colleges, junior colleges, and the Senior College to the current Concordia University System, in which a minority of students are preparing for professional church-work vocations and an even smaller minority are preparing for the pastoral ministry, intentional efforts at pre-seminary pastoral formation are critical. The twelve “Themes for Pastoral Education” should provide a strong and intentional focus in the formal academic training for the pre-seminary programs. It is commendable that in addition to the pre-seminary academic programs, the Synod’s universities offer pre-seminary fellowship and service groups that provide less formal but very important opportunities for collegiality and pastoral formation. Such opportunities should continue.

Nonetheless, the majority of students entering Synod’s seminaries now come from academic backgrounds that were not specifically designed for seminary preparation and from vocational backgrounds in occupations other than the pastoral ministry.⁸ In a matter of two or three generations, a significant shift has occurred from a majority of men who have experienced eight to ten years of intentional pre-ordination pastoral formation to a majority whose pre-ordination pastoral formation occurs over four years, as in the case of residential students, or less, as in the case of alternate routes such as the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program. As a result, a large emphasis on pastoral formation must necessarily occur at the seminary level and continue beyond seminary.

Seminary Pastoral Formation

Both seminaries provide a core curriculum that reflects the traditional academic disciplines of biblical interpretation (exegesis), the Lutheran Confessions and Christian/Lutheran doctrine (systematics), church history, and pastoral/practical theology. In addition, both seminaries continually are involved in ongoing self-studies not only to review their academic programs but also with the goal that their entire program of pastoral formation will result in candidates for the holy ministry who are both theologically sound and emotionally mature, and who are ready to engage their congregations and communities in a responsible, caring, and evangelical manner.

Both seminaries provide pastoral formation experiences beyond the classrooms, vicarages, and varied field-work opportunities, which may include contexts involving institutional service, cross-cultural ministry, and engaging the community and culture in witness and service. Moreover, from the admissions process through the time that the

seminaries declare that the candidates are qualified for their first call, both seminaries are intentional in following the progress and pastoral formation of individual seminarians.⁹

In recent years, joint meetings between the seminary faculties and the Council of Presidents have been scheduled on an annual basis. Bridging the gap between formal seminary education and the actual performance of pastors as they assume service in their first calls, these meetings have provided opportunities for frank and helpful dialogue as well as the sharing of theological and practical considerations for pastoral formation at the seminary level and beyond. For the sake of further growth in the overall topic of pastoral formation, it is essential that these joint meetings and frank dialogues continue.

Post-Seminary Pastoral Formation

Graduation from a seminary of the Synod does not mean the end of learning and pastoral growth and formation. In recent years, the Post-seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) program has provided a first step for continuing education and post-seminary pastoral formation. Through a peer learning group of pastors in their first through third years of ministry, along with a seasoned pastor who serves as a facilitator, pastors are able to improve their ministry skills through informal discussions and also with the benefit of a formal PALS curriculum dealing with a variety of practical topics. The PALS courses are continuing education courses, with continuing education units (CEUs) granted upon completion. While participation in PALS is not required for recent graduates, and while not all districts currently participate in the PALS program but some instead provide a more district-specific program, participation in PALS or a corresponding district program is an important step in post-seminary pastoral formation and should be expected as a vital step in pastoral formation.

The seminaries of Synod also have a vital role in post-seminary continuing education and pastoral formation. Both seminaries host on-campus opportunities for pastoral growth¹⁰ as well as provide multiple continuing education class opportunities annually at various locations throughout the nation,¹¹ granting CEUs upon successful completion of the workshops or classes. In addition to their other advanced-degree programs, both seminaries offer a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program to experienced pastors who desire to grow in their competence in pastoral sensitivities and skills. The DMin course of study is done mostly by extension while the pastor is serving his parish.

The Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) has, for many years, provided another venue for pastoral growth and formation, especially in providing training in mission-focused pastoral leadership. Combining peer learning, personal coaching, and additional academic work, PLI has partnered with the seminaries of Synod in offering a DMin program. Likewise, DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel provides advanced training for Lutheran pastors who desire to grow in their abilities to provide spiritual care and counsel for the people in their congregations.

Beyond the continuing education opportunities provided by the PALS program, the seminaries, and other organizations such as PLI and DOXOLOGY, Bylaw section 4.8 provides for official district conferences, which include “matters pertaining to Christian doctrine and practice; to professional problems; to the proper conduct in office; to private study” etc. (Bylaw 4.8.1 [b]), and which are to be held “at least once each year” (Bylaw 4.8.2), and at which attendance “shall be obligatory” (Bylaw 4.8.2 [d] [1]). Practice concerning official conferences varies throughout the Synod’s districts as to the frequency and structure of the conferences and whether formal continuing education units are provided. However, consideration should be given to offering formal continuing education opportunities, including granting CEUs, at official conferences.¹²

Synod Bylaw section 4.9 makes provision for nonofficial conferences, including circuit conferences (*Winkels*). Workers “are encouraged to meet . . . for the purpose of discussing doctrinal, professional, and practical matters” (Bylaw 4.9.1 [a]). A variety of unofficial conferences are held in districts and the Synod. Some focus on specific theological topics, while others emphasize practical concerns that apply to specific niches within the Synod.

Synod Bylaw 5.2.3 [i] provides for regular circuit conferences (*Winkels*). Although the agenda and content is not specified by the Synod’s bylaws, *Winkels* typically include theological study, discussion concerning pastoral practice, and time for casuistry, discussing difficult pastoral care situations—all of which may contribute to ongoing professional growth and pastoral formation. However, the bylaws make no expectation for attendance at *Winkels* beyond the encouragement stated in Bylaw 4.9.1 [a].

Beyond the single required annual official district conference and the encouragement for pastors to participate in circuit conferences or other unofficial conferences, there are no provisions in the Synod’s bylaws for required continuing education or intentional growth in pastoral formation beyond the seminary level.

A concern that repeatedly surfaced in the meetings associated with the 5-05A Task Force was that for well-balanced post-seminary career-long pastoral formation, pastors should participate in a variety of continuing education topics. Under the traditional four disciplines of exegetical, systematic, historical, and practical theology, pastors would participate in continuing education modules which would aid proficiency in a broad range of classes or workshops including, but not limited to, biblical languages, scriptural and confessional theological scholarship, preaching and worship skills, leadership and administrative development, mission outreach from local to global contexts, engaging the culture with faithful Law and Gospel proclamation and practice, cross-cultural exposure, and church and ministry understandings. While it is beyond the scope of this 5-05A Task Force Report to establish a comprehensive and detailed program for continuing education and pastoral formation, provision should be made so that pastors will have opportunity for well-balanced growth that reflects the integrity of the pastoral office, is sound in theology and practice, and is faithful to the mission of the church.

2. Accountability for Continuing Education

Even as different pastors have different strengths, weaknesses, and interests, there is a wide spectrum of involvement in continuing education and commitment to intentional pastoral growth and formation. There are many pastors who have found great benefit for themselves and the congregations or agencies they serve through intentional involvement in formal continuing education. There are other pastors who capably serve their congregations or agencies but whose involvement in formal continuing education has been less intentional. And there are some pastors who have felt little need for continuing education but whose pastoral growth and formation would have benefitted greatly from such. Proverbs 27:17 states, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” Intentional continuing education can have a vital role in career-long pastoral growth and formation, sharpening men to be more capable in their pastoral care and service. Perhaps this has never been more important than in the current post-churched (or pre-churched) culture in which the church now exists and in which pastors serve.

In Synod, there is significant recognition of the benefit of continuing education in the process of career-long pastoral formation. The 2007 LCMS convention overwhelmingly adopted Res. 5-05, “To Encourage Commitment to Continuing Education for Clergy.”¹³ Res. 5-05 not only encouraged all LCMS pastors to develop and engage in a plan for continuing education, but it also encouraged congregations

both to cover the cost of their pastors' continuing education and to provide "additional compensation" for pastors as they continued their education and spiritual and professional growth. Moreover, Res. 5-05 directed that "the Council of Presidents, the Board for Pastoral Education, and the Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support work together in developing strategies for implementing continuing education plans for pastors."

Although representatives from the Council of Presidents, the Board for Pastoral Education, and the Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support participated in a task force to implement 2007 LCMS Res. 5-05, a task-force report was not completed, nor was a firm plan of action developed. One of the primary reasons was that the wording of Res. 5-05 was limited to encouragement, and the current Bylaws of the Synod offer no effective means of providing accountability.¹⁴ It was largely for this reason that the wording of 2010 Res. 5-05A became more specific, directing that what became the Res. 5-05A Task Force would study how best to hold clergy accountable for continuing education. This coincided with a recommendation from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance (BRTFSSG) that also urged accountability for continuing education.¹⁵

There is no provision in the LCMS bylaws for pastors to participate in any formal continuing education nor accountability toward an ongoing process of career-long pastoral formation subsequent to their being declared qualified for their first call by the faculties of the seminaries and subsequent to their ordination, installation, and initial membership in Synod. For continued eligibility as a rostered pastor and availability for further calls, an individual needs only to be a communicant member of a congregation which is a member of the Synod¹⁶ and to perform the duties of his office.¹⁷ Further, neither Scripture nor the Lutheran Confessions specify formal academic requirements either for entering or continuing in the pastoral office.¹⁸ The Synod, however, in its understanding of *iure humano*, may establish criteria for those who are included on the roster of the Synod and who are qualified for initial and subsequent calls. Involvement in continuing education should be added to the criteria that the Synod already has established.

Recognizing the benefit of continuing education to the ongoing process of pastoral growth and formation, two of the important documents that are critical to every pastor's membership file at the pastor's home district include sections concerning continuing education. The Pastor's Information Form (PIF) has a line concerning the pastor's "Openness to Continuing Education." And the Self Evaluation Tool (SET) has two separate sections concerning continuing education. The first states, "Enumerate skills you have acquired (Clinical Pastoral Education, sign language, substance abuse, counseling, etc.) and other continuing education courses you have taken" and then asks for details including the course name, location, dates, and time involved. A second question asks, "What plans do you have for future continuing education and/or special skill building?"

Congregations or other calling entities do well to review information about a pastor's attitude and involvement in continuing education when considering candidates for their call. They should also make ample provision both in providing financial assistance and nonvacation time for the pastor's involvement in continuing education if he accepts their call. Moreover, reflecting the encouragement of 2007 Res. 5-05, districts should revise their district salary guidelines available to congregations, providing incremental adjustments to the salaries of pastors who actively participate in some form of continuing education.

In addition, in order to integrate the process of career-long pastoral formation through continuing education, every pastoral candidate and pastor should develop a personal continuing education portfolio, including a long-term plan of action and goals for continuing

education. The pastor's official membership file at the district should include a summary record of the pastor's portfolio tracking his continuing education endeavors. This portfolio summary, like the current SET, could be incorporated into the placement process for a candidate's first call, with intentional direction begun for continuing education beyond the seminary. An expected part of this portfolio would be formal participation in the PALS program (or a comparable district program) for the first three years following graduation from the seminary. A summary of this continuing education portfolio should be included along with the pastor's PIF and SET information to calling congregations. Moreover, district presidents and/or circuit counselors, as the district presidents' representatives, should, as a part of their official visits, consult with each pastor concerning his continuing education plans and progress, providing evangelical encouragement to the end that pastors will be equipped with the best and strongest theological and confessional foundations to serve faithfully in their calling.

Recommendations

1. While 2010 Res. 5-05A specifically addresses pastoral formation, certification, and accountability for continuing education; the changes to the Bylaws of the Synod which would be necessary to address these concerns also by default involve the commissioned workers of Synod. It is recommended that over the coming triennium, one representative each from the Office of Pastoral Education, the Concordia University System, the Council of Presidents, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations consult with the Commission on Handbook to develop specific bylaw proposals which reflect the recommendations of this 5-05A Task Force Report and present these proposals for adoption at the 2016 LCMS convention.
2. LCMS Bylaw 2.11.1 should be amended to read thusly:
 - 2.11.1 To remain on the roster of the Synod as an active member, an ordained or commissioned minister of religion must do the following: be a communicant member of a congregation which is a member of the Synod (except as provided in paragraph [c] below) and be regularly performing the duties of one of the following:
 - (a) Be a communicant member of a congregation which is a member of the Synod (except as provided in paragraph [b] [3] below):
 - (b) Be regularly performing the duties of one of the following:
 - (a)(1) An ordained minister serving a congregation of the Synod.
 - (b)(2) A commissioned minister serving a congregation of the Synod.
 - (c)(3) A minister of religion, ordained or commissioned, serving a congregation which is not a member of the Synod, provided that such is approved (on the basis of policies adopted by the Council of Presidents) by the president of the district in which the congregation is located.
 - (d)(4) An elected officer of the Synod, including a district or other agency of the Synod.
 - (e)(5) An executive or professional staff member serving the Synod, including a district or other agency of the Synod.
 - (f)(6) An executive or professional staff member serving a national inter-Lutheran entity of which the Synod is a member.
 - (g)(7) A missionary serving under a call by the Synod, including a call by a district.
 - (h)(8) A person serving on the faculty or professional staff of an educational institution of the Synod.
 - (i)(9) A military or institutional chaplain or other specialized ministry endorsed by the Synod, including endorsement by one of its districts.
 - (j)(10) An executive or professional staff member called or appointed by a national inter-Lutheran agency referred to in Bylaw 1.3.8.
 - (k)(11) An executive or professional staff member called or appointed by an auxiliary (Bylaw section 6.1) or other recognized service

organization (Bylaw section 6.2), or a person serving an educational institution solely governed by congregations of the Synod and recognized by a district of the Synod.

- (c) Be involved in an ongoing program of professional continuing education.
3. A new Bylaw section 2.11 “Qualification for Subsequent Calls” should be added to the Synod’s *Handbook*. The new bylaw should, *at the minimum*, make provisions for (1) an initial plan for continuing education for all graduates of education institutions of Synod, for candidates who have satisfactorily completed an approved colloquy program, and for candidates who have satisfactorily completed a distance learning and/or a mentoring system; (2) an active personnel portfolio for every active worker indicating involvement in a well-balanced program of continuing education modules and/or courses; (3) providing to the district office by January 31 a record of the prior year’s continuing-education involvement; and (4) a minimum annual number of continuing education units (CEUs)—no less than 1.5 per year (see Endnote 12). Additional consideration should be given to provisions for continuing education standards. Such provisions might state that the Board of Directors of the Concordia University System shall establish and maintain continuing education standards for commissioned members (this is consistent with Bylaw 3.6.6.5 [j]), and that the Council of Presidents, in consultation with the Office of Pastoral Education and the faculties of the seminaries, establish and maintain continuing education standards for ordained members.
 4. Further consideration should be given to Bylaw sections 2.7 and 2.8, which currently authorize the educational institutions of Synod to declare candidates qualified for their first call. While this may indeed be the desire of Synod, it would seem beneficial to explore and offer to the Synod in convention other alternatives which may not give the appearance of a conflict of interest.
 5. Bylaw section 4.8 should be amended to encourage that official district conferences provide formal continuing education opportunities, including the granting of CEUs.

Notes

1. The twelve themes with their definitions:
 - Academic Readiness: The church needs pastors who are grounded in the Holy Scriptures, rooted in the Lutheran Confessions, formed by the history of the church, and able to apply the Word of God to the lives of people for their salvation and for his own, to the glory of God.
 - Pastoral Practice: The church needs pastors who are competent leaders in pastoral ministry.
 - Spiritual Formation: The church seeks men whose faith in Jesus Christ is nourished regularly by the Word and sacraments in public worship and by a disciplined devotional life.
 - Mission Outreach: The church needs pastors who are prepared to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.
 - Understanding Church within Culture and Context: The church looks to its pastors to know the Holy Scriptures well, to be confidently Lutheran, and to apply the Word of God to contemporary contexts and culture.
 - Community of Faith: The church wants pastoral education undertaken in an environment of prayer and care, with worship at the center, and with the proper integration of biblical theology and pastoral practice.
 - Service of the Baptized: The church wants pastors who are prepared to motivate and stimulate, prepare and engage the baptized in their lives of service and vocation.
 - Church Administration: The church needs pastors to lead and manage the congregation to accomplish its mission and purpose.
 - Faithful Faculty with Pastoral Experience: The church needs faculty who are committed to the mission of the church, maintain academic excellence, testify to their faith, relate theology to pastoral practice, make

alive the Lutheran heritage, and show appreciation for the practice of pastoral ministry.

- Scholarship for the Church and to the World: The church needs pastors, congregations, universities/colleges, and seminaries to transmit Lutheran theology to the next generations.
 - Flexibility in Approach and Delivery of Pastoral Education: The church needs pastoral education brought to candidates as diverse as their membership and mission—young and old, single and married, no debt and heavy debt, no college and advanced degrees, novice Christians and Lutherans their entire life, confined to one place and highly mobile, dominant culture and ethnic community, rich and poor.
 - International/Global Component: The church needs to recognize that pastoral education is an international endeavor.
2. *Handbook*, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2010. Bylaws 2.7.1 regarding residential seminary training; 2.7.2 regarding colloquy; 2.7.3 regarding distance learning; and 2.8.1 regarding all first calls.
 3. Gerhard Bode Jr., “A Brief History of Endorsing Ministerial Candidates in the LCMS” (paper presented to the Joint Meeting of the Council of Presidents and the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, February 19, 2012).
 4. See 2010 *Handbook*, Bylaws 2.7.1 and 2.7.3.
 5. “Certification provides an impartial, third-party endorsement of an individual’s professional knowledge and experience.” Philip Barnart, “The Guide to National Professional Certification Programs” (HRD Press, 1997), ISBN 0-8493-9960-2; retrieved electronically 9 November 2012.
 6. See 2010 *Handbook*, Bylaws 2.13.2.2 (b) and 2.13.4.2 (c).
 7. *Class Profile: Class I, 2012–2013, Master of Divinity Degree Program*, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Eighty-one percent of entering students list a pastor’s influence.
 8. While Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (formerly Springfield), historically has had a higher percentage of second career students, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, has seen a significant increase in second career men, accounting for 48 percent of the first-year MDiv residential students in academic year 2012–13 (*Class Profile: Class I, 2012–2013, Master of Divinity Degree Program*, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis).
 9. Beyond general student orientation for all students, both seminaries assign faculty advisors for each seminarian and review the reports from the field-education supervisors as well as conduct pre- and post-vicarage reviews. Students at the St. Louis seminary undergo psychological testing with follow-up interviews to develop a personal formation plan that can involve some counseling. A Ministerial Formation Student Consultation Committee (MFSCC) at St. Louis meets weekly to review the progress of students, identifying areas of concerns that may need to be addressed. This is in addition to two full faculty reviews of all students during each resident year with any concerns forwarded to the MFSCC for follow-up attention. At the Fort Wayne seminary, a Pastoral Formation Statement is introduced to all students during the first year and then reviewed as part of the new-call orientation for all fourth-year students.
 10. Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, hosts an annual *Symposia Series* addressing contemporary topics from both exegetical and confessional perspectives. In 2013, the exegetical topic was “*Love and Marriage: Does the Bible Still Mean What It Says?*” and the confessional topic was “*Morality and Ethics in the Church and in the Public Square: The Lutheran Challenge.*” Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, hosts a variety of on-campus workshops and lectures (see <http://www.csl.edu/category/events/> or <http://www.csl.edu/resources/continuinged/>) as well as downloadable archived classroom video presentations available on iTunes.csl.edu.
 11. During the summer and fall of 2012, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, each provided 18 regional continuing education workshops.

12 Normally one CEU credit is granted for 10 contact hours, but this may vary depending on required noncontact assignments or other requirements.

13. *Convention Proceedings*, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2007, pp. 140–41. The resolution was adopted with a Yes vote of 1,084 and a No vote of 132.

14. Perhaps this dilemma reflects the words of the first President of Synod: “According to the constitution under which our synodical union exists, we have merely the power to advise one another, that we have only the power of the Word, and of convincing” (C.F.W. Walther’s First Presidential Address, 1848, translated by Paul F. Koehnke, *CHIQ.*)

15. For the full recommendation, see *The Final Report of The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance*, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, October 15, 2009, pp. 47–48.

16. An exception is provided in LCMS Bylaw 2.11.1 (c), which makes provision for a minister of religion serving a congregation which is not a member of the Synod, provided that such is approved by the president of the district in which the congregation is located.

17. LCMS Bylaw section 2.11 “Continued Eligibility of Individual Members.”

18. Certainly, apart from academic expectations, there are ample scriptural expectations for those who hold the pastoral office, such as 1 Tim. 3:1–7; 4:12; Titus 1:6–9; and 1 Peter 5:1–3.

5-05A Task Force Addendum to Report

[The following “Report Observations” correspond to the underlined sections in the 5-05A Task Force Report. This addendum provides recommendations both for convention action and for interim action by entities or agencies other than a convention of Synod.]

1. Report Observation:

“Unlike other professional organizations which require a certification or licensure process by a board or agency independent of the educational institution from which the individual graduated, there is no independent ‘certifying agency’ provided by the current Bylaws of Synod....While there is certainly validity to the knowledge that a faculty has of its students, consideration should be given to a process of declaring candidates qualified for their first call which does not give the appearance of a conflict of interest.”

Proposed Convention Action:

This is addressed in Recommendation 4 (Report, p. 102).

Proposed Interim Action:

- This matter first should be discussed further at joint meetings of the faculties of the seminaries and Council of Presidents, and then referred to the committee described in Recommendation 1 for bylaw recommendations to the 2016 convention.

2. Report Observations:

“A new Bylaw section 2.11 “Qualification for Subsequent Calls” should be added (with the corresponding renumbering of the remainder of Bylaws chapter 2, “Membership”).”

“The Synod, however, in its understanding of *iure humano*, may establish criteria for those who are included on the roster of Synod and who are qualified for initial and subsequent calls. Involvement in continuing education should be added to the criteria that the Synod already has established.”

Proposed Convention Action:

This is addressed in Recommendation 3.

Proposed Interim Action:

- A representative from the CTCR and from each of the seminary faculties should approach this from a scriptural and confessional basis. While neither Scriptures nor the Confessions specifically deal with the matter of the relationship between continuing education and qualification for subsequent calls, there are certainly scriptural and confessional references which have bearing on this matter (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15 and

Luther’s Prefaces to the Small and Large Catechisms at a minimum). Such references should be included in any resolution which is presented to a convention of the Synod which would consider such a bylaw change.

3. Report Observation:

“The twelve ‘Themes for Pastoral Education’ should provide a strong and intentional focus in the formal academic training for the pre-seminary programs. It is commendable that in addition to the pre-seminary academic programs, the Synod’s universities offer pre-seminary fellowship and service groups that provide less formal but very important opportunities for collegiality and pastoral formation. Such opportunities should continue.”

Proposed Convention Action:

None

Proposed Interim Action:

- Because the twelve “themes” were part of Res. 5-05A, which was adopted in 2010, these themes already should be integrated as part of the operating guidelines for each of Synod’s colleges or universities which has a program for pastoral formation. The Concordia University System should follow up to ensure that these “themes” are in place and are being integrated in the programs for pastoral formation.

4. Report Observation:

“Participation in PALS or a corresponding district program is an important step in post-seminary pastoral formation and should be expected as a vital step in pastoral formation.”

“Provision should be made so that pastors will have opportunity for well-balanced growth that reflects the integrity of the pastoral office, is sound in theology and practice, and is faithful to the mission of the church.”

Proposed Convention Action:

This should all be considered as part of the proposed amendments to Bylaw section 2.11 (see no. 2 above).

Proposed Interim Action:

- District presidents should both encourage formal participation in PALS or a corresponding district program by all new graduates and include this in the process of developing a continuing education portfolio for every pastor.
- The Council of Presidents should work with the Office of Pastoral Education and the faculties of the seminaries to determine continuing education modules which reflect both the twelve “Themes for Pastoral Education” as well as those areas of “necessary growth in pastoral formation” identified in 2010 Res. 5-05A, namely: “biblical languages, mission training, leadership development, disability awareness, relationship and equipping skills, etc.” In addition, this group should develop templates both for pastors’ continuing education portfolios and the corresponding pastors’ district files. Such templates should provide continuing education standards that will help guide the pastors in an intentional and well-balanced plan for continuing pastoral formation.

5. Report Observation:

“For the sake of further growth in the overall topic of pastoral formation, it is essential that these joint meetings and frank dialogues continue.”

Proposed Convention Action:

None

Proposed Interim Action:

- The faculties of the seminaries and the Council of Presidents should continue to commit to annual joint Council of Presidents/faculty meetings on each campus with an agenda that specifically includes the topic of pastoral formation.
- In the past, there were occasional joint meetings of the Council of Presidents with the faculties of both seminaries together. Because of the cost involved, those joint meetings have been discontinued.

However, recognizing that there would be benefit to having the Council of Presidents and both faculties together, the thought came up concerning the possibility of meeting together electronically on occasion. This possibility should be referred to the Program Committee of the Council of Presidents along with the Faculty Planning Committees.

6. Report Observation:

“Consideration should be given to offering formal continuing education opportunities, including granting CEUs, at official conferences.”

Proposed Convention Action:

This is addressed in Recommendation 5 (Report, p. 103).

Proposed Interim Action:

- The Council of Presidents should develop guidelines for official district conferences which make provision for formal continuing education opportunities, including the granting of CEUs. Such guidelines may consider the 12 “Themes for Pastoral Education” affirmed by 2010 Res. 5-05A. The Council of Presidents should also begin working with the seminary faculties to determine continuing education modules that may be incorporated.

7. Report Observation:

“Congregations or other calling entities do well to review information about a pastor’s attitude and involvement in continuing education when considering candidates for their call. They should also make ample provision both in providing financial assistance and nonvacation time for the pastor’s involvement in continuing education if he accepts their call. Moreover, reflecting the encouragement of 2007 Res. 5-05, districts should revise their district salary guidelines available to congregations, providing incremental adjustments to the salaries of pastors who actively participate in some form of continuing education.”

Proposed Convention Action:

None

Proposed Interim Action:

- This should be referred to the Council of Presidents and specifically to its Clergy Call and Roster Committee.
 - A preliminary document on continuing education should be drafted for immediate use, then modified following the 2016 convention to incorporate any changes concerning continuing education that are adopted.
 - The Council of Presidents’ Manual should be updated to include continuing education information.
- Initially, district presidents should do the following:
 - Incorporate information about continuing education in their pre-call/call process with congregations
 - Involve the circuit counselors in promoting continuing education with both pastors and congregations
 - Work to modify their district salary guidelines to account for continuing education

8. Report Observation:

“Every pastoral candidate and pastor should develop a personal continuing education portfolio, including a long-term plan of action and goals for continuing education. The pastor’s official membership file at the district should include a summary record of the pastor’s portfolio tracking his continuing-education endeavors. This portfolio summary, like the current SET, could be incorporated into the placement process for a candidate’s first call, with intentional direction begun for continuing education beyond the seminary. An expected part of this portfolio would be formal participation in the PALS program (or a comparable district program) for the first three years following graduation from the seminary. A summary of this continuing education portfolio should be included along with the pastor’s PIF and SET information to calling congregations. Moreover, district presidents and/or circuit counselors, as the district presidents’ representatives, should, as a part of their official visits, consult with each pastor concerning his continuing education plans and progress, providing evangelical encouragement to the

end that pastors will be equipped with the best and strongest theological and confessional foundations to serve faithfully in their calling.”

Proposed Convention Action:

None

Proposed Interim Action:

- This should be referred to the Council of Presidents and specifically to the Clergy Call and Roster Committee.
 - A preliminary document on continuing education should be drafted for immediate use, then modified following the 2016 convention to incorporate any changes concerning continuing education that are adopted. This would include a standardized form (in addition to the PIF and SET) which will track workers’ participation in continuing education.
 - The Council of Presidents’ Manual should be updated to include continuing education information.
- Initially, district presidents should do the following:
 - Encourage each pastor to develop his continuing education portfolio (see “Proposed Interim Action in no. 4 above)
 - Begin using the continuing education standardized form as part of the information provided in the calling process

5-05A Task Force

R6-01-01

First Vice-President

The vice-presidents of the Synod are elected to advise the President of the Synod, to serve on the Council of Presidents, and to form, under the President, the Praesidium of the Synod. Upon his request or as provided by the Synod, the vice-presidents assist the President in carrying out his responsibilities and represent him as needed.

The First Vice-President serves as a full-time executive and a non-voting member of the Synod’s Board of Directors. He is responsible to the President at all times for the performance of his duties.

During this past triennium, the undersigned has been given opportunity to work with many individuals and groups throughout the Synod. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- President of the Synod and his staff as a member of the President’s team
- Secretary of the Synod
- Council of Presidents
- Board of Directors of the Synod
- Corporate Synod executives and Administrative Team
- Task Force on Restructuring (as we transitioned from the old structure to the new)
- President’s Church Relations Cabinet
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
- Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
- Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly
- Committee on Lutheran Cooperation
- Res. 8-07 Task Force
- Convention Planning Committee
- Commission on Theology and Church Relations
- Commission on Constitutional Matters
- Boards for National and International Mission
- Presidents and members of the faculties of both seminaries
- Praesidium of the Synod
- PALS Steering Committee
- Several *ad hoc* task forces at the International Center

- Synod Prison Ministry Conference
- Human Resources Committee
- Several pastoral conferences around the Synod

The Praesidium, which includes the President of the Synod and the five vice-presidents, met regularly for prayer, Bible study, and discussion of Synod matters. The Praesidium gave counsel on a variety of matters as requested by the President of the Synod, district presidents, and others. The undersigned serves as secretary of the Praesidium.

The First Vice-President serves as chairman of both the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry and the Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry, the reports of which follow in this *Convention Workbook*. By means of colloquy, the Lord of the Church provides for the congregations of the Synod many qualified commissioned ministers and ordained pastors.

The President or his staff often consult with me or ask me to work with individuals or groups requesting information regarding ecclesiastical supervision issues in the districts. We always seek to help the individuals and to help and support the district presidents in their necessary work. We assisted in the preparation for district conventions and handled most of the requests for circuit exceptions in the preparation for the 2013 Synod convention.

President Matthew Harrison, at the beginning of our service together, asked the undersigned to develop what we are calling “The Koinonia Project,” an initiative of the office of the President to work toward greater unity of doctrine and practice in our Synod. More information on this effort can be found both in the Report of the President and on the Synod’s Web site at <http://lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1041>. The goal of The Koinonia Project (koinonia is the Greek word meaning “partnership,” “fellowship,” or “sharing in common”) is to address the theological issues causing friction among us **by a thorough process under the Word of God where we come to clear agreement on (1) the points at issue, (2) what we confess together, (3) what we reject, and (4) what we will therefore do together, on the basis of Scripture and our Confessions.** This effort to do so we have chosen to call “The Koinonia Project” because we pray God will build and strengthen our unity in the Word of God and our fellowship, our “koinonia” together. In so doing, we seek to follow our Lutheran forebears who began the process of developing the Formula of Concord by agreeing on what the true issues were. We pray The Koinonia Project can become an honest Spirit-guided effort over time to do what it takes to engage one another in theological listening and the discussions necessary under the Word of God and our Lutheran Confessions to work toward unity, concord, and harmony in our midst. “Koinonia” is always God’s gift in Jesus by means of His Word and Sacrament.

During the triennium, the First Vice-President visited several times with members of the faculty of both of our seminaries and preached in chapel at both seminaries. He attended the LCEF Fall Leadership Conferences and 15 district conventions, spoke at various professional church worker conferences, preached at a number of congregations across the Synod, addressed a variety of groups within the Synod, and wrote various pieces for the Witness, Mercy, Life Together blog sponsored by the President’s office (WMLTblog.org).

To speak personally, it is both a privilege and a joy to serve with President Matthew Harrison, together with the Praesidium, other Synod officers and the Council of Presidents. The President and all the members of his staff, especially my executive assistant, Mrs. Brenda Schreder, are all gifts of God and a pleasure to work with. I look forward to each day working with them in order to serve the Lord and to serve you, the members of the Synod, in this capacity. The Lord Jesus is blessing our beloved Synod with rich resources and faithful servants.

Herbert C. Mueller Jr., *First Vice-President*

R6-01-02

Report of the Praesidium

The vice-presidents of the Synod are elected to advise the President of the Synod, to serve on the Council of Presidents, and to form, under the President, the Praesidium of the Synod. The Praesidium for 2013 included the following:

- President Matthew C. Harrison, St. Louis, MO.
- First Vice-President Herbert C. Mueller Jr., Waterloo, IL.
- Second Vice-President John C. Wohlrahe Jr., Milwaukee, WI.
- Third Vice-President Paul L. Maier, Kalamazoo, MI.
- Fourth Vice-President Daniel Preus, St. Louis, MO.
- Fifth Vice-President Scott R. Murray, Houston, TX.

Upon his request or as provided by the Synod, the vice-presidents assist the President in carrying out his responsibilities and represent him as needed. The Praesidium as such met regularly (generally four times per year) for prayer, Bible study, discussion of Synod matters and to give counsel on a variety of matters as requested by the President of the Synod, district presidents, and others. The undersigned serves as secretary of the Praesidium.

The Praesidium is responsible for a series of Bible studies prepared for circuit pastoral conferences. “The Under-Shepherd under the Cross” was the theme for 2011–2012. During the present year (2012–2013), we are working with the theme “Called to Be Christ’s Witnesses.” These studies are funded through payments made each year by the districts and are available for free download at www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1129. Pastor Mark Love of St. Peter’s, Rockford, Michigan, is the general editor.

During the triennium, the vice-presidents visited several of the campuses of the Concordia University System, advised the President and First Vice-President on the Koinonia Project, assisted in making sure a representative of the Synod was present for all of the 35 district conventions, and provided consultation to the President regarding nominations for the CCM.

A major project given to the Praesidium by the 2010 LCMS convention had to do with the evaluation of our relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in the area of “cooperation in externals.” This directive came from 2010 Res. 3-03 “To Cooperate in Externals with Theological Integrity,” which resolved as follows:

Resolved, That the task force be thanked and commended for its work on identifying practical implications of the 2009 ELCA decisions on human sexuality; and be it further

Resolved, That, in keeping with the basic principles set forth in the task force statement, cooperation in externals with other churches, including the ELCA, continue with theological integrity; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God for the opportunity to give witness to God’s care for all people through such cooperative work; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR, in consultation with the Praesidium and other entities and individuals as needed, develop more in-depth theological criteria for assessing cooperative endeavors, determining what would necessitate termination of such cooperative efforts; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Praesidium, in consultation with the CTCR, provide an assessment of the current state of cooperation in externals and a full report of criteria for ongoing assessment of the same by July 13, 2011.

In response, the CTCR prepared “Principles for Cooperation in Externals with Theological Integrity,” adopted by the CTCR in December 2010, which appears in this workbook. The Praesidium discussed at length the above resolution and this document prepared by the CTCR. Relationships with social ministry recognized service organizations (RSOs), plus educational RSOs, dominated the

discussion. The actual task of evaluating RSOs belongs to the Synod's staff following policies adopted by the Synod's Board of Directors.

After reading through the CTCR Report word-for-word, the Praesidium endorsed the report, "Principles for Cooperation in Externals with Theological Integrity (2010 Res. 3-03)," with a unanimous vote. Special note should be taken of the following questions from the document:

1. Is the purpose of the joint work fully consistent with the positions, policies, and objectives of the Synod?
2. Do cooperative efforts imply doctrinal unity with the ELCA or endorsement of ELCA positions on same-sex relationships or other matters of disagreement with the LCMS?
3. Does the joint agency or organization distinguish itself as an entity from the churches that support it?
4. Are all the policies and programs of the organization consonant with the doctrinal position of the LCMS?
5. Do the individuals who lead the organization openly support and encourage efforts, positions, or policies which compromise the theological stance of the Synod?

Finally, having read and endorsed the CTCR document, the Synod Praesidium also adopted the following resolution on June 2, 2011:

Resolved, That each LCMS Recognized Service Organization be evaluated on the basis of the theological criteria provided by the CTCR Document, "Principles for Cooperation in Externals with Theological Integrity (2010 Res. 3-03)," adopted by the CTCR in December 2010, and on the basis of those evaluations and guided by the entire aforementioned document, approved also by the Praesidium in June 2011, recommendations be made to the various LCMS entities responsible for the various RSOs as to whether or not continued RSO status be granted or revoked.

Therefore, all those charged with evaluating RSOs of the Synod as well as those involved in any cooperative endeavors with the ELCA are required to use the criteria and guidelines in this CTCR document in their ongoing work to evaluate on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions whether or not a particular venture can be undertaken or sustained.

It has been a pleasure to serve this triennium with the members of the Synod Praesidium. God be praised!

Herbert C. Mueller Jr., First Vice-President

R6-01-03

Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry

The 2010 *Handbook* of the Synod provides for the following representatives on the Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry:

1. The First Vice-President of the Synod as chairman (the undersigned)
2. A representative of Concordia University System (Dr. Gayle Grotjan)
3. Two college/university presidents appointed by the President of the Synod (Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich and Rev. Dr. Patrick Ferry)
4. Two Concordia University System faculty involved in colloquy appointed by the president of Concordia University System (Rev. Dr. Gary Bertels and Dr. Mary Hilgendorf)
5. One representative from CUEnet (Dr. Heather Stueve)

Dr. Mary Hilgendorf served two years of the triennium until her retirement in 2012. She will be replaced in the new triennium when the committee is reappointed.

The 2010 LCMS convention, with the adoption of 2010 Res. 8-08A, made a number of changes in the Bylaws of the Synod, affecting many areas of the national Synod's work. One provision of that resolution significantly revised the Bylaws of the Synod regarding colloquy into the commissioned ministry. In essence, the Bylaws were shortened (see 2010 *Handbook*, Bylaws 3.10.3–3.10.3.2, p. 150) with many of the details previously included in the Bylaws to

be included in a policy manual. Thus the Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry developed a new policy manual, the details of which were based in large part on the Bylaws in the Synod's 2007 *Handbook*. After approval by the committee and examination by the Commission on Constitutional Matters, this policy manual is available on the Concordia University System Web site at <http://lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=672>.

The Concordia University System (CUS) provides for the preparation of candidates for certification as Ministers of Religion—Commissioned. CUEnet is the organization within the CUS national office authorized to deliver instruction for colloquy. All approvals come from the academic institutions. The committee generally oversees the colloquy process, but much of the actual work is ably handled by CUEnet and the CUS. The committee met in person once in St. Louis to prepare the "Policy Manual for Colloquy into the Commissioned Ministry." The committee also considers requests for exceptions to the policies and other issues that arise from time to time.

We are thankful for CUEnet and for the people who oversee the program and teach the courses, but most of all we are thankful for the people who have been presented to the Church as commissioned ministers, gifts of Christ, by this process. It is a pleasure to serve the Synod by chairing this committee and working with these people. To God be the glory!

Herbert C. Mueller Jr., *Chairman*

R6-01-04

Colloquy Committee for Pastoral Ministry

The Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry includes the First Vice-President of the Synod as chairman (the undersigned), the presidents of the two seminaries of the Synod, plus one district president elected by the Council of Presidents. The triennium saw significant change in the committee, first with the election of the undersigned as First Vice-President, coupled with turnover in several of the other positions. During the triennium, Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast replaced Rev. Dr. Dean Wenthe as president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Rev. Timothy Scharf, president of the Southern Illinois District, replaced the Rev. Dr. Ray Mirly, president of the Missouri District, who was term limited, as the Council of Presidents' representative. Rev. Dr. Glen Thomas, because of bylaw changes made by the 2010 LCMS convention, is no longer included as an official member of the committee. Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is the only present member of the committee who had been serving before the 2010 convention of the Synod.

The 2010 LCMS convention, with the adoption of 2010 Res. 8-08A, made extensive changes in the Bylaws of the Synod, affecting many areas of the national Synod's work. One of the many provisions of that resolution significantly revised the Bylaws of the Synod regarding colloquy, both for the pastoral ministry and the commissioned ministry of the Synod. In essence, the pertinent bylaws were shortened (Bylaws 3.10.2–3.10.3.2), with many of the details previously listed in the bylaws to be included in a policy manual. Thus the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry, over the course of several meetings, developed a policy manual and revised colloquy application form, the details of which were based in large part on the pertinent bylaws in the 2007 LCMS *Handbook*. In this process, the chairman consulted several times with the Council of Presidents and the President of the Synod. The seminary faculties had opportunity to provide input, and the final version of the policy manual was examined and approved by the CCM. It is available on the Synod's Web site at <http://lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=1106>. Look for "Pastoral Colloquy" under "Documents."

There are three categories of men eligible to apply for colloquy into the ministerium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: (1) ordained pastors with sufficient education who are presently actively serving a congregation of another synod, who desire to colloquize into the LCMS (normally, we seek to have them bring their congregation along with them into the Synod); (2) men who are graduates of a seminary program of sufficient academic standards leading to ordination who have been members of LCMS congregations for at least two years (often, these are men who have left congregations in other synods and have joined LCMS congregations); and (3) licensed deacons of the Synod's districts who have served in the full Word and Sacrament ministry of a congregation under license by a district for at least 10 years. The Colloquy Committee is empowered by the policy manual, at the request of the sponsoring district president, to make some exceptions to the minimum requirements in categories 2 and 3. All others, including commissioned ministers of the Synod, are directed to the alternate route programs at one of our seminaries.

During the course of the triennium, the Colloquy Committee met 12 times to examine applications, conduct interviews with various applicants (no applicant is ever certified without a personal interview), and transact business monitoring the progress of the various applicants. In the work of interviewing applicants, the committee often draws upon other ordained men from the staff of the Synod to help with the interviews. As of this writing, 43 men were certified during this triennium for placement in a call in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The men who apply come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Many come from other Lutheran churches here and abroad. Others were ordained in churches of other confessions but have been attracted to the truth of the confession our Synod holds. All are thoroughly examined and, where necessary, given more work to do to prepare (often including further interviews and examination), so that when the Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry certifies them, to the best of our knowledge, they are ready to serve in our midst as faithful Lutheran pastors. We thank God for these gifts to His Church, many of whom have come to us at no little personal cost. Even though they may have been trained in another church body, they come because they are convinced by the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions to commit themselves to carrying out ministry in our midst according to that confession we share. To God be the glory!

Herbert C. Mueller Jr., First Vice-President

R6-02

Secretary

The Office of the Secretary has been kept busy throughout the 2010–13 triennium. Managing the workload has been possible only with the faithful and diligent labor of Executive Assistant Pam Weeke, the part-time assistance of the Chief Financial Officer's Executive Assistant Marie Muhlke, and the ready cooperation of other executive staff and departments in the International Center—especially the regular support provided by the leadership and staff of the Departments of Rosters and Statistics and Communications.

This will be a report in four parts: (1) customary duties; (2) responsibilities relating to conventions of the Synod; (3) other work pertaining to the Office of Secretary; and (4) other duties assigned by the 2010 convention and during the course of the triennium (Bylaws 3.3.3ff.).

1. Customary Duties of a Corporate Secretary

As provided by Bylaw 3.3.3, I have served as a voting member and the secretary of the Board of Directors of the Synod, participating in all meetings and keeping all minutes of those meetings. For a time,

until budgetary considerations caused it to be discontinued, I provided a recap of important board business in a *Reporter* insert called "Board Briefs." In its place, I now to provide a brief summary of each meeting's more significant actions on the board's Internet Web page.

In addition, I have signed numerous corporate documents, provided testimony on behalf of the Synod before the courts, and participated in discussions with the Synod's legal counsel regarding legal and bylaw issues.

2. Responsibilities Relating to Conventions of the Synod

During any triennium, as soon as the business of one convention has been handled, including the publication of the *Convention Proceedings* and a revised *Handbook*, the nominating process for the next-following convention begins. Given the structure and governance changes adopted by the 2010 convention, however, business from that convention has largely continued unabated as changes have been put into practice spanning the entire triennium.

To help the Synod at-large to adapt to a new way of doing things and to prepare for the 2013 convention, a post-card mailing campaign was developed to provide congregations with timely information regarding their opportunities and responsibilities. By the end of the current triennium, a series of 18 postcards will have been sent to all congregations, prompting them regarding circuit responsibilities, district convention requirements, nominating and voting processes, the submission of business to the 2013 convention, and more.

Nomination and Election of President

New to the 2010–13 triennium is the pre-convention election of the President of the Synod for the 2013–16 triennium. The bylaws require the Secretary to "provide a secure and verifiable method that will offer opportunity to every congregation of the Synod to submit nominations" (Bylaw 3.12.2 [b]) and "a secure and verifiable method ... for two voting delegates from each congregation in attendance at the previous district conventions ... to vote for one of the candidates for President" four weeks prior to the 2013 convention (Bylaw 3.12.2.3).

The nominations process for President did not change from previous elections. Ballots were mailed to all congregations in early October 2012, and they were received back by February 20, 2013. A total of 1,745 nominating votes were received (as compared to 2,007 in 2010), and the required three nominees with the most votes who indicated their willingness to serve if elected have been identified (see "Biographical Synopses and Statements of Nominees" booklet accompanying this *Convention Workbook*); the election takes place four weeks prior to the 2013 convention.

The greater challenge has been to develop and maintain the voters list comprised of the 8,200 delegates who attended the 2012 district conventions and who will be entitled to vote in the election of President. This has been quite expensive in terms of time, labor, and finances. While electronic means for communicating and electing are the only way to meet bylaw time-expectation requirements, obtaining and maintaining an up-to-date list of usable email addresses will have required nine months of ceaseless effort by the time the vote is taken.

The services of Election-America, a company with a good record of assisting organizations with electronic balloting, have been acquired for the actual conduct of the election process in June 2013. Election-participation materials will be provided to the voters in early June via regular mail and email, so that all who are on the voters' list will receive the materials. The actual balloting will take place via the Internet shortly thereafter—with the election results to be announced two weeks prior to the 2013 convention, when the president-elect will have opportunity to select (from the list of the top 20 nominees who will have consented to serve if elected) the five candidates who will

comprise the slate for the election of the First Vice-President during an early session of the convention.

Nomination and Election of First Vice-President

The October 2012 nominations ballot mailing to all congregations also included opportunity to nominate two ordained ministers for First Vice-President. A total number of 1,565 nominations were received. Top nominees were contacted to determine 20 nominees willing to serve, if elected. As noted above, from this list of nominees the President-elect will choose five candidates to form the slate for the election of the First Vice-President by the convention.

Nomination and Election of Regional Vice-Presidents

Within months of the 2010 convention, the Council of Presidents and the Board of Directors carried out their Bylaw 3.2.1 (a) responsibility to designate five geographical regions for the 2013 election of regional vice-presidents and certain board members. These regional designations provided the basis for the mailing of regional vice-president nomination ballots accompanying the ballots for President and First Vice-President in the October 2012 mailing. These ballots (along with ballots for regional members of the Board of Directors of the Synod, as appropriate) were received and tabulated in the Secretary's Office. The top five nominees for each regional vice-president and regional board member election will comprise the slates to be voted on at the 2013 convention for those positions, without opportunity for floor nominations.

Responsibilities with Reference to Committee for Convention Nominations

As required by bylaw, the Secretary's Office is in charge of receiving nominations for the more than 80 office, board, and commission positions to be filled through the regular nominations and election process of the convention. The more than 380 nominations and accompanying biographical and evaluative information that were received were in turn provided to the Committee for Convention Nominations at a meeting convened in early January. The slates of candidates developed by the committee, along with all other nomination and election information, are published in the "Biographical Synopses and Statements of Nominees" booklet accompanying this *Convention Workbook*.

Guidelines for the Committee on Elections

As required by bylaw, the Committee on Elections for the 2013 convention was provided a current manual with suggested election procedures to assist the committee in carrying out its important convention responsibilities. Included are recommendations for working with audio-visual and voting apparatus to be used for convention elections and decision making. Here again, the 2010 convention made changes to many of the rules governing elections that will require careful attention on the part of the committee when the convention does its electing.

Convention Publications

The Secretary serves as the editor of all convention publications. This *Convention Workbook*, while its content is the responsibility of the President's Office, is produced by the Secretary's Office in close cooperation with Concordia Publishing House. Publication of *Today's Business* (initial mailing and daily editions) containing the business to come before the convention will follow after floor-committee meetings and throughout the convention, and the *Convention Proceedings* containing the official report of the activities and actions of the convention and the 2013 *Handbook* of the Synod will be published during the months following the convention.

A significant change in the distribution of convention publications was made by the 2010 convention. Printed copies of this *Convention*

Workbook are received by all delegates and alternates, officers of the Synod, and members of boards, commissions, and councils. Its content has been posted on the Synod's Web site for all other interested persons. The same will be true to a large extent for the first issue of *Today's Business* containing the proposed resolutions prepared by floor committees and the *Convention Proceedings* following the convention.

3. Other Work of the Office

As provided in Bylaw 3.3.3.2 and various other bylaws through the *Handbook*, the Secretary of the Synod also serves in a variety of other capacities, such as a nonvoting member and secretary of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, the administrator of the Synod's dispute resolution process, a voting member of the Board of Governors of Concordia Historical Institute, and the editor of *The Lutheran Annual*. The Secretary's Office is responsible for maintaining records, keeping a file of the governing instruments of all agencies of the Synod, and supervising the maintenance of the official rosters of member congregations and church workers of the Synod.

Of particular note are the Secretary's duties as administrator of the Synod's dispute-resolution process, which continues to facilitate much good throughout the Synod, especially on the district level. What began as something of a general process for bringing people together to resolve disputes in a more casually structured manner has grown over the years to become a more formal process governed by detailed bylaws and accompanying standard operating procedures manuals. Accordingly, and in the ongoing interest of adding helpful regulation to the processes, I have advocated a number of bylaw changes to the Commission on Handbook, and the commission has proposed convention actions to accomplish some of those changes.

I wish also to add a positive comment as a member of the Board of Governors of Concordia Historical Institute. The Institute has been something of a "poor sister" in the Synod's family of synodwide corporate entities and has struggled in recent years. I am proud to say, however, that under the very able and generous leadership of Mr. Larry Lumpe as Executive Director, with the very helpful support of the current Synod administration and Board of Directors, and with a forward-looking Board of Governors, a rejuvenation of CHI has taken place during the triennium, including plans to elect a new executive director in months to come. How important and what a blessing this is to have a historical institute not only to keep records intact but to maintain an accurate record of the history of Lutheranism in general and our Synod in particular, especially in a day and time when history is often ignored and even altered to suit current-day interests.

4. Other Assigned Duties

Board of Directors, Concordia Publishing House

Early in the triennium, I was asked by the President of the Synod to serve as his representative on the Board of Directors of Concordia Publishing House. Here I add another personal comment: At a time when our society is flooded with religious materials of all kinds in print and electronically, what a great blessing is ours to have our own publishing house to provide trustworthy printed materials for use by our congregations and in our homes. Add to that the leadership and administration at our publishing house that is successfully weathering the economic storm, not just staying afloat but powering forward, winning the highest business awards in the land while producing the highest quality materials to be found on shelves and computer apps anywhere.

Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Task Force

Later in the triennium, I was asked by the President of the Synod to serve on and chair a Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Task Force to

“commence a thorough evaluation of the SMP program,” his “deepest concern” being the need by the Synod to “be very deliberate about the nature, size, and growth of this program” lest it “jeopardize residential seminary education altogether and severely compromise the integrity of the ministerium of the LCMS in the long term.” I was pleased to work with Rev. Randall Golter (then-President of the Rocky Mountain District) and Rev. Timothy Mech (parish pastor from Sheboygan, Wisconsin, with experience with the SMP program). Our report, printed elsewhere in this *Convention Workbook*, is the product of numerous interviews with SMP faculty, staff, mentors, and students; extensive reading of recommended books and articles; the research provided by the current SMP Committee in a 2012 white paper, and the ready and able assistance of Rev. Dr. Glen Thomas of the Synod’s Office of Pastoral Education.

Assignment by 2010 Convention

The 2010 convention, in response to Overture 7-17 “To Consider Adding Time Limitations to Dispute Resolution Process” submitted by the Northern Illinois District, resolved “That the Secretary of the Synod be directed to study this issue in consultation with the Council of Presidents and report to the next convention of the Synod, making any recommendations which would address this situation and improve the dispute resolution process” (2010 Res. 7-08).

The issue in question, stated in the “WHEREAS” paragraphs of the resolution: that the “present process [for dispute resolution] does not require either side in a dispute to initiate the formal process of dispute resolution within a specific time frame, thus possibly placing the potential respondent in a position of never knowing if the dispute has been resolved or if action may be taken at some undetermined date in the future,” also adding: “Delays in resolving disputes can inflict harm upon individuals and organizations.”

As required, this issue and a proposed recommendation to the 2013 convention were discussed with the Council of Presidents in light of Matthew 5:23–25 (“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift”) and Ephesians 4:25–27 (“Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil”).

It was agreed that delaying reconciliation between fellow Christians is a serious matter. Possible required time frames for initiating efforts at dispute resolution (e.g., two years, five years) and other requirements were discussed, but such approaches to the matter were also recognized to be open to abuse, questionable in light of the urgency advocated in the Scriptures, and might also provide a way to avoid using the Synod’s dispute resolution process. At the same time, there was agreement that something more should be included in the Synod’s governing documents regarding such urgency.

After such consultation with the Council of Presidents, and given the provision of 2010 Res. 7-08 that I “report to the next convention of the Synod, making any recommendations which would address this situation and improve the dispute resolution process,” I offer the following suggested addition to the dispute-resolution bylaws of the Synod to underscore the urgency of becoming reconciled, also providing a bylaw resource for district presidents to use when consulting with accusing parties in the initial consultation phase of dispute resolution (with possible application also to other dispute processes of the Synod):

1.10.1.1 The Holy Scriptures (Matt. 5:23–25; Eph. 4:25–27) urge Christians to settle their differences as soon as they occur, accuser and accused speaking the truth and reconciling their faults. To do otherwise is to give opportunity to the devil and allow sin to reign in

their hearts (Rom. 6:12). Reconciliation of a grievance with a fellow Christian must be a first and immediate priority for every Christian, “for we are members one of another” (Eph. 4:25).

1.10.1.2 ~~1.10.1.1~~ When Christians are unable to settle their differences “between you and him alone” (Matt. 18:15) as soon as they occur, the Holy Scriptures (1 Cor. 6:1–7) urge Christians to settle their differences “quickly” (Matt. 5:25) by laying them before ...”

In Summary

I have appreciated very much this opportunity again to serve our Synod as its Secretary for these past three years. Such service is quite different from what I thought I would be doing as a pastor when I first entered the ministry, but it offers unique challenges to keep things interesting every day—in addition to the great privilege of service in our Lord’s kingdom. For all of this, I am thankful.

Raymond L. Hartwig, *Secretary*

R6-03

Board of Directors

The Constitution of the Synod is quite clear in conveying the responsibility and authority the Synod gives to the Board of Directors:

The Board of Directors is the legal representative of the Synod. It is the custodian of all of the property of the Synod, directly or by its delegation of such authority to an agency of the Synod. It shall exercise supervision over all the property and business affairs of the Synod except in those areas where it has delegated such authority to an agency of the Synod or where the voting members of the Synod through the adoption of bylaws or other convention action have assigned specific areas of responsibility to separate corporate trust entities, and as to those the Board of Directors shall have general oversight responsibility as set forth in the Bylaws. (Constitution, Art. XI E 2)

Legal, property, and business matters are included in its responsibility and have been given attention throughout the past triennium.

New Structure

The delegates to the 2010 convention of the Synod adopted a massive change in structure of/for the Synod. Under the capable efforts of President Matthew Harrison, his staff, other officers, executives, and all employees, the changes were initiated in 2011 and were almost all completed by early in 2012. These workers of the LCMS put forth an inordinate amount of time and energy to accomplish this in a relatively short period of time. This put budget planning, personnel shifts, responsibilities, and relationships into continuous flux and adjustment. This adjustment continues even to the present as the work of the Synod moves forward. As the new triennium approaches, more attention can be given to operation and less to adjustment.

New Positions and Personnel

The new structure of the Synod called for reorganization under National Missions and International Missions. Subsequently, Chaplain Gregory Williamson was called as the Synod’s Chief Mission Officer in early 2012. Additionally, the Board of Directors has been able to welcome and work with the Rev. Bart Day, executive director of the Office of National Mission and the Rev. Randall Golter, executive director of the Office of International Mission. With new leadership positions being filled, the work of the Synod moves forward under the theme of Witness, Mercy, Life Together.

Financial Condition of the Synod

Rather than go into detail, I would merely refer the reader to the report of the Chief Financial Officer of the Synod. Please note especially that the unrestricted budget for 2012–13 is about \$19 million

and the total working budget is about \$64 million, considerably less than it was just 10 years ago. Together with many other cutbacks in program, the number of employees of corporate Synod at the International Center has been greatly reduced.

There has been, and may continue to be, a misunderstanding among members of many congregations. While each congregation supports the work of the church-at-large either through a budgeted amount or through a designated part of member offering envelopes, that amount in its entirety does not come to national Synod for its budget. Congregational treasurers forward “Synod” or perhaps “mission” offerings to their respective district, and each district determines the amount of that offering that will be retained for the district work and the amount forwarded to national Synod.

National Office Compensation

The Board of Directors is responsible for determining the compensation of the employees of corporate Synod. All positions are reviewed and placed into a position classification grid. While the base can or may change from one year to the next, personnel are compensated according to the place on the grid where their position and responsibility are determined. As the base changes, increases, decreases, or remains the same, so the salary can or may change. Since 2006, the following compensation philosophy has been followed: “At the International Center of the LCMS, our compensation philosophy is simple: In striving to be good stewards of the dollars entrusted to us, we shall pay fair salaries in a fashion which rewards performance in order to be able to attract, motivate, and retain employees.”

Concordia University—Wisconsin and Concordia University—Ann Arbor

During the past triennium, much attention was given to and effort put into the ultimate affiliation of Concordia University—Ann Arbor (CUAA) with Concordia University—Wisconsin (CUW). This involved persons from both of the universities (staff and boards of regents), the Concordia University System, the Board of Directors, and others. Governance, leadership, financial responsibility, faculty, student bodies, and such were all part of the discussion and ultimate decision. All involved and in any way responsible are grateful to the Lord for the final outcome. CUAA continues to serve the church today as Concordia University.

Recognition of Thrivent

It should be noted that during each of the fiscal years 2011–12 and 2012–13 the Synod received generous churchwide grants from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans in excess of \$1 million. Thrivent has been a financial supporter of the Synod since its beginning. These grants are used to support specific ministry projects and programs of the Synod.

Minutes of the Board of Directors

The minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors are available on the Synod’s Web site. The BOD does hold open meetings, although parts of each meeting are conducted in “executive session.” Some items of business (e.g., legal, personnel) are, for obvious reasons, conducted with only the members of the board involved. Thus, the minutes of these executive sessions are not open to the general public.

The members of the Board of Directors express their sincere thanks to the Synod for the special

Robert T. Kuhn, *Chairman*

Chief Administrative Officer

Most business, legal, and administrative responsibilities of the Board of Directors are carried out by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Synod, who serves as the board’s Chief Operating Officer. During this past triennium, in addition to day-to-day operations and other administrative responsibilities, the CAO has spent focused time in four specific areas:

Meetings with District Boards of Directors: The LCMS Board of Directors desires that the CAO work to enhance relationships with the districts and the church-at-large by informing and educating them regarding the board’s activities and responsibilities and by providing a forum to assist the board in understanding the needs of the districts and other Synod constituents. To that end, the Board of Directors encouraged the CAO to visit each district board of directors. At these meetings, time is dedicated to topics and issues determined by the district. The CAO’s participation includes (1) responding to district board of directors’ questions about the LCMS national office operations, including business, legal, and governance questions; and (2) recording and carrying back to the LCMS Board of Directors any thoughts, comments and questions. The goal is for the district board to speak freely about the issues important to them and having those comments carried back to the LCMS board.

Review and Revision of Administrative Policies for Agencies and Corporate Synod: In conjunction with the Board of Directors’ Policy and Audit Committees, administrative policies for corporate Synod and certain policies for agencies of the Synod have been updated during the triennium. All administrative policies for corporate Synod are now electronically available to the national office staff in a searchable, consistent format. Board policies for agencies, as required by Synod bylaws, have also been revised and reissued with distribution to all agency leaders and business managers. These policies are available via the Board of Directors Web page at www.lcms.org/bod.

Establishment of Foreign Entities: In order to execute the Synod’s global mission strategy, it is increasingly necessary to register the LCMS in foreign countries or create separate legal entities in foreign countries to carry out our ministries. This work is coordinated by the CAO’s office, working with the Office of International Mission, LCMS legal counsel, and local counsel as necessary. This strategy is designed to support the work of our international missionaries and to protect the interests of the LCMS.

Operations Team: The 2010 convention established an Operations Team at the national office. Bylaw 3.5.2 states, “The Operations Team shall assist the President and the Board of Directors of the Synod in carrying out their respective responsibilities for oversight, supervision, management, and coordination of the operations of the national office and according to the triennial emphases adopted by conventions of the Synod.” Bylaw 3.5.2.1 adds, “The Operations Team shall consist of the Chief Mission Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Chief Financial Officer and shall be convened by the Chief Administrative Officer.” Throughout the triennium, this team has met monthly with a standard agenda that brings together the three leaders of the program, administrative, and financial units of the LCMS national office to coordinate and support the ministries of the Synod. This has resulted in coordinated initiatives, streamlined processes, and growing cross-unit support within the national office.

The CAO is administratively responsible for several service units operating under the authority of the Board of Directors. These units are comprised of dedicated individuals whose service to the Synod is more often measured in decades rather than years. A brief overview of their responsibilities and activities follows.

Ronald P. Schultz, *Chief Administrative Officer*

Department of General Services

In support of our Lord's command to the Church to share the news of the forgiveness that is ours in Christ, the Department of General Services is responsible for "developing and administering building, information and office support services to the entities of the LCMS International Center properties and other corporate organizations of the church in their support of the LCMS mission and ministry objectives."

General Services is comprised of the following service operations: Business Services, Research Services, Facility Services, Purchasing Services, Travel and Meeting Planning, and the Office of Rosters and Statistics. These groups serve all four corporate and trust entities housed in the LCMS International Center properties (The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Concordia Plan Services, the LCMS Foundation, and the Lutheran Church Extension Fund). Approximately 30 full- and part-time employees presently work in these five areas.

- *Business Services* contains units in General Services that support business activities of the entities housed at the International Center as well as district offices, congregations, recognized service organizations (RSOs) and rostered church workers.
- *Research Services* provides a full range of research design and analysis services. Over the past three years, Research Services has provided a great deal of assistance to the seminaries, various districts, and the Res. 8-07A Task Force, which is considering how LCMS districts might be configured in coming years. Another significant effort included developing a pilot project with the Missouri District to study the relationship between congregations and the district office.
- *Facility Services* provides support services to the International Center in St. Louis. Major projects undertaken by the Building Operations unit of Facility Services over the past three years include the relocation of the KFUD studios from the seminary campus to the International Center and the installation of a generator to provide backup power to the IC to allow critical business processes to continue in the event of an extended outage. Crossroads Café is operated by Facility Services and provides cafeteria, vending, and catering services to the IC properties.
- *Purchasing Services* works with International Center organizations to develop purchasing requirements and bid specifications for the procurement of goods and services. Additionally, Purchasing oversees the LCMS Group Purchasing Agreement, which negotiates volume-based discount pricing with selected vendors on behalf of 8,000+ churches, schools, and other LCMS organizations.
- *Travel and Meeting Planning* provides event-planning services, including travel, housing, transportation, and conference needs for LCMS organizations. These services are provided for events across the country, including the Synod's conventions. Since the 2010 LCMS convention, this department has planned or assisted with over a thousand external (off-site) events, accommodating an estimated 200,000 people. In addition, Travel and Meeting supported more than 15,000 meetings and activities at the International Center buildings during that same period.
- *The Office of Rosters and Statistics* compiles and maintains the official LCMS rosters of congregations and church workers. Additionally, this office maintains rosters of schools, congregational lay leaders, recognized service organizations, and LCMS high school youth. Much of this information is available on the LCMS Web site and is available to all congregations, schools, districts, and boards, as well as to other approved organizations.

David Fiedler, Executive Director (until recently)

Department of Human Resources

The Department of Human Resources provides leadership to the human-resources function in service to church workers at the International Center and those throughout the Synod. The department is keenly focused on creating a caring and supportive work environment so that employees may give their most effective service to the Lord and to the Synod. The department has a direct relationship to the Synod Board of Directors and endeavors to support the Board of Directors' philosophy "to be good stewards of the dollars entrusted to us, pay fair salaries, and reward performance in order to be able to attract, motivate, and retain employees." The Department of Human Resources coordinates the development and administration of personnel policies, procedures, and supporting systems within and between boards, commissions, departments, entities, and agencies of the Synod.

During the last triennium, the department was intimately involved with the 2010 convention resolutions to restructure corporate Synod. The department assisted with the analysis of the functions required in the new structure and helped develop organization charts and position descriptions. Each position was evaluated, re-pointed (grade classified), and assigned to the appropriate area. Human Resources staff worked on or provided technical support to the restructuring work groups. The department was an integral part of the communications team to ensure the employees were kept apprised of the status of the initiative.

As the Department of Human Resources endeavors to continually refine the day-to-day processes and procedures, the major goals for the next triennium are (1) the development of proficiency and compliance training; (2) implementing Lutheran U for all International Center employees; (3) improved employee communication tools; (4) enhanced automated processes, and (5) continued upgrades to the Human Resource Information System. Accomplishment of these objectives will lead to enhanced services to boards, commissions, agencies, departments, and corporate entities supported by the Synod so that they can concentrate on giving their most effective service to their mission.

Val Rhoden-Kimbrough, Executive Director

Department of Information Technology

The Information Technology (IT) department manages LCMS information technology services, resources, and strategy. It provides information technology services to LCMS corporate Synod (boards, commissions, departments, and offices) and the LCMS Foundation.

The strategically aligned services provided by the IT department and the vendors it manages include network administration, data management and application hosting, network security management, software development and maintenance, e-mail, Internet access, Web-application hosting, personal productivity and collaboration, IT support desk (help desk and microcomputer support), technical training, and IT project and policy management. The IT department currently supports the technology needs of more than 500 business users.

Technological advances continue to impact our world and our church body in significant ways. The pace of those advances and the evolving needs of corporate Synod and the LCMS Foundation challenge us to make appropriate use of God's gift of technology. The IT department's services align with Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards and enable the department accountably to serve the Synod and the LCMS Foundation with the best possible stewardship.

Over the past triennium, the IT department has led or supported the following initiatives: the many IT-related activities associated with the restructuring of the national office of the LCMS and the Witness,

Mercy, Life Together (WMLT) rebranding; KFuo's relocation from the campus of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis to the LCMS International Center; IT infrastructure enhancements; enhanced corporate data security; software and data-related initiatives; and mobile technology activities.

Planned technology initiatives include migrated and enhanced Lutheran Rosters and Statistics System (LRSS) functionality; Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) implementation; consolidation of corporate data and revision of related policies; and expanded integration with mobile devices.

May God continue to bless our efforts to make appropriate use of His gift of technology.

Myron A. Koehn, *Executive Director*

Chief Financial Officer

The financial challenges facing our beloved Synod really haven't changed much over many years. The 1976 Treasurer's Report in the *Convention Workbook* reads much the same as the 2010 Treasurer's Report. "A crisis is approaching." "Synod's unrestricted revenues are declining at an alarming rate." "In only a few short years we will not be able to perform the functions for which Synod was created." To the uninformed, it could easily appear that the Synod Treasurers have been "crying wolf"! Still, the wolf has not yet appeared. Our Lord continues to provide. The Synod continues to exist. The Synod's objectives are being pursued. Life goes on. Other seemingly more urgent needs are elevated before our congregations' members and seem to garner their support.

Across Synod, even in the face of slowly declining congregation membership, total Sunday morning offerings have been increasing. In 2011, total Sunday morning offerings across all our congregations were over \$1.37 billion, a record amount. However, the distribution of these unrestricted resources for congregation, district, and Synod mission and ministry programs and operations shows that, overall, congregations are retaining all of the increase, and even reducing the overall level of financial support for both district and Synod mission and ministry opportunities. In fact, beginning in 2009, congregations collectively have reduced financial support for district and Synod mission and ministry activities.

Facing a decreasing pool of revenue and rising costs, districts collectively have been retaining an average of an additional \$1 million each year, for the past 20 years. This has resulted in a reduction of the portion of the Sunday-morning offerings that districts finally remit to Synod. For fiscal years 2013 and 2014, the decline in district support has not been as great, but it is still declining nevertheless.

Some questions we should ask ourselves are "Is the decrease in resource sharing a product of lack of information at the congregation level about the work done collectively at the district and Synod levels?" "Is it the result of a general lack of enthusiasm for proclamation of the Gospel beyond the environs of each local congregation?" "Can individual congregations do mission and ministry throughout the world better than could be done collectively?" "Is there a process problem (*i.e.*, should the flow of resources from the congregations to the districts and then to Synod be revised or reversed)?"

Regardless of the reasons, this reduction in unrestricted resources, coupled with constitutional and convention mandates, has resulted in our declining ability to support our mission and ministry programs from unrestricted resources and has necessitated reliance on the solicitation of restricted gifts to provide the majority of resources for these programs.

What can help to forestall reductions in program support? There are several things we could change or do. One would be to eliminate the "historic CUS debt" and provide the Concordia University System, Inc. (CUS) a way to generate resources for its own operations

and capitalization. Such actions would reduce the demand on Synod's available unrestricted resources and allow sustained or increased levels of support of mission and ministry programs by over \$3 million.

Another change we could make would be to change the way we allocate resources shared by our beloved congregations to district and Synod for our common work together. A third would be to allow Synod Inc. to suspend the implementation of convention-passed mandates until a specific funding mechanism is identified and proven reliable, or only as growth in resources allows.

The opportunities to spread the salvific message of the Gospel and to address the human care and relief needs throughout the world will always exceed the financial resources that we have available to address them (Matt. 26:11; Mark 14:7).

Several important questions we must ask ourselves are "Are we, collectively and as individual congregations, serious about doing our part to carry out the Great Commission?" "Do we still see value in walking together to perform witness and mercy activities throughout our nation and the world?" "Are the activities we determined in the past to do together still appropriate?" "If so, are we effectively communicating those needs and opportunities to our congregation members so that they may understand the need to provide resources to fund them at levels that are adequate to accomplish them?" "If we are not providing adequate resources now, what can we do to increase support?" "If we are providing adequate resources, how can we better distribute them to meet the needs that we have identified?" "Are we making the support of our local congregations and their ministries a greater priority than our support of our district and Synod's national and international missions and ministries?"

I must point out my observations related to the hard work of the dedicated employees at the International Center who kept focused on the task before them during the restructuring of Synod programs under two mission boards. This restructuring occurred during a period of declining revenues and the consumption of reserves, wherein for the past four years adjustments to employee pay were not able to be made—not even modest cost-of-living adjustments. Additionally, job uncertainty was a large issue. Asking employees to do more and more with less and less is neither sustainable nor healthy in the long term.

Departments that report administratively to me are comprised of competent and dedicated employees whose support for Synod operations is vital.

- The *Accounting Department* serves the Synod by accurately recording the receipt and expenditure of restricted and unrestricted resources entrusted to us by congregation members and other donors, both directly through direct contributions and indirectly through congregations' world missions and ministry budgets that support their respective district's and the Synod's missions and ministry programs.
- The *Internal Audit Department* serves the Synod's boards, commissions, service departments, and agencies as requested by their governing boards or as directed by the Synod's Board of Directors. The Internal Audit Department (1) performs financial statement audits in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants; (2) helps to reduce overall audit costs by assisting external auditors who perform financial-statement audits of the various Synod corporate and trust entities; (3) examines and evaluates corporate and individual compliance with LCMS Board of Directors policies and recommends ways to improve internal controls, operations, and organizational structures to make them more effective and efficient; and (4) investigates allegations of suspected financial and organizational misconduct, in accordance with Synod policy.
- The *Risk Management and Insurance Department* serves the Synod by analyzing and procuring appropriate insurance coverage,

administering claims, and assisting Synod entities with disaster recovery and disaster response plans. The department utilizes various risk-management methods to treat, reduce, or address risk exposure, including self-insurance, risk transfer, and insurance. The department also promotes risk awareness and recommends actions to protect the people and assets of the LCMS and its related entities; it also provides training to the Synod's boards, commissions, service departments, and agencies in the areas of loss control and safety compliance and employment issues through consultation and presentations to LCMS entities, districts, and congregations.

I marvel how we have truly been blessed by our Lord, whose beloved Church we are. Our Lord has placed challenges before us, but He also has opened up opportunities for us to glorify His name in all the earth, so that every individual might be drawn toward His great love for all the world in Christ Jesus.

May our work together be a blessing to those whom we serve and bring glory and honor to our triune God.

Jerald C. Wulf, *Chief Financial Officer*

R6-03-01

Report on the Disposition of Funding the Mission Recommendations

Resolution 4-02 of the 2010 convention resolved that each recommendation in the 2006 Blue Ribbon Task Force for Funding the Mission (BRTFFM) Report for increasing the Synod's unrestricted revenues be placed on the agenda of the Synod's Board of Directors for disposition by the next (2013) LCMS convention. This task was accomplished by the board during 2011 and 2012.

The BRTFFM Report contained 11 areas of discussion with recommendations, each of which the board evaluated for further action: Stewardship, Evangelism, Harmony in the LCMS, Communication, Structure Concerns, Management Efficiency, Higher Education Support, Support from Corporate Entities, Support from RSOs, Synod/District Fiscal Conference, and Improved Congregational Support.

The board found that many of the BRTFFM recommendations were acted upon by either the 2007 or 2010 conventions or by the initiative of corporate Synod staff. The decline in the Synod's annual unrestricted revenue continues, however, despite the report of the BRTFFM and the actions taken by the 2007 and 2010 conventions. The board concluded that stewardship is one aspect of discipleship. Disciples (students) of Jesus Christ understand what it means to live under God's grace, freely given, and that a response of thankfulness and joy is the Spirit-led outcome of discipleship.

St. Paul's mission congregations used both stewardship and fund-raising. Stewardship supported the operation of the congregation and made possible gifts to support continued mission efforts, while fund-raising tactics were used to raise funds to support the poor Christians in Jerusalem, for example. The board believes that a balance between stewardship and fund-raising must be realized. When too much focus is placed upon stewardship for the support of our own congregations, then they lose sight of the need to support global mission efforts and mercy work. When too much focus is placed upon fund-raising for global missions and mercy work, then the operations of individual congregations are jeopardized.

Even though the number of congregation members is declining in the Synod, total giving at the congregation level continues to increase. The amount passed on by congregations to districts for district and Synod financial needs, while not increasing, has remained nearly flat, while the amount passed on to Synod Inc. by the districts has been steadily declining for more than 20 years, at an average of \$1 million per year.

The board believes that growing in discipleship will bring about a maturity of faith and thus enable responses in several areas addressed by the BRTFFM, especially in the areas of stewardship and evangelism.

Stewardship

The board found that, since 2008, the Synod's stewardship training resources have been revised, refreshed, or replaced as necessary, as recommended by the BRTFFM, in order to assist individual congregation members with growth and maturation in stewardship. Stewardship resources and materials are available through the corporate Synod, the LCMS Foundation, and LCEF, each with a slightly different focus. The Faith Aflame portal on the LCMS Web site contains many resources that can be used directly or adapted for regular congregational stewardship emphases; LCEF's Consecrated Stewards and Capital Funding Services materials, the latter of which focuses on congregational building programs; and the Foundation's Gift Planning Services are available to assist LCMS congregation members to provide for the Lord's work today, tomorrow, and until the Day of our Lord's reappearing. Helping congregations to become aware of and to use these resources remains the biggest challenge. The Board of Directors recommends that the Praesidium and the Council of Presidents lead our districts and congregations to grow in discipleship, which will also result in better management of the bountiful resources bestowed upon us by our triune God.

Evangelism

Growing in discipleship will allow our congregation members to share the Good News of salvation in Christ Jesus with their neighbors and friends, their associates and acquaintances, or anyone whom they encounter during their sojourn on this earth. Evangelism, spreading the Good News of salvation in Christ Jesus through word and deed, must be at the heart of everything we do, individually and corporately. The Board of Directors recommends that the Praesidium and the Council of Presidents lead our districts and congregations to grow in discipleship, which will lead to an increased proclamation of the Gospel in our communities and throughout the world, that the Holy Spirit may work in the hearts of those who hear the Good News of salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Harmony

Harmony results when different parts blend together, sometimes coming together in unison, at other times paralleling each other but in different ranges, and still other times when embarking on what seem to be divergent paths. At times, even discordant blends can become eerily beautiful. Harmony, however, is not made up of random notes on a musical score, nor is it solely unison. Creating harmony requires precise communication between the composer and the choir or orchestra. Getting the blend just right takes effort. This, essentially, is what the Task Force on Harmony, established by 2007 Res. 4-01A, reported to the 2010 convention. The Koinonia Project, coordinated by the Office of the First Vice President, has begun the practical implementation of the work and recommendations of the Task Force on Harmony. The Board of Directors encourages every Synod member to become involved in this worthwhile project.

Communication

Better, clearer, more frequent, open, and honest communication was at the heart of the task force's report and many of its recommendations. Finding the best and most effective ways to reach the different generations comprising our congregation members is challenging at best. Letters and magazines are not the most effective way to reach our younger members, yet our mature congregation members prefer

that method. Recent changes in *The Lutheran Witness, Reporter*, and the production of the new *Lutherans Engage the World* are merely the first steps to reach our broad spectrum of members in meaningful ways. Electronic media are being used more and more to communicate with our youth and young at heart.

Simply passing convention resolutions will not automatically improve communication. It takes continual effort on the part of everyone, church professionals and laity alike, striving toward this goal. As communication improves, trust should also improve. This does not mean that open and honest communication guarantees unequivocal agreement (see *Harmony*, above); however, such communication promotes an environment wherein differences of opinion can be discussed and worked through collegially and respectfully, allowing mutual growth and edification. In fact, such communication will likely encourage differences of opinion to be expressed. We are grateful to our Lord and God that He has provided us with His Holy Word (*norma normans*) to teach us His doctrines and to bring us the saving Gospel of Christ. We are also grateful to God that we have the Lutheran Confessions (*norma normata*) to help us defend those doctrines as we faithfully proclaim the Gospel message. Finally, we thank our good and gracious Lord for giving us one another to support, encourage, teach, and correct each of us as we continue to grow in discipleship.

Structure Concerns

The study of district configuration is in progress and will be reported to the 2013 convention by the Res. 8-07 Task Force charged with examining that issue.

Management Efficiency

Internal structure concerns have largely been addressed, as required by 2010 Res. 8-08A. All mission and ministry programs have been grouped as national missions or international missions. There are about 70 fewer employees of corporate Synod today than there were two years ago. Some small number of adjustments may still be needed as time goes on.

The Synod continues to look at ways to become more efficient in its operations. As opportunities arise, it continues to work with the synodwide corporate entities and others to coordinate activities in order to avoid overlap and duplication of effort. The board worked diligently to facilitate the affiliation of Concordia University—Ann Arbor with Concordia University—Wisconsin. The board is also reviewing its annual operating subsidies to support the Concordia University System, Concordia Historical Institute, and the National Housing Support Corporation (d/b/a Lutheran Housing Support Corporation), encouraging each of them to begin to work toward less dependence on Synod subsidies for their operations.

Higher Education Support

The task force recommendations related to expanding boards of regents and specifying minimum qualifications for serving on them were implemented by convention actions in 2007 and 2010. These actions allow the colleges and universities of the CUS system and each of the seminaries to assemble boards of regents with the necessary talents and abilities to manage these important institutions.

Support from Corporate Entities and RSOs

The BRTFFM recommended that recognized service organizations and synodwide corporate entities be assessed an amount commensurate with the benefits they receive by being associated with Synod. The board found that those synodwide corporate entities that are able to generate their own resources do provide Synod with a share of their incomes, as they are blessed. Those that depend upon Synod's unrestricted resources for their existence would have to ask for an increase in that support in order to return support to Synod. Instead, it is vital that these current synodwide corporate entities be encouraged to develop their own revenue sources to enable them to reduce their dependence upon the Synod's unrestricted resources. The board also found that the Synod incurs significant costs in approving and monitoring recognized service organizations, without any direct support other than the Synod's unrestricted resources.

Synod/District Fiscal Conference

The Board of Directors supports the concept of a Synod/District Fiscal Conference as another channel to provide better communication regarding the challenges and opportunities to be faced in carrying out our common good activities, mandated by our Constitution and Bylaws and convention actions. The board recommends that a triennial fiscal conference, attended by each district president and treasurer/business manager, be held beginning in 2015.

The board believes that congregations will respond through better, open, and honest communication about the great things God is able to accomplish for His kingdom when we work together. Numerous conventions have passed resolutions calling on congregations to maintain and increase unrestricted support for district and Synod ministries, yet the unrestricted support passed through our districts to the Synod has continued to decline at the average rate of \$1 million each year. An average support level of \$10 to \$15 per baptized member per year would equally share the cost for providing for ministry and leadership activities mandated by our Constitution and Bylaws and convention actions, and allow us to maintain or increase the current level of program support at the Synod Inc. level. The board encourages each congregation and district to meet or exceed that level of funding for our common-good activities, in order that mission and ministry program activities may be better supported.

We pray that the Lord's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and that our service will be pleasing to Him as we proclaim the Gospel throughout all the world, witnessing through word and deed as we live our lives together in His service. We are baptized for this moment.

LCMS Board of Directors

R6-03-02

Fan into Flame Final Report

Introduction

Fan into Flame, an audacious five-year campaign to raise \$100 million in support of the Synod's *Ablaze!* mission goal of reaching 100 million people with the Gospel by Reformation Day 2017, concluded its active fund-raising phase on October 31, 2011. Delegates to Synod's 2010 convention voted to extend the campaign eight months past its original timeline in order to conclude work in the 35 districts of the LCMS.

The campaign is now in a passive phase, wherein contributors who made significant multi-year commitments continue to fulfill their pledges through periodic gift installments.

At the Synod's 2010 convention in Houston, delegates approved Res. 1-01*, which required that "a final report on the *Fan into Flame* campaign be provided to the next Synod convention." This report is intended to fulfill the 2010 convention's expectation, as well as the expectation of all those who prayed for and took a personal interest in this endeavor.

It has been said that fund-raising campaigns can have very long "tails." To illustrate, the most recent gift for the Synod's two-year *Forward in Remembrance* campaign (1979–81) was this past February, as the 2013 *Convention Workbook* and this report were in final editing. So while Res. 1-01 of the 2010 convention calls for a "final report," the reality is that the impact of *Fan into Flame* through the many gifts and contributors who participated will not be fully realized for several years, if not decades. The true final report will likely be read in the historical logs of the Synod and its missionaries, and in the lives and legacies of those who heard the precious Gospel of Jesus and were called to faith by the Holy Spirit.

REPORT COMPONENTS

- Campaign Overview
- Participation
- Financial Overview: Revenues, Disbursements, and Expenses
- Campaign Breakdown: Restricted and Unrestricted Support
- Expense (Cost) Ratios
- Current Status and Activities
- Attachment—2010 Res. 1-01

Campaign Overview

The Synod's *Fan into Flame* campaign was historic and unprecedented in its scope, vision, and design. It provided substantial resources in support of the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to "vigorously make known the love of Christ." People in our neighborhoods and around the world are hearing the Gospel through the efforts of the *Ablaze!* movement because of the support LCMS members and households gave through *Fan into Flame*.

Genesis of the Campaign

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's *Fan into Flame* campaign was officially adopted at the 2004 Synod convention (Res. 1-04) to develop \$100 million in financial support for the *Ablaze!* movement, an effort to reach 100 million people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ by 2017.

Components and Distribution Plan

Fan into Flame was designed as a unique approach to partnering with LCMS households, congregations, and districts. For the first time, a portion of funds raised would be returned to participating congregations and districts as support for local and regional outreach efforts. The model for the distribution of raised funds was centered around Acts 1:8, "You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The verse framed a case for raising funds intended to benefit evangelism and outreach efforts by local congregations (Jerusalem), districts (Judea), and coordinated nationwide programs (Samaria), in addition to international mission and outreach efforts (the ends of the earth).

Focus Areas	Defined Goals	%	Disbursements Plan ¹	%
Congregations (Jerusalem)	\$15,000,000	15%	\$ 13,500,000	13.5%
Districts (Judea)	\$15,000,000	15%	\$ 13,500,000	13.5%
National (Samaria)	\$20,000,000	20%	\$ 18,000,000	18.0%
International (the ends of the earth)	\$50,000,000	50%	\$ 45,000,000	45.0%
Fund-Raising Expenses/Recovery			\$ 10,000,000	10.0%
Total	\$100,000,000	100.0%	\$100,000,000	100.0%

¹Figures in this column reflect disbursement goals, including those to cover fund-raising expenses.

Summary

Securing \$69 million in gifts and pledges, *Fan into Flame* stands as one of the largest, most ambitious, and most complex campaigns in the Synod’s history. When combined with the sustaining annual mission gifts received during the campaign’s time frame (Feb. 2005 through this report), the amount contributed over a six-year period to carry out witness-related work exceeded \$150 million. While the financial goal of \$100 million was not realized due to a number of significant internal and external challenges, *Fan into Flame* did strengthen the global witness of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It is also providing critical information that will enable Synod to wisely evaluate recommendations for future fund-raising campaigns, using lessons learned from this six-year effort.

Fan into Flame is still relevant to LCMS witness and mercy work. The gifts donors continue to provide as they fulfill outstanding campaign commitments (pledge receivables) are still needed and expected in the field. These resources will carry out and complete the authorized, mission-critical work intended to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world through the Synod’s new structure.

Participation

This specific convention report is not intended to provide a detailed listing of every participating household, congregation, group, or district. The final campaign newsletter distributed in April 2012 and available online at the Synod’s Web site (www.lcms.org/fanintoflame) offers information about participating congregations and district engagement through April. In addition, the LCMS did not and has not secured permission from participating LCMS households to publish a donor list.

What is important to note is that at least one campaign gift flowed out of every LCMS district, whether through a district effort such as that run by the Southeastern and Texas Districts, through related district special campaigns such as that conducted in the Michigan District, or from LCMS households and congregations within each district who gave directly to the campaign.

More than 10,000 LCMS households made direct gifts or multi-gift pledges in support of *Fan into Flame*, including a substantial number of donors giving a first gift-of-record to Synod. Bible classes, local Vacation Bible Schools, men’s and women’s groups, family foundations, and even some corporations championed the cause of evangelism and outreach through sacrificial campaign gifts.

LCMS individuals, congregations and districts ²	10,474
Private and family foundations, corporations	31
<u>Other (schools, VBS programs, LWMLs, men’s groups, etc.)</u>	<u>93</u>
Total donors, grantors, and contributors	10,598
Direct Participant Congregations	
Congregations making direct gifts to <i>Fan into Flame</i> :	192
Direct Participant LCMS Districts	
Districts making direct gifts to <i>Fan into Flame</i> :	16

²Under *Fan into Flame* tracking and reporting protocols, a district or a congregation was counted as an indirect participant so long as at least one gift came from a member household or a group within that congregation or district. The information is accurate only to the extent that a specific household or group can be linked directly to an LCMS congregation and the congregation’s associated district. In some cases, Synod has no verifiable data to make this type of connection for reporting purposes.

FAN INTO FLAME FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Revenues, Disbursements and Expenses (Unaudited) as of January 31, 2013

*(Note: Slight errors in totals may exist due to rounding of exact figures to the nearest whole dollar)*Campaign Revenues

Cash Received by Synod for Outreach	\$40,456,817	
Cash Received by Synod for New Ablaze! NSM* Missionaries	\$ 8,926,184	
Related District and Congregational Campaigns	\$ 5,753,988	
Subtotal: Gifts		\$55,136,989
Subtotal: Pledges		<u>\$14,174,732</u>
Total Revenues: Cash, Related Campaigns, Direct NSMs, Pledges		<u>\$69,311,721</u>

*NSM=Network Supported Missionary

Campaign Disbursements (a detailed breakdown of the following disbursements is available at www.lcms.org/fanintoflame)Campaign Expense Recovery

Cash Used for Expense Recovery (per Campaign Policies)		
Expenses Recovered—Restricted Cash	\$ 4,049,935	
Expenses Recovered—Unrestricted Cash	<u>\$14,048,052</u>	
Subtotal: Cash Used for Expense Recovery		\$18,097,988

Campaign Outreach Disbursements Net of Expense Recovery

Cash Received by Synod Disbursed for Outreach		
Jerusalem (Congregational Outreach)	\$ 2,317,017	
Judea (District Outreach)	\$ 7,302,595	
Samaria (National Outreach)	\$ 3,321,057	
Ends of the Earth (International Outreach)	<u>\$ 8,161,623</u>	
Subtotal: Cash Received by Synod Disbursed for Outreach		\$21,102,293

Campaign Cash on Deposit with Synod

Jerusalem (Congregational Outreach)	\$ 102,346	
Judea (District Outreach)	\$ 88,132	
Samaria (National Outreach)	(\$ 24,528)	
Ends of the Earth (International Outreach)	<u>\$1,090,587</u>	
Subtotal: Cash on Deposit with Synod		\$ 1,256,537

Other Campaign-Related Disbursements

Related District and Congregational Campaigns-Disbursements	\$ 5,753,988	
New Ablaze! NSM Missionaries: Restricted Gift Disbursements	<u>\$ 8,926,184</u>	
Subtotal: Other Campaign-Related Disbursements		\$14,680,172

Balance of Pledges

Pledge Receivables	\$ 8,777,435	
Uncollectable Pledges (Write-offs)	<u>\$ 5,397,297</u>	
Subtotal: Pledges		<u>\$14,174,732</u>

Total: Expense Recovery, Disbursements, Cash on Deposit, Pledges \$69,311,721Expenses

Expense Detail

Incurred Expenses by Category

Consultant (Community Counseling Service Co., LLC)	(\$ 8,237,421)	41.4%	
LCMS Foundation Services ³	(\$ 2,113,023)	10.6%	
General and Administrative ⁴	(\$ 1,289,471)	6.5%	
LCMS Staff Wages & Benefits ⁴	(\$ 5,693,060)	28.6%	
Publications and Promotion	(\$ 753,579)	3.8%	
Travel and Events	(\$ 1,266,000)	6.4%	
Other ⁵	<u>(\$ 530,239)</u>	2.7%	
Subtotal: Incurred Campaign Expenses			(\$19,882,793)
Cash Applied to Campaign Expenses			\$18,097,988
Campaign Expense Deficit Borne by Synod			<u>(\$ 1,784,805)</u>

³ The LCMS Foundation serviced the campaign with gift and pledge processing, direct-marketing expertise, database management, and constituent research.⁴ LCMS World Mission fund-raising staff expense and G&A were allocated 100% to the campaign (atypical of industry standards, which would allocate personnel by percentages between ongoing, sustaining operational requirements, and the campaign). Removing these would lower the campaign costs by as much as \$6,982,531 to \$12,900,262. The rationale for industry standard practice is that the organization would still incur most if not all of these costs even if the campaign were not conducted simply to carry out regular, sustaining fund-raising in support of annual operations.⁵ Comprises campaign expenses which do not fall into any of the other six categories.

Campaign Breakdown—Restricted and Unrestricted Support

(Note: Slight errors in totals may exist due to rounding of exact figures to the nearest whole dollar)

<u>Cash: Outreach Disbursements</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jerusalem (Congregational Outreach)	\$ 2,317,017	\$ —	\$ 2,317,017
Judea (District Outreach)	\$ 8,221,438	\$ —	\$ 8,221,438
Samaria (National Outreach)	\$ 3,321,057	\$ —	\$ 3,321,057
Ends of the Earth (International Outreach)	\$ 7,711,539	\$ 450,084	\$ 8,161,623
Ablaze! NSM Direct Missionary Support	\$ 8,926,184	\$ —	\$ 8,926,184
Related Congregation and District Campaigns	\$ 5,573,988	\$ —	\$ 5,573,988
Total Cash Disbursements—Outreach	\$35,332,380	\$ 450,084	\$35,782,464
<u>Cash: Fund-raising Releases</u>			
Jerusalem (Congregational Outreach)	\$ 267,724	\$ (9,850)	\$ 257,873
Judea (District Outreach)	\$ 822,144	\$ 8,566	\$ 830,710
Samaria (National Outreach)	\$ 555,587	\$ 1,661,218	\$ 2,216,805
Ends of the Earth (International Outreach)	\$ 1,463,120	\$13,329,479	\$14,792,599
Ablaze! NSM Direct Missionary Support	\$ —	\$ —	\$ —
Total Cash: Fund-raising Releases	\$ 3,108,574	\$14,989,413	\$18,097,988
<i>Related Congregation and District Campaigns</i>	<i>\$ Not known</i>	<i>\$ Not known</i>	<i>\$ Not known</i>
<u>Cash: Deposits Held by Synod</u>			
Jerusalem (Congregational Outreach)	\$ 102,346	\$ —	\$ 102,346
Judea (District Outreach)	\$ 88,132	\$ —	\$ 88,132
Samaria (National Outreach)	\$ (28,528)	\$ —	\$ (28,528)
Ends of the Earth (International Outreach)	\$ 1,071,269	\$ 19,317	\$ 1,071,269
Ablaze! NSM Direct Missionary Support	\$ —	\$ —	\$ —
Total Cash: Deposits Held by Synod	\$ 1,237,220	\$ 19,317	\$ 1,256,537
<u>Pledges</u>			
Outstanding Pledges			\$ 8,777,435
Uncollectable Pledges (Write-offs)			<u>\$ 5,397,297</u>
Subtotal: Pledges			\$14,174,732
TOTALS:	<u>\$39,678,174</u>	<u>\$15,458,814</u>	<u>\$69,311,721</u>

Expense (Cost) Ratios

If used appropriately, fund-raising expense ratios can be useful management and diagnostic tools to access fund-raising effectiveness and efficiency, to evaluate the impact of external and internal influences beyond the direct control of the fund-raising staff, and to establish baselines against which future efforts can be measured. It is important to understand that the nonprofit sector has not yet reached a definitive consensus on how to best calculate expense ratios in a way that accurately reports fund-raising performance. The following are presented to show the wide range of possible ratio variables that can be used to assess performance. The ratio in bold (direct campaign expense ratio) is closest to the approach which directly correlates fund-raising effort against relevant returns. It should also be noted that popular perception of what is considered to be “acceptable” ratios is currently under close scrutiny, as common benchmarks have been built on misleading information. The Better Business Bureau’s acceptable maximum of 33% is a standard based upon the most current research covering nonprofit cost ratios.

Gross Campaign Expense Ratio—through January 2013

Incurring Expenses	\$19,882,793
Total Cash & Pledges	\$69,311,721
Gross Expense Ratio	0.287 (28.7%)
Gross Campaign ROI (return on investment)	\$ 3.49

Direct Campaign Expense Ratio, excl. Related Cong./District Campaigns—through January 2013

Incurring Expenses	\$19,882,793
Synod Cash & Pledges, incl. <i>Ablaze!</i> NSM Direct Support	\$63,914,424
Related Expense Ratio	0.311 (31.1%)
Related ROI	\$ 3.21

Current Campaign Expenses Ratio—through January 2013

Incurring Expenses	\$19,882,793
Synod Cash (Only), incl. <i>Ablaze!</i> NSM Direct Support	\$49,383,001
Current Expense Ratio	0.402 (40.2%)
Current ROI	\$ 2.48

Deployed/Deployable Cash Campaign Expense Ratio—through January 2013

Incurring Expenses	\$19,882,793
Synod Cash Disbursed for Outreach, <i>Ablaze!</i> NSM, Cash on Deposit	\$31,285,014
Deployable Expense Ratio	0.636 (63.6%)
Deployable ROI (Net ROI)	\$ 1.57

Current Activities following Restructuring

Between October 31, 2011 (the last day of the active fund-raising phase) and June 30, 2012, the Synod’s fund-raising unit saw the departure of the last senior campaign leader and two senior gift officers who had been intimately involved in the *Fan into Flame* fund-raising effort. Several fund-raising staff members from LCMS World Mission continue to serve in the restructured advancement unit; however, their previous roles in *Fan into Flame* were support focused rather than decision-making focused. The new executive director of Synod’s new Mission Advancement unit started, purely by coincidence, the same day the active phase concluded.

Effective July 1, 2012, Mission Advancement employed just one full-time staff member tasked solely with providing dedicated *Fan into Flame* support, primarily for processing quarterly disbursements back to congregations and districts. Pledge-fulfillment support efforts draw upon staff resources allocated to other aspects of Synod’s advancement work. These staff members are in areas associated with missionary support and other pledge-based programs, allowing Synod to leverage their expertise for the benefit of *Fan into Flame* fulfillment efforts.

The passive phase of *Fan into Flame*, which focuses on supporting participants as they complete multi-gift and multi-year commitments, will continue until all outstanding pledges have either been fulfilled or written-off as uncollectable. In addition, Mission Advancement is responsible for processing the disbursement requests which direct campaign funds back to participating congregations and districts as additional cash and pledge payments are received. Progress reports are submitted to both the Chief Mission Officer of Synod and, via quarterly reports, to the Synod’s Board of Directors.

To date, \$5,397,297 in pledges have been written-off as uncollectable due to donor deaths, changes in personal circumstances which prevent donors from fulfilling a pledge, or because donors have been unresponsive to pledge-fulfillment support efforts. Synod policies do not treat outstanding pledges as a bill that must be paid in the face of some demonstrable consequence or aggressive collection effort.

This report was prepared by Mission Advancement (Mark D. Hofman, CFRE, MBA, Executive Director), with support from the Synod’s Accounting Department and the LCMS Foundation.

***To Celebrate *Fan into Flame* Blessings and Commit to Its Completion**

[2010] RESOLUTION 1-01

Overture 1-01 (CW, p. 149)

WHEREAS, The 2004 LCMS convention adopted Res. 1-04, which called for the Synod to commit itself to supporting the major fund-raising effort approved by the Board of Directors of the Synod and administered by the Mission Support Unit, with a goal of raising \$100 million above the regular LCMS World Mission budget in time for a celebration of God’s blessing by the 2010 Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, This effort, named the *Fan into Flame* campaign, was begun in earnest in 2005; and

WHEREAS, The Mission Support Unit was tasked with the engagement of each district in a local and national effort in order to raise support for mission activity in local congregations, districts, throughout the United States, and around the world, using a case model that incorporated Jesus’ charge to His disciples in the Book of Acts 1:8 (“... in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”); and

WHEREAS, Three-quarters of LCMS districts have completed their district efforts to date; and

WHEREAS, One-quarter of the districts may require additional time to complete their efforts; and

Whereas, Approximately \$40 million in major gift requests are pending; and

WHEREAS, \$57 million has been raised, 8,000 new donors have been added to the ranks of mission supporters, 19,000 gifts have been generated, and 1,100 congregations have participated; and

WHEREAS, A number of *Ablaze!* projects and initiatives of the Synod and her districts and congregations have been undertaken as a result of the *Fan into Flame* campaign; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention celebrate God’s blessings through the *Fan into Flame* campaign, which has raised over \$57 million as of May 2010 for mission work in local communities, across the country, and around the world; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Synod celebrate the formal completion of the campaign on Reformation Day of 2011; and be it further

Resolved, That *Fan into Flame* campaign support mechanisms remain in place until the remaining districts and congregations of our Synod complete their campaign efforts and all pending gift requests have been closed; and be it finally

Resolved, That a final report of the *Fan into Flame* campaign be provided to the next Synod convention.

Action: Adopted (8)

(Res. 1-01 was adopted as presented, without debate [Yes: 819; No: 221].)

R6-04

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation

Established in December 1958, the Foundation is now in its 55th year of *Linking Christians with Giving Opportunities*®. At the heart of this mission statement is a core value of Christ-centered financial stewardship, which properly views giving as a Spirit-inspired act of sanctification motivated by the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14). The Foundation exists to offer comprehensive charitable expertise and services to help individual Christians plan and direct their passions for giving to family and all ministries of the church today, tomorrow, and forever.

Vision. The Foundation vision statement—*Every Christian with a Lifetime Plan for Giving Today, Tomorrow and Forever*—proceeds from its mission. In this vision, each person who has come by faith to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ sees his or her life as a God-given resource “to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Pet. 4:10b) and approaches personal stewardship joyfully, prayerfully, and conscientiously. The terms “today, tomorrow and forever” each have distinct meaning within the context of the Foundation’s mission and vision.

Gifts Today are direct gifts used immediately to support ministry efforts. During the last triennium, many individuals throughout our church body expressed their love for Christ through the Foundation by providing direct support for the ministries they love. In fiscal years 2010, 2011, and 2012, the Foundation processed and distributed 486,998 individual gifts for immediate support of ministry totaling \$142,210,182.

Gifts Tomorrow are deferred, or planned, gifts—including annuities, trusts, family gift funds, bequests, and other estate plans—that support ministry efforts at some point in the future. Many deferred gift instruments administered by the Foundation provide a stream of payments to individuals and married couples during their lifetimes, and in some cases during the lives of their loved ones, with the remainder value of the assets distributed to ministries named by the donors when the instruments mature. During the last three years, the Foundation distributed 11,901 matured planned gifts totaling \$38,955,970 and helped prepare 4,050 new gift plans with an estimated future value of \$187,154,345, which will be distributed as the charitable instruments mature.

Gifts Forever are endowed gifts that produce ongoing support for ministry efforts. The Foundation administers 657 endowments designed to support ministry in perpetuity. Current asset balance of the managed endowments is more than \$108 million. During the last triennium, \$11,628,815 was distributed from the endowments to ministries of the church. At the end of fiscal year 2012, total assets at the Foundation were \$910 million. The investment performance of assets under management did quite well during the triennium, a period which included the worst global economic recession in the last 80 years and significant investment declines in the financial markets. All Foundation funds have positive performance relative to their benchmarks over both the short and long term. More than 560 unique ministries of the church benefited from gifts received and distributed through the LCMS Foundation during the triennium.

Membership and Partnerships. While the Foundation exists to serve all congregations and entities of the church, 61 voting members elect trustees and vote on other official actions. Foundation Members currently include 35 LCMS districts, 10 colleges/universities, two seminaries, nine other Synod-affiliated entities, and five LCMS Delegates. The Board of Trustees includes 11 voting members, of which seven are elected by the members, two are elected by the Synod in convention, the Synod President or his representative,

and the chairman of the Board for National Mission or his representative. The Chief Financial Officer of the Synod is an ex-officio nonvoting member of the board.

The Foundation continues to partner with Concordia Plan Services in the investment arena. Jointly using Wilshire Associates as an investment advisor and Northern Trust as our custodial bank, we have further expanded the relationship to include five new investment advisors. This is important to both organizations because investment managers’ fees are based upon the amount of funds under investment. With combined assets under the same managers (but with separate accounts), we have been able to reduce investment fees to both organizations while continuing our distinct investment programs. We are jointly looking for additional investment managers with Wilshire’s assistance, so that we can expand our savings and strengthen our investment programs.

Leadership and Organization. In March 2011, the Rev. Thomas Ries resigned his position as president of the Foundation. Mr. Wayne Price assumed the position of interim president while the Board of Trustees actively seeks to fill the president position. Four senior vice-presidents give leadership to the organizational functions of Finance and Administration, Trust Administration and Customer Support, Marketing and Communications, and Gift Planning. Sixty full-time employees serve the Foundation.

The Foundation has full-time gift-planning partnerships with one auxiliary (Lutheran Women’s Missionary League), Lutheran Haven Retirement Center, and eight districts of the Synod. The districts are California-Nevada-Hawaii, Eastern, Iowa West, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, SELC, and Southern Illinois. In addition, the Foundation has five gift-planning counselors at large and associate gift-planning partnerships with 26 other districts and Synod entities, and serves individuals, congregations, and organizations with gift planning and investment services in all 35 LCMS districts.

In 2012, the Synod’s Board of Directors resolved to transfer from the Foundation the responsibility for development efforts that benefit the ministries represented by the Synod. Depending on the needs of each LCMS program, the scope of these efforts has ranged from full development services on the one hand to a more limited scope of services on the other. The term “full development services” is broadly described on three levels: Level 1 is face-to-face contact with donors; Level 2 is non face-to-face contact with donors; and Level 3 is non-donor contact activities such as gift processing, data management, and reporting. Since 2001, some Synod programs have continued in a full development services partnership. Others have migrated to taking responsibility for their own Level 1 activities while continuing to work with the Foundation for Levels 2 and 3 services. The employees remaining in Levels 2 and 3 continue to be Foundation employees until such time as both organizations establish an orderly transfer.

Overall, the Foundation has brought a high degree of consistency and professionalism to every aspect of the development process and continues to adapt to the development needs of the synodical programs as they evolve.

Goals. During the triennium, the Foundation continued its strategic focus on gift planning, endowment funding, and continued the consulting and training services to help equip leaders of districts, congregations, and other ministries to conduct their own gift-planning efforts. The goal of this focus is to increase the number of face-to-face encounters with decision makers, who will create their own lifetime plan for giving. The Foundation follows five avenues in pursuit of this goal: congregations, existing accounts, referrals, organizations, and training and consulting. Spotlighting the congregation avenue, *Transfer the Blessings*, a program that equips an LCMS congregation to identify and provide gift-planning services to benefit the congregation, resulted in 113 gift plans valued at more than \$37 million. Each

avenue provides its own set of opportunities for identifying individuals who have a passion for Christ-centered stewardship and helping them create lifetime gift plans.

The Foundation's annual Ministry Report with supplemental information, updated financials, and distributions appears on the Foundation's Web site at www.lcmsfoundation.org. The Foundation's audited financial statements are available on request.

As it enters the next triennium, the Foundation rejoices in the enormous blessings of the past and looks forward confidently by God's grace to the future.

Wayne Price, *Interim President*

R6-05

Lutheran Church Extension Fund

Organization Mission Statement

To support the Church in fulfilling its mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ by being a Christ-centered servant partner of the LCMS, ensuring that funds and services are available now and in the future.

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is honored to serve and support LCMS ministries in building the kingdom of Christ.

The country continues to be impacted by the global recession of 2008 and 2009 and the slow economic recovery. Yet the Lord has blessed LCEF with many opportunities to walk alongside ministries that are adjusting to economic and cultural challenges. We are confident He will provide the resources and solutions needed to effectively fulfill His mission of sharing the Gospel.

As unemployment increased and remained elevated, contributions to a number of congregations and other ministries decreased and school enrollment declined, presenting a significant challenge to all. As a result, the level of LCEF's loan delinquencies and impairments increased. LCEF expended considerable time and resources to work with these challenged ministries. We are pleased to report that these efforts resulted in a return to prerecession delinquency levels, and loans that have been restructured are returning to current status.

Key financial and ministry highlights as of Dec. 31, 2012, are listed below. For more current information, visit lcef.org or call 800-843-5233.

- **Total Assets.** As a result of the recession, ministries have delayed building projects, and the demand for loans has decreased significantly. To maintain the appropriate balance of loans and investor payables, LCEF limited growth in investor payables area. Total assets were \$1.82 billion, a level comparable to the previous three fiscal years.
- **Loans Receivable.** Loan demand was such that new loans were funded from the principal repayments on existing loans. Accordingly, the loan portfolio decreased to \$1.423 billion from a high of \$1.526 billion as of June 30, 2010.
- **Loan Delinquencies.** Providing ministries time to address the issues causing delinquencies and restructuring the terms of the loans, the percentage of loan delinquencies returned to a historically normal level of between 2% and 3%. Since our last report to the Synod, LCEF put aside considerable funds to ensure the loan-loss reserve is adequately capitalized.
- **Capital to Asset/Liquidity Ratios.** LCEF is focused on ensuring it has a strong capital position and adequate liquidity. LCEF improved its capital position to 9.79% (exclusive of its loan loss reserve) from 8.85% at June 30, 2010, an increase of 0.94%. Inclusive of the loan loss reserve, the capital ratio improved to 11.80% from 10.17% as of June 30, 2010. It should be noted that the FDIC considers a strong capital ratio for financial institutions better than 8%. LCEF's level of cash and investments as a percentage of its outstanding investor payables totaled 23.7%, an increase from 15.7% as of June 30, 2010. A liquidity ratio of 20% is considered a strong ratio within the financial industry.

- **Low Interest Rates.** The Federal Reserve lowered interest rates several times in an effort to stimulate the economy. Since LCEF's set rates on a combination of the cost of funds and prevailing market interest rates, ministries have had an opportunity to borrow at historically low levels.
- **Investor Payables.** Loyal investors continued to provide funds to provide LMCS ministries financial resources that support their efforts to expand God's kingdom. While the investor payable portfolio of \$1.6 billion is slightly lower than the previous three years, LCEF is blessed by more than 51,000 primary investor relationships. Investors in the easy-access StewardAccount®, introduced in 2000, have invested in excess of \$500 million.

Distribution of Operating Results. In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, LCEF was able to return excess earnings to the Synod and partner districts. In 2011, more than \$701,400 was distributed; in 2012, more than \$1.65 million was shared.

Reorganization and Branding. To better address the changing needs of the Synod's ministries and support the ministries impacted by the economic downturn, LCEF restructured its national-office operations, experiencing an increase in efficiencies and a reinvigorated mission and brand. The updated logo and purpose statement (shown below) is an opportunity to generate more excitement, reach new partners, and more effectively serve the LCMS.

Operational Summary

2009–2010

Total assets as of June 30, 2010, the end of LCEF's fiscal year, reached \$1.81 billion, with \$1.57 billion in investor payables and \$160 million in net assets. Strong investment returns and operating efficiencies resulted in net income of \$10.6 million.

Although requests for loans slowed during the 2010 fiscal year, LCEF funded loans requested by LCMS congregations, schools, missions, and other organizations totaling \$165.9 million, with \$30 million for rostered church-worker loans. The total loan portfolio was valued at \$1.53 billion.

Like many financial institutions, LCEF experienced an increase in delinquent and impaired loans (defined as a loan placed on non-accrual status or with restructured terms). In response, LCEF added \$13.5 million to LCEF's loan-loss reserve to provide for potential loan losses. At fiscal 2010 year-end, delinquencies totaled 7.2% of the loan portfolio, up from 6.4% in fiscal 2009 and 2.7% in 2008.

The economic recession impacted funds LCEF holds in investments that are set aside to meet loan disbursements and to provide operational funds for redeemed notes as needed. To assist management, in April 2010, the LCEF Board of Directors established a Board Investment Committee. LCEF worked with outside professional financial advisors to construct and maintain a diversified, conservative, and prudent investment portfolio.

In May 2011, LCEF responded to several natural disasters that impacted many LCMS members and congregations. Through LCEF's Natural Disaster Loan Program, ministries and rostered church workers in areas declared a natural disaster area by a local, state, or national entity were eligible to receive 0% interest-rate loans that required no payment during the first 12 months of the term. In addition, LCEF waived the administrative fees for Laborers For Christ projects and Architectural Advisory Committee Site and Facility Analyses. Through this program, LCEF assisted, among others, Immanuel Lutheran Church and Martin Luther School in Joplin, Missouri, and St. John Lutheran Church, Hillsboro, North Dakota.

LCEF's Rostered Church Worker Loan program adapted to changes in the home-lending industry as a result of regulations implemented after the credit crisis. The SAFE Act eliminated organizational exemptions available to LCEF, which resulted in increased licensing fees, and subjected all loan originators to state-specific testing and

licensing requirements. LCEF now offers rostered church worker loans in the states where a majority of the church workers reside.

2010–2011

A tough economic environment continued into fiscal year 2011, and LCEF continued to assist many congregations, schools and universities, missions, and other LCMS organizations with their loan, investment, and support-service needs.

Total assets as of June 30, 2011, were \$1.84 billion, with \$1.60 billion in investor payables and \$162.4 million in net assets. With strong net interest income during fiscal 2011, LCEF added to the loan-loss reserves for delinquent and impaired loans, and lower valuations of LCEF's real estate portfolio, a result of the continuing real estate market decline. Loans receivables totaled \$1.50 billion.

LCEF's interest rates continued to compare favorably with rates at other financial institutions, and LCEF investors remained loyal and committed to supporting LCMS ministries and church workers. In many congregations, LCEF volunteers advocating the mission of LCEF helped to retain investors.

Just as other organizations and businesses made structural changes to be more responsive to customer needs, LCEF did as well. The national office initiated a realignment in fiscal 2011 to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

An area added in fiscal 2010, the Loan Resolution Group, diligently worked with ministries challenged by the economic downturn, seeking options that provided ministries time to address the challenges, while continuing to meet obligations and financial commitments. This group has received high marks from ministries they support. In addition, district staff members strived to be the best financial resources to ministries at the local level. At fiscal 2011 year-end, 90-day delinquencies totaled just 3.9% of the loan portfolio, down from the previous year's mark of 7.2%.

High energy costs caused many ministries to seek solutions that put more dollars toward outreach and programs rather than building operating costs. LCEF's Laborers For Christ members assisted in a variety of ways, including replacing windows and doors, installing exterior siding that increases the level of insulation from the elements, and changing lighting fixtures to meet government standards for more efficient bulbs and ballasts. Laborers teams have always been conscious of these considerations, but many congregations, too, are more mindful and are actively seeking the expertise and experience of Laborers and members of LCEF's Architectural Advisory Committee.

2011–2012

Economic recovery—globally and nationally—was slow to gain traction and continued to impact ministries. LCEF saw many ministries seeking the best way to embrace and rejoice in their mission, while adapting to a changing environment. We continued to shape our offerings to be the best possible resource for them.

Our district and ministry support areas were reorganized to be more holistic, assessing a ministry's focus and helping it clarify its purpose before aligning resources and setting plans into action. We saw a steady increase in ministries seeking a joyful stewardship experience with the assistance of our Capital Funding Services consultants. These campaigns were blessed by an outpouring of faith and reflections of God's gifts to us. While some were for debt reduction, many had a mission component to them. For that we thank God and His people determined to share the Gospel.

As of June 30, 2012, LCEF's total assets were \$1.82 billion, with \$1.59 billion in investor payables and \$1.42 billion in loans receivable. Delinquencies in excess of 90 days totaled just 2.40% of the loan portfolio, once again illustrating that our loan restructures and concentrated work with challenged ministries resulted in positive results for ministry.

During this timeframe, LCEF hired a Chief Credit Officer and established a national ministry loan area to focus on Recognized Service Organizations, an area previously underserved by LCEF. In addition, LCEF implemented procedures to more effectively market LCEF's loan products to LCMS ministries. The implementation of a new loan underwriting system and the cross-training of all loan staff members improved the services of our loan area.

LCEF experienced a strong level of net income, totaling \$10.8 million compared to \$3.1 million as of June 30, 2011. This was the result of lower levels of required reserves, improved market value appreciation on LCEF's investment portfolio, increased operating efficiencies, and a significant level of gift and bequest income. The base capital-to-asset ratio (which excludes loan loss reserves) improved to 9.41%, compared to 8.85% as of June 30, 2011. Inclusive of loan loss reserves, the capital ratio reached 11.32%.

Recognizing that LCEF must reach out to more LCMS members to ensure continued strong investment at all age levels, LCEF has planned and executed several strategies and programs.

One of the most exciting programs initiated in fiscal 2012 was the National Student Marketing Competition. Open to Concordia University students, all of the colleges and universities were invited to assemble a team of undergraduate students under the guidance of a faculty advisor to research and develop a campaign to attract new and younger investors to LCEF. The inaugural event culminated in presentations by four teams in April 2012 at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis. The competition provided an opportunity to connect with valued ministry partners, gain knowledge that could further our mission, and give practical experience to business, marketing, and advertising students.

The 2013 competition presentations were April 11–13, again at the International Center. Those participating included Concordia University, Irvine, California; Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Illinois; Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota; Concordia College—New York, Bronxville, New York; Concordia University Texas, Austin, Texas; and Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Recognizing further changes in the housing loan market and the unique needs of pastors and rostered church workers (RCWs), LCEF initiated a new RCW residential loan with a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage. This Well-Qualified Buyer Loan is available for the purchase of a home, not for refinances. This complements our other variable-rate RCW loan products with low down payments and no private mortgage insurance (PMI) requirements, giving church workers choices that best suit their needs and situations.

LCEF's cost of funds decreased to a historical low of 2.375%, which allowed LCEF the opportunity to provide loans at competitively low rates. In addition, congregations with new LCEF loans can reduce their interest rate further if a certain percentage of members invest. We call this partnership program Shared Blessings, which helps ensure LCEF reaches new investors, investments are adequate to fund loan needs, and costs are kept low for the congregation so more dollars are available for ministry.

During fiscal 2011, the Committee on Constitutional Matters (CCM) reviewed LCEF's articles of incorporation and bylaws for compliance with the Bylaws of the Synod. As LCEF's articles of incorporation already state that LCEF is subject to the Bylaws of the Synod and the recommended changes clarified references and provisions to which LCEF already adhered, LCEF recommended changes during its November 2011 annual meeting held in conjunction with LCEF's Fall Leadership Conference.

Conclusion

The last several years have indeed brought challenges and changes. However, because we have remained true to our commitment to serve LCMS ministries, those that are challenged are making strides in meeting their mission to serve their communities and reach out with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this support is made possible by the commitment and dedication of loyal—fiercely loyal—investors with a passion and drive to ensure resources are available to help build God’s kingdom.

We encourage all of our national and district staff members and volunteers to seek God’s guidance in turning any perceived “road-blocks” into opportunities to serve and support ministries’ efforts to share His Word. We seek to share the resources entrusted to us, the talents of our staff and volunteers, as we are guided by the Lord and the Holy Scriptures. We seek to be a catalyst for energizing ministry, and we thank God for the opportunity to serve every day. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Randall J. Peterson, *Chairman*
Richard C. Robertson, *President/CEO*

R6-06

Commission on Constitutional Matters

Preface

In his presidential address at the 1896 convention of the Synod, which celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Synod, President Henry C. Schwann said:

What is the purpose which our ecclesiastical polity is to serve? None other than the sole, lofty, vast and eternal purpose: the honor of God and the salvation of men. ... For that purpose He has given His Son, His Spirit, His Word, and His Sacraments. This purpose is to be served by everything in heaven and on earth. ... But how? Do we claim that this polity is the means of grace whereby His good and gracious will is fulfilled? Never! Such means, means of grace, only He who is the liberal Lord of Grace can institute. ... If the Word is to be preached and the Sacraments administered, then various discussions, decisions, arrangements, and orders concerning time, place, and manner are necessary. Without them even the smallest congregation cannot function. How much more essential are these when several congregations, motivated by the Love of Christ, join together in preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments to those who do not have them. But, note well! These arrangements are not means of grace but simple, outward means of assistance so that the means of grace can be utilized and can be put into operation. This is what our Church polity is to achieve. No more, no less. (*Proceedings*, 1896, p. 18, emphases added)

In his 1848 presidential address to the convention, Dr. C. F. W. Walther stated:

Accordingly there can be no doubt, venerable brethren in office and respected delegates, that we are not renouncing any right belonging to us if we as servants of the Church and as members of an ecclesiastical Synod claim no other power than the power of the Word; for in the Church where Christ alone rules there dare and can be no other power to which all must submit. To be sure, there are matters which the Word of God does not regulate, but which must be arranged in the Church; but all such matters are not to be arranged by any power above the congregation, but the congregation, that is, pastors and hearers, arranges them, free of every compulsion, as it is necessary and appears salutary. ... If, however, we glance at the conditions in which the Church finds itself here, we can hardly consider any other constitution as the most salutary but one under which the congregations are free to govern themselves, but enter into a synodical organization such as the one existing among us with the help of God, for enjoying fraternal consultation, supervision, and aid and to spread the kingdom of God jointly and to make possible and accomplish the aims of the Church in general. ... Also our synodical body has the same prospects of salutary influence, if it does not attempt to operate through any other means than through the power of the Word of God. (emphases added)

Under the above principles of LCMS polity, the Commission on Constitutional Matters has the self-understanding that the members of the Synod are carrying out what they themselves decide as expressed and set forth in the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions through the delegation of responsibilities given to the commission with precisely defined service functions.

As is true for the Synod itself and all its agencies, the commission is a servant that carries out a “necessary” and “salutary” function (cf. the word “arrangements” in the quotes above) for the Synod as authorized by the Synod.

Historically, the commission has been responsible for providing the primary service function of the interpretation of the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, thereby assisting the members of the Synod in carrying out the Synod’s polity in a fitting and orderly manner so that, as observed above, the Means of Grace can be utilized and can be put into operation, and we can more effectively spread the kingdom of God.

Functions

INTERPRETATION

Through its opinions, the commission carries out its primary responsibility to interpret the collective will of the Synod as stated in the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod. The commission does not develop board policies and programs, nor does it supervise their implementation. The commission does not see to it that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are carried out, nor does it have the authority to interpret the Scriptures or provide a theological opinion. While having no authority over any officer, board, or commission, the commission does state through its opinions/interpretations what this Synod of self-governing congregations has reserved unto itself alone and what it has delegated specifically to others.

The commission’s authorized function of interpreting assists the members of the Synod in the clarification and understanding of the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, thereby helping to promote harmony and to prevent self-will, self-ambition, controversy, dissension, and division. This function of interpretation is stressed in the Bylaws of the Synod (Bylaws 3.9.2–3.9.2.2.3).

An interpretation challenge facing a Commission on Constitutional Matters is that while the commission’s members accept without reservation the Scriptures and the Confessions (the confessional basis of Art. II of the Constitution), the commission is limited to and charged only to interpret the Synod’s covenant (a human document), that is, the Constitution (to which all who wish to be and remain members of the Synod shall subscribe), Bylaws, and resolutions of the human organization called the Synod. As an example, the Synod’s various theological positions may not be explicit conditions of membership in the Synod according to our Constitution (a voluntary human covenant). There may be divinely mandated scriptural principles not explicitly a part of the required provisions, order, regulations, processes, and procedures of the human covenant of love. Thus the task for the commission, with its Synod-given authority, is to interpret only the latter.

CONSULTATION

While the commission may consult Synod’s legal counsel, and anyone or group it chooses, such as an officer, a board, or a commission of the Synod, the commission must “notify an officer or agency of the Synod if a request for an opinion involves an activity of that officer or agency and shall allow that officer or agency to submit in writing information regarding the matter(s) at issue” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2 [b]).

BINDING NATURE OF OPINIONS

While “an opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided,” a convention of the Synod may overrule an opinion based on “substantive rationale from the Constitution, Bylaws and resolutions of the Synod” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2 [c]). If an opinion pertains to business, legal, or property matters and the Board of Directors of the Synod concludes that such an opinion is contrary to the laws of the State of Missouri, special bylaw provisions allow a resolution of the matter (Bylaw 3.9.2.2).

CONVENTION RESPONSIBILITY

The commission is required to examine all reports, overtures, and resolutions to the Synod to determine their agreement in content with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod (Bylaw 3.9.2.2.1). The commission is required to be represented at the convention floor committee meetings to ensure that any constitution and bylaw matters are in accord with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod (3.9.2.2.2). Overtures proposed for bylaw amendments to the convention and even amendments to such overtures must be examined by the commission prior to presentation to the convention to determine that they are not in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod (Bylaw 7.1.1 [c]). The commission is also required to carry out any assignment given to it by the convention.

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS OF THE SYNOD AND ITS AGENCIES

The Synod requires the commission to examine all articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policy manuals of every agency of the Synod to ascertain whether they are in harmony with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod (Bylaw 3.9.2.2.3). The comments resulting from the commission’s examination or review are considered formal opinions, and the commission takes care to distinguish between suggested changes and those that are required. In its review of agency documents, the commission has noted a frequency of instances of minor departures from the norm of how the Synod prepares documents, as in its Bylaws and the commission’s documents. Rather than call attention to each of these details individually and repeatedly, the commission has prepared a checklist of these “*Frequently Noted Concerns and Aberrations*” to alert document preparers and editors. In this manner, the commission promotes and facilitates uniformity of language and grammar usage in bylaw and policy documents throughout the Synod.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMISSION ON HANDBOOK

The Commission on Constitutional Matters provides consultation to the Commission on Handbook in revising the *Handbook* of the Synod following each convention to bring it into harmony with the resolutions and changes adopted by the convention. The Commission on Constitutional Matters may also propose, suggest, or refer clarifications (changes) needed or new provisions to the Commission on Handbook in order to address specific handbook-related issues that surface between conventions (Bylaw 3.9.4.2 [b] and [e]). Generally speaking, the Commission on Constitutional Matters is responsible for “content,” while the Commission on Handbook is responsible for “language (terminology).”

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUALS (SOPM) [Dispute Resolution and Expulsion]

The commission is required by the Synod to create and amend as necessary a Bylaw section 1.10 *Standard Operating Procedures Manual* in consultation with the Secretary of the Synod and the Council of Presidents. In consultation with the Secretary of the Synod and with the concurrence of the Council of Presidents, *Standard*

Operating Procedures Manuals are created and amended as necessary for the provisions set forth in Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17. The commission also provides consultation for the Bylaws 3.10.4.7.9 (j) and 3.10.5.6.9 (j) dispute resolution provisions. These *manuals* are available on the Synod Web site.

2010–2013 Triennium

A great number of the commission’s 200 agenda items (as of Feb. 3, 2013) in the 2010–2013 triennium dealt with the governing documents of districts. This was due primarily to the many changes made to the Synod structure and governance bylaws at the 2010 convention.

The ramifications of the 2010 convention structure and governance actions also required considerable attention by the commission during this triennium as it reviewed and interpreted the convention actions and bylaw changes, which understandably included some ambiguity and a lack of clarity. The commission began this review at its first meeting after the 2010 convention (Aug. 30–31, 2010). In carrying out its responsibility, the Commission on Constitutional Matters referred the discovered or identified ambiguities or needs for clarification to the Commission on Handbook throughout the triennium as well as at a special joint meeting hosted and conducted by the Commission on Constitutional Matters on Nov. 2, 2012. At the invitation of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, in addition to the Commission on Handbook, the Office of the President, the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Chief Mission Officer also participated.

Significant time, energy, and meetings were spent by the commission in helping facilitate the decision and action of the affiliation of Concordia University Ann Arbor with Concordia University Wisconsin. The commission was involved in reviewing and approving all the critical and essential documents of this affiliation and their coordination in light of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.

On the basis of questions addressed to it, the commission gave much attention to dispute resolution (Bylaw 1.10) and expulsion from membership (Bylaw 2.14) matters. The issues addressed by the commission were both the substance of the matters as well as the due process required by the Synod in the interest of the integrity, trustworthiness, and credibility of the processes in the eyes of all parties.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 2010 CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

The commission implemented its specific responsibility given in the following convention resolutions:

Res. 8-07 “That the 2010 LCMS convention direct the President of the Synod to convene a special task force to work in consultation with the Council of Presidents and the Synod’s Board of Directors to submit to the next Synod convention a recommendation that includes, but is not limited to, the following ...”

In accord with the convention resolution, the commission selected Wilbert Sohns as the “one member of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) selected by the CCM” to serve on the Res. 8-07 Task Force, which had its first meeting on July 17, 2012.

Res. 8-12A “That in preparing the 2010 *Handbook*, the Commission on Constitutional Matters (or the Commission on Handbook if Res 8-08A is adopted) shall update the terminology in the *Handbook* to be consistent with the current usage of the Synod and the resolutions of the 2010 convention.”

While the Commission on Handbook assumed this responsibility, the Commission on Constitutional Matters was consulted by the Commission on Handbook and reviewed the convention resolutions with respect to “content” to bring the *Handbook* into harmony with the resolutions and changes adopted by the convention.

Res. 8-30B “That the President of the Synod in consultation with the Council of Presidents, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, and the Commission on Constitutional Matters make provisions for the preparation of materials (a study) that explain the biblical,

confessional, and historical basis for Art. VI of the Synod's Constitution and the current and historic bylaws that elucidate the article. ... That following the study, the Commission on Handbook, in consultation and concurrence with the Synod President, the Commission on Constitutional Matters, and the Council of Presidents, submit a proposal to clarify and affirm or amend Art. VI to the next convention of Synod. ..."

A consultation was held with the President on Sept. 3, 2011. On Sept. 27, 2011, the commission shared with the President pertinent resource documents that could be included in the study. The commission is not aware of the progress of this study.

At its Feb. 10–12, 2012, meeting, the commission did issue Opinion 11-2598 (printed in *Appendix I* of this *Convention Workbook*), which referred to the 2010 convention resolution and again urged its timely implementation: "In Res. 8-30B, the 2010 convention of the Synod resolved to study Art. VI. Its second WHEREAS paragraph indicated in part the urgency of this study: 'WHEREAS, Concerns have been expressed throughout the history of the Synod, including recently, about the proper understanding and application of Art. VI with respect to the conditions or requirements for acquiring and holding or retaining membership in the Synod.' These 2010 concerns of the convention echo the 1981 entreaties of President Preus to give this matter our attention. The commission urges the timely implementation of this convention resolution including its second-last resolve paragraph: '*Resolved*, That following the study, the Commission on Handbook, in consultation and concurrence with the Synod President, the Commission on Constitutional Matters, and the Council of Presidents, submit a proposal to clarify and affirm or amend Art. VI to the next convention of Synod.'"

Res. 8-32B "That the President of the Synod implement a synod-wide study of the document, *CONGREGATIONS OF THE SYNOD, Background Materials on the Advisory Nature of the LCMS*, together with the CCM opinion and any other helpful historical materials (historical bylaws, convention resolutions, etc.) between now and the next convention of the Synod. ... That following the study, the Commission on Handbook, in consultation and concurrence with the Synod President, the Commission on Constitutional Matters, and the Council of Presidents, submit a proposal to clarify and affirm or amend Art. VII to the next convention of Synod...."

Following the consultation with the President on Sept. 3, 2011, the commission on Oct. 13, 2011, shared with the President pertinent resource documents that could be included in the study. The commission is not aware of the progress of this study.

OPINIONS

While not all commission opinions are of consequence to the entire Synod, those opinions of broad significance during the triennium are provided in the 2013 *Convention Workbook, Appendix I*. The titles of some of these are as follows:

- Ecclesiastical Supervisory Responsibilities of a District President (10-2581)
- Supervision of Doctrine and Practice of Pastors and Congregations of the Synod (11-2589)
- Issues Related to Election of President of Synod (11-2592)
- Interpretation of Constitution Art. VI 2 b (11-2598)
- Implementation of New Synod Structure (11-2600)
- Fellowship Within the Synod (11-2610)
- Authority of a District President (11-2616)
- Role of CTCR and CCM Opinions, Doctrinal Statements and Resolutions (12-2634)
- Questions re Ecclesiastical Supervisor's Responsibilities during Expulsion Proceedings (12-2650)
- Questions re "Actual Partiality or the Appearance Thereof" (12-2651)
- Fairness and Due Process Questions Received from Final Hearing Panel (12-2659)

- Special Hearing Panel Procedures and Role of the Administrator (12-2660)
- "Unalterable Articles" in the Constitutions of Congregations (13-2663)

PDF files containing selected prior commission opinions since the 2001 convention are posted on the Synod Web site.

GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATIONS' CONSTITUTIONS

Congregations become members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod only after their constitutions and bylaws have been approved by a constitution committee and board of directors of one of the Synod's 35 districts. Similarly, upon favorable action by the district board of directors, a congregation is notified that the changes to its constitutions and bylaws are acceptable to the Synod, and the congregation may proceed with formal adoption of the revised constitution and/or bylaws and remain a member in good standing of the Synod. While no particular form of congregational governance is required as a condition of membership, the commission, as a service to the Synod, has issued guidelines for the proper composition of congregations' constitutions and bylaws so as to avoid omitting required provisions or including provisions that violate Synod's covenants. The current guidelines were revised November 2012. These *Guidelines* appear in the 2013 convention Workbook and on the Synod Web site.

COMMISSION ON CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS GOVERNING POLICIES

Among many commission governing policies, which were revised in November 2012, are "Understanding the Rules and Principles of Interpretation Used by the Commission on Constitutional Matters in Carrying Out Its Responsibility for Interpretation" and "Understanding the Use of Research by the Commission before Arriving at an Opinion/Interpretation." The governing policy document also includes the history of the commission. The CCM *governing policies* are available on the Synod Web site.

TEMPLATES FOR DISTRICTS' ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

In examining the articles of incorporation of the 35 districts, the commission has observed unintended aberrations. Understanding that state laws with respect to incorporation must be observed, the commission will be providing a template to be helpful to the districts as they revise their articles of incorporation.

JOINT MEETING WITH COMMISSION ON HANDBOOK, THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, CHIEF MISSION OFFICER

A fruitful joint meeting was held Nov. 2, 2012, to identify those areas or issues needing further clarification with respect to the structure and governance matters adopted at the 2010 convention and surfaced by commission opinion 11-2600. These included, but are not limited to, the following:

- Definitions of "executive director," "mission board," "oversight," "supervision," "report," "relates to," "receive direction," "operating board," "policy board," "responsible," "directed toward"
- The relationship, role, and responsibilities of the Board for International Mission and the Office of International Mission, the Board for National Mission and the Office of National Mission
- Budgeting responsibilities
- The relationship of the Chief Mission Officer, the President, and the executives
- The distinction between "supervision" and "ecclesiastical supervision." For instance, does the Synod President have "supervision"

in addition to “ecclesiastical supervision” over the seminaries, universities, districts, district presidents, boards, officers, etc.?

2010–2013 Triennium Membership and Organization

MEMBERS

The commission consists of five voting members. Three are ordained ministers, and two are lawyers. The Secretary of the Synod serves as a nonvoting member and its secretary. The voting members are appointed by the President of the Synod from nominees provided by district boards of directors and selected as candidates by the Council of Presidents. The President’s appointees are ratified by a majority vote of the Council of Presidents.

The current members of the commission are Wilbert J. Sohns (Chairman); Philip J. Esala (Vice-Chairman); Daniel C. Lorenz (Secretary *pro tem*); George J. Gude; R. Neely Owen; and Raymond L. Hartwig (Secretary). The five voting members serve six-year terms, renewable once. The two six-year terms of Daniel Lorenz and Wilbert Sohns come to a conclusion with this convention, and they cannot be appointed to another term. The first six-year term of Philip Esala comes to an end at this convention, but he is eligible to be appointed for another six-year term.

Dr. Sohns represents the Commission on Constitutional Matters as an advisory member of the Commission on Handbook and represents the Commission on Constitutional Matters as a member of the Res. 8-07 Task Force on Future District Function and Configuration.

MEETINGS

The commission meets at least four times a year, and more often as necessary, to carry out its responsibilities.

MINUTES

The commission publishes its minutes following each meeting. These minutes contain the official opinions of the commission in response to questions submitted in writing. Since opinions are binding upon the Synod and its members unless or until overruled by a national convention, former minutes and selected prior opinions are made available electronically on the Synod Web site for at least three years, subject to the addition of other opinions relating to frequently asked questions. In addition, some opinions older than three years related to frequently asked questions may also be included. The date on which an opinion was decided is now included at the bottom of each opinion.

OTHER HELPFUL COMMISSION DOCUMENTS

The commission may publish on the Synod Web site other documents relating to the commission’s work that it determines may be helpful to the Synod, including the following:

- Historical Background and Interpretation of Art. VI 2 of the Constitution of The Lutheran—Church Missouri Synod, a Research Study Document provided for and on behalf of the CCM by Gerhard Bode, January 2012
- Response to “Request for CTCR Opinion Concerning Continued Eligibility of an Inactive Emeritus Member under Art. VI of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” adopted by the CTCR, Feb. 12, 2010
- Commission on Constitutional Matters Governing Policies
- Standard Operating Procedures Manuals
- Guidelines for the Constitution and Bylaws of a Lutheran Congregation
- Frequently Noted Concerns and Aberrations
- The Synod *Handbook*

Wilbert J. Sohns, *Chairman*

R7-01

Commission on Handbook

The Commission on Handbook (Bylaws 3.9.4–3.9.4.2) consists of eight members, five voting and three nonvoting. Three of the voting members are individual Synod members (ordained or commissioned ministers) and two of the voting members are attorneys. The three nonvoting members are as follows: the Secretary of the Synod, the Chief Administrative Officer of the Synod, and a voting member of the Commission on Constitutional Matters. The voting members are appointed by the President of the Synod for six-year, once-renewable terms from nominees provided by district boards of directors and selected as candidates by the Counsel of Presidents. Current voting members of the commission are Albert M. Marcis, Walter L. Rosin, Richard T. Nuffer, Marvin L. Temme, and Gordon D. Tresch (chairman). Nonvoting members are Raymond L. Hartwig, Ronald P. Schultz, and Wilbert J. Sohns.

The primary responsibility of the Commission on Handbook is to provide ongoing maintenance and management of the Synod *Handbook* (Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation of the Synod) (Bylaw 3.9.4). Specific responsibilities of the commission are explicated in Bylaw 3.9.4.2, as follows: (1) assisting convention floor committees when developing amendment proposals to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation of the Synod to determine their agreement in language (terminology) with the existing *Handbook*; (2) in consultation with the CCM, revising the *Handbook* of the Synod immediately after each convention in order to bring it into harmony with resolutions and changes adopted by the convention; (3) maintaining a complete file of succeeding handbooks so comparison can be made between current and preceding provisions; (4) carrying out assignments by Synod conventions relating to the *Handbook*; and (5) responding to requests from Synod agencies to propose new provisions to address specific handbook-related issues that arise between conventions of the Synod.

At its organizational meeting on July 7, 2011, the commission elected Gordon D. Tresch as chairman. Also elected were Rev. Marvin Temme as vice-chairman, Rev. Raymond Hartwig as secretary, and Rev. Walter Rosin as secretary *pro tem*. The commission further determined that commission leadership will be elected at the initial meeting of the commission following each Synod convention. The commission at this meeting, in order to insure all business would be handled in good order, determined the following: (1) all minutes are to be posted in a timely fashion on Synod’s Web site under the link to the Commission on Handbook, with meeting dates to be posted in advance on Synod’s Web site under the link to the Commission on Handbook; (2) the chairman, with the assistance of the Secretary’s Office, is to provide an agenda to the commission in advance of each meeting, with items of business assigned numbers for easy reference; (3) writing assignments given by the chairman are to be indicated on the agenda; and (4) devotional responsibilities are to be assigned by the chairman on a rotating basis.

Pursuant to 2010 convention Res. 8-30B “To Study Article VI of Synod’s Constitution” and Res. 8-32B “To Study Article VII of Synod’s Constitution,” the commission, at its initial meeting (7/7/11–7/8/11), instructed its chairman to write a letter to the Synod President expressing the commission’s willingness to assist, however appropriate, in meeting the convention resolutions’ expectations relating to the convention’s direction that a proposal(s) to clarify, affirm, or amend the articles in question be submitted to the next Synod convention after appropriate study.

The 2010 convention Res. 8-05B “To Elect Delegates to the Synod Convention,” dealing with national convention delegate selection (number and process), was referred to the Commission on Handbook.

The commission, in fulfillment of this convention-assigned responsibility, is proposing the following two actions to the 2013 Synod convention for consideration: (1) “To Establish Number of Delegates to Synod Conventions” and (2) “To Change Process for Electing Delegates to Synod Conventions.”

In response to Overture 8-80 referred to the commission in 2010 Omnibus Resolution A, the commission is proposing a convention action to the 2013 LCMS convention to change Bylaws Chapter 7 amendments to bylaws requirements in order to eliminate confusion respecting the differing duties of the Commission on Handbook and the CCM.

Since the last convention, the Commission on Handbook has adopted from time to time editorial changes to the Bylaws. These nonsubstantive corrections have been applied to the electronic version of the *Handbook* available on the Internet.

Other bylaw amendments being proposed to the 2013 convention by the Commission on Handbook include the following subjects:

1. *Handbook* issues re expulsion process (Bylaw sections 2.14; 2.15; 2.16; 2.17)
2. *Handbook* issues re dispute resolution process (Bylaw section 1.10)
3. *Handbook* issues re bylaws pertaining to districts
4. *Handbook* issues re Synod conventions
5. *Handbook* issues re synodwide corporate entities
6. District membership/ecclesiastical supervision issues (Bylaw 2.12, *et. al.*)
7. Bylaw issues from 2010 convention restructuring decisions

During the course of this triennium, the commission will have met eight times (including a joint meeting in November 2012 hosted by the CCM with representatives of the Office of the President to discuss areas and issues identified by the CCM relating to polity matters adopted by the 2010 convention requiring attention) prior to the 2013 LCMS convention. All specific agenda items are publicly available on the Synod’s Web site under the link to the Commission on Handbook.

Gordon D. Tresch, Chairman

R7-02

Resolution 8-07 Task Force

The 2010 LCMS convention adopted Resolution 8-07, which directed the President of the Synod to convene a special task force to study future district function and configuration. The task force worked in consultation with the Council of Presidents and the Board of Directors to submit to the 2013 LCMS convention recommendations that include but are not limited to

- general principles of viability for a district as called for in Bylaw 4.1.1.3 (b) (3);
- the purpose and function of a district;
- recommendations to improve efficiency and coordination between the Synod and districts and among the districts, including possible changes in the number and configuration of districts; and
- an implementation plan for any recommended changes that will address staff personnel and financial operations, as called for in Bylaw 4.1.1.3 (b) (5).

The task force consisted of one lay and one rostered representative from each of the five electoral regions, one district executive, one member of the CCM, one member of the former Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance, one district president, and the Chief Mission Officer of the Synod.

The task force held its initial meeting in July of 2012. At that meeting, task force members reviewed and developed a list of several topics that are important to the process of forming recommendations for consideration by the Synod in convention.

An overriding concern for the task force has been to solicit input from the various constituencies that might be affected by its recommendations. To this end, the task force has submitted a number of survey questions to the Council of Presidents and Synod Board of Directors, soliciting their observations and suggestions. In addition, the task force conducted two focus groups in November of 2012 with a sample of district presidents attending the fall 2012 LCEF conference.

While the task force has the responsibility to make recommendations for improvements to district operations and the configuration of districts, the task force has solicited input from districts on the recommendations and seeks cooperative implementation of task force recommendations.

The task force has proceeded with its discussions seeking to keep primary focus on the mission of the Synod. In other words, the theological commitments and objectives of the Synod enumerated in the Preamble and Articles II and III of its Constitution need to be at the heart of any recommendations. Within that context, the task force also evaluated the operational and financial responsibilities of the districts and how best to carry out all these responsibilities.

To this end, the task force adopted decision-making criteria that recognize the importance of theology. Those criteria are

- ecclesiastical supervision;
- visitation;
- communications;
- perceived value;
- operations costs; and
- implementation costs.

The task force has concentrated initially on the responsibilities of districts as defined in the Synod’s Constitution and Bylaws. It committed significant time to discussion of the roles of both districts and circuits in serving local congregations. Most significantly, the task force reviewed the office of visitation in the LCMS and the roles the districts and circuits have in fulfilling this. Districts, which are considered the Synod itself performing the functions of the Synod, together with the circuits are component parts of the Synod.

Office of Visitation

In an attempt to strengthen the circuits and the *office of visitation* in the Synod, the 2010 convention adopted Res. 8-02A, “To Restore Circuits to Their Primary Purpose.” The resolution revised Bylaw 5.1.1 with the provision that “a circuit is a network of congregations that ‘walks together’ for mutual care, support, advice, study, ecclesiastical encouragement, service, coordination, resources, and counsel—all for the sake of greater congregational participation in God’s mission” (emphasis added).

The Preamble to 2010 Res. 8-07, “To Study Future District Function and Configuration,” established the context and direction for the resolution:

Districts are large ecclesial clusters (congregations and circuits) established by the Synod for the care, support, advice, ecclesiastical encouragement, service, coordination, and counsel that will foster the congregation’s greater participation in God’s mission. Present district boundaries were determined by the national Synod with the intention of providing the most efficient and effective support and ecclesiastical encouragement and counsel to local congregations (emphasis added).

The Res. 8-07 Task Force reviewed the *office of visitation* historically and theologically to determine how both evangelical visitation and the work of the circuits within the districts can be strengthened in the LCMS. The Rev. Dr. Wilbert Sohns prepared an essay on visitation for the task force, which is attached as an *appendix* to this report.

Visitation has been one of the primary focuses of the task force, recognizing that doctrinal integrity and communication of the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod come from a system

of regular and consistent dialog with its congregations and members. The support of its congregations is paramount to a strong church body. To achieve this, the office of visitation must be strengthened.

Recommendation

The task force recommends the following actions by the Synod to strengthen the effectiveness and understanding of visitation:

- The Synod in convention reaffirm that visitation is a primary function of our Synod, districts, and circuits;
- The current title of “circuit counselor” should be returned to its previous designation of “circuit visitor”;
- Visitation circuits should be established to serve the needs of congregations as best determined by the district;
- The Synod President, with the aid of the Synod Vice-Presidents, must be expected to visit with every district president at least once every triennium;
- Every district president, with the aid of the district vice-presidents, must be expected to visit every circuit counselor (visitor) and his congregation at least once every three years;
- The circuit counselor (visitor), at the request and under the supervision of the district president, must be expected to visit every congregation at least once every three years;
- The above expectations are to be understood to be minimal expectations, and visitation beyond those expectations is encouraged;
- All visitations shall follow the general guidelines established by the Council of Presidents, adapted to local circumstances;
- Because of the great importance of the spiritual office of circuit counselor (visitor), pastors and congregations are encouraged to give careful attention to the qualifications and responsibilities for the selection of circuit visitors (Bylaw section 5.2);
- Districts and circuits are encouraged to consider also using qualified retired pastors as circuit counselors (visitors);
- The Council of Presidents is encouraged to investigate and consider means of improving appropriate visitation, care, support, and encouragement of all rostered members of Synod, including ordained and commissioned ministers serving outside the congregations;
- Each district president develops a regular program for the evaluation of the circuit counselor (visitor).

General Principles of Viability

The 1969 Synod convention adopted Res. 4-03, “To Establish General Principles for Formation or Realignment of Districts” (1969 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 102). According to the resolution, “a viable district—

1. offers adequate parish services;
2. provides adequate mission development, guidance, and support;
3. is adaptable and flexible in meeting new and various needs for ministry;
4. has boundaries corresponding to the major communications spheres in a given area;
5. centers in a metropolitan area and has boundaries and internal structures adapted to the metropolitan areas within its boundaries;
6. evidences balance rather than homogeneity;
7. is compact in terms of travel patterns and travel time;
8. has sufficient potential financial resources for its own programs and for the support of the synodical ministries;
9. is large enough to be effective and efficient;
10. has general acceptance by the constituency involved.”

Recommended Principles

The task force adopted the following recommended principles for viability of a district. These will be presented as an overture for consideration by the 2013 LCMS convention. These general principles should be considered when judging the viability of a district. Does the district

1. provide appropriate guidance and support to member congregations for participating in the mission God has given to the church, including how that is carried out in the various missions and ministries of the church?
2. carry out ecclesiastical supervision, as defined in the Synod’s Constitution (Art. XII) and Bylaws (Bylaw 1.2.1[g]), in a reasonable and timely manner?
3. provide encouragement and needed congregational services (e.g., stewardship, conflict resolution, crisis counseling, financial counseling, calling process, collaborative efforts, networking, nourishment, and help with evangelistic outreach, etc.) to member congregations and provide advice and counsel to member congregations struggling to carry out their core functions?
4. adapt to new circumstances and meet changing needs relating to the mission and ministry of the Church?
5. ensure that the district president is carrying out the minimum requirements for official visits to each of the member congregations as outlined in the Synod’s Bylaws (Bylaw 4.4.4), including coming to the pastors and member congregations at least once every three years as a brotherly advisor, “reminding them of the joy of serving in the mission and ministry of the church”?
6. meet its financial responsibilities and obligations and receive sufficient financial resources from its membership to (i) support the mission and ministry of the church in the district; and (ii) financially assist the mission and ministry of Synod?
7. find itself to be of a size and configuration to be effective, efficient, and capable of serving all who make up its constituency?
8. provide adequate assistance and support to allow the district president to carry out the functions and obligations of the office of district president as set forth in the Bylaws?

District Configuration

With principles of viability as a guide, the task force considered district configuration in light of the responsibilities of the districts and their ability to carry out these responsibilities based on their respective financial and personnel resources.

The task force recognizes that each district has historical ties as well as geographic and personality traits that bind it together. Districts are currently internally organized to address the responsibilities of the district based on their size in terms of both geography and number of congregations and rostered church workers. The task force considered alternatives for the size of districts, considering larger and smaller sizes and the current configuration. There is no right answer that fits all districts or regions of the country. Size is not an indicator of success or viability, but viability is determined by how a district operates and fulfills its duties and responsibilities.

The task force recognized that there are efficiencies in certain functions that could be realized by consolidation of smaller districts (in terms of number of congregations). The task force also recognized that potential improved efficiency and effectiveness might be realized by redrawing district geographic lines, but the task force concluded that changes of this type need to come from the districts. The task force encourages districts to evaluate and consider changes.

Recommendation

Districts should consider, investigate, and develop collaborative opportunities with neighboring districts or on a regional basis, compared to the viability principles. Consideration should be given to collaboration between districts in areas such as mission planning, finance and accounting, human resources, LCEF representative, information technology, stewardship, church planting, ministers of religion conferences, and sharing staff resources. Districts should include in their report to the next Synod convention the results of these efforts.

Additional Recommendations

The task force considered and recommends the following for consideration:

1. There is confusion as to the definition of several key words people use in the daily life of the Church. The Commission on Handbook should consider including the following words in the definition section of the Bylaws:
 - mission
 - missions
 - ministry
 - visitation
 - official visit
2. The terms “bishop” and “district president” are used inconsistently throughout the Synod. There is confusion in the community and the outside world about what a district president is. The term “bishop” is more recognizable to the community. It is also helpful to provide context for the responsibilities and duties of the current district presidents. The task force recommends that the Synod consider changing the name of district president to bishop.

Conclusion

The task force respectfully submits these recommendations to the 2013 LCMS convention for consideration. It expresses its gratitude and thanksgiving for the assistance and input provided during its deliberations with the Council of Presidents, the Synod’s Board of Directors, and the Synod’s staff.

Task Force Members:

Ray Bauch, East/Southeast Region
 Rev. Richard Boche, Council of Presidents
 Rev. Bryant Clancy, Central Region
 Rev. Ruben Dominguez, West/Southwest Region
 Rev. Thomas Eckstein, Great Plains Region
 John Edson, Great Plains Region (Chairman)
 Rev. Roger Gallup, Great Lakes Region (Secretary)
 Elaine Graff, West/Southwest Region
 James Lowitzer, Central Region
 Rev. Herbert Mueller, First Vice-President, President’s Office
 James Saalfeld, Great Lakes Region
 Rev. Will Sohns, Commission on Constitutional Matters
 Roger Sprengel, District Executive
 Rev. Larry Stoterau, Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance
 Rev. Dien Ashley Taylor, East/Southeast Region
 Rev. Gregory Williamson, Chief Mission Officer
 Gene Weeke, Staff Resource

The Office of Visitation¹ in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Historical and Theological

Introduction

In an attempt to strengthen the circuit and the *office of visitation* in the Synod, the 2010 convention adopted Res. 8-02A, “To Restore Circuits to Their Primary Purpose.” The resolution revised Bylaw 5.1.1 with the provision, “A circuit is a network of congregations that ‘walks together’ for mutual care, support, advice, study, ecclesiastical encouragement, service, coordination, resources, and counsel—all for the sake of greater congregational participation in God’s mission” (emphasis added). In harmony with this resolve, the convention floor committee also proposed, “Districts shall establish circuits according

to geographic, demographic, and mission criteria, or such other criteria as shall be determined by a district.” However, the convention amended the resolve to limit the criteria only to “geographic” (2010 Bylaw 5.1.2, emphasis added).

The Preamble to 2010 Res. 8-07, “To Study Future District Function and Configuration,” established the context and direction for the resolution: “Districts are large ecclesial clusters (congregations and circuits) established by the Synod for the care, support, advice, ecclesiastical encouragement, service, coordination, and counsel that will foster the congregation’s greater participation in God’s mission. Present district boundaries were determined by the national Synod with the intention of providing the most efficient and effective support and ecclesiastical encouragement and counsel to local congregations” (emphasis added).

The 8-07 Task Force (authorized by 2010 Res. 8-07) reviewed the *office of visitation* historically and theologically to determine how this office and the circuit model in the districts can be strengthened in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The History of the Office of Visitation

The reformers recognized and desired superintending bishops that were “true” or “proper” bishops, distinguishing between the bishop’s functions by divine right and human right. While the confessors of the Reformation condemned the abuses of superintending bishops, they respected the right of the church to establish the functions of superintending bishops. They re-established the *episcopate* in a God-pleasing and Christ-centered way.

Because of the central concern for the Word and the need to reform parish life and pastoral work according to the evangelical doctrine, Dr. Martin Luther proposed formal visitations at the outset of the Reformation. Philip Melancthon drafted the *Visitation Articles* in 1528 for the proper supervision of the congregations and pastors in Ducal Saxony, with Luther providing the Preface.²

The importance of *episcopate* (supervision) to Luther was described in letters in which he articulated the need for all parishes to be inspected in regard to poor economic and spiritual conditions. His concern was for the souls of people and the preaching of the pure Gospel. The instructions for the visitors of parish pastors cited the Old and New Testament evidence of the divinely wholesome value of pastors and Christian congregations being visited by understanding and competent persons (Acts 8:14; 9:32; 15:2; 1 Sam. 7:17; 21:1; 10:8; 11:14; 13:8; 15:12; 1 Kings 17–21; 2 Kings 2–13; and Luke 1:39).

Other Scripture passages helpful in understanding the *office of visitation* not cited in Luther’s Preface in the 1528 *Visitation Articles* include: “And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are’” (Acts 15:36, emphasis added); “Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for His name” (Acts 15:14, emphasis added); “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people ... because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high” (Luke 1:68, 78, emphasis added); “Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and ‘God has visited His people!’” (Luke 7:16, emphasis added); “It has been testified somewhere, ‘What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man, that You care for [visit] him?’” (Heb. 2:6, emphasis added). All the visit words in these passages are rooted in the Greek word επισκοπεω (cf. επισκοπή [episcopate]—the office; cf. επισκοπος [bishop]—the person of the office).

Historically, the Synod has been so convinced of the power and authority of the Word that it believed it could accomplish its mission primarily through mutual encouragement and support based on that Word, rather than by organizational authority, command, and

control. In his first presidential address (1848), C. F. W. Walther said, “According to the Constitution under which our synodical union exists, we have merely the power to advise one another, that we only have the power of the Word and of convincing.”

At the founding of the Synod, the 1847 Constitution³ stated:

Article IV. I. Business of the Synod.

1. Supervision of the purity and unity of the doctrine within the synodical constituency, and opposition to false doctrine.

2. Supervision over the administration of the preachers and teachers of the synodical constituency.

Article V. I. Execution of Synodical Business.

7. The Synod requires a report from the president on the result of his visitations in the preceding year in conformity with instruction [viz. from Synod], in order to supervise [the] doctrine, life, and administration of the preachers and school teachers (see under Article VI. A., Para.7)

Article VI. Rights and Duties of the Officers and Remaining Members of the Synod.

Of The President

7. He is to make use of all diligence during his three year administration to visit every parish of the synodical constituency at least one time, whereupon he presents his report at the annual synodical convention.

13. In his supervisory capacity he himself is to act strictly according to the written instructions, which he hereto received from the Synod. (emphases added)

In his presidential address to the 1848 Synod convention, reviewing the importance of the 1847 action, Walther stated, “We can hardly consider any other constitution as the most salutary but one under which the congregations are free to govern themselves, but enter into a synodical organization such as the one existing among us with the help of God, for enjoying fraternal consultation, supervision, and aid and to spread the kingdom of God jointly and to make possible and accomplish the aims of the Church in general” (emphasis added).

In 1854, seven years after the founding of the Synod, and with only 89 congregations and 15,000 baptized members, the 73 voting delegates resolved to reorganize the Synod, providing a new “outward means of assistance” by “arranging” and establishing the structure and governance of districts and the office of the district president as ecclesiastical supervisor in the district. It was understood that administrative matters (ecclesiastical supervision) could be dispatched with much greater ease if broken down to the district level with greater participation of both pastors and congregations anticipated in district sessions.

In 1866, 19 years after the founding of the Synod, with 205 congregations and over 65,000 baptized members, the 215 delegates at the Synod convention resolved to reorganize the Synod, providing yet another “outward means of assistance” by “arranging” and establishing the structure and governance of circuits and the office of the circuit visitor as assistant to the district president in his function as ecclesiastical supervisor in the district. This new circuit structure was for the purpose of more effectively carrying out ecclesiastical administration and to broaden the engagement of pastors and congregations.⁴

Thus, the 1854 and 1866 Synod conventions placed the matter of the office of the visitor into the hands of the individual districts. By 1866 President Walther deplored the fact that only two of the district presidents had salaried assistants (Western and Eastern) and encouraged that others follow suit. The district presidents by this time were so overburdened with other responsibilities that they could no longer adequately supervise the parishes in their districts on a planned visitation program.

The Office of Visitation

With visitation circuits established as early as 1866, this “lower level” of Synod administration (office) came into being to lessen the duties of the district president. Creating the circuits was left to the discretion of the districts. (Nineteen years after the establishment of the Synod, the responsibilities of parish visitation had been shifted twice.)

A. The Visitor

While the parish pastor is the bishop/visitor *de jure divino*, the President of the Synod, the district presidents, and the circuit visitors (counselors) are the bishops/visitors *de jure humano*.

In the administrative pyramid existing in the Missouri Synod, the visitor (counselor) has taken the place as next in line to the district president. The key person in the relationship of the circuit to the local congregation has been, naturally, the visitor. Originally, the function of the circuit visitor was a spiritual one. He was to be concerned with the unity of faith and life in the congregations of the circuit. He had the responsibility to assist and be accountable to the district president (who holds the office of ecclesiastical supervisor in the district) in the supervision of doctrine and practice among the pastors and teachers within his circuit.

As servants of the Word, visitors (representing the district president/ecclesiastical supervisor) bring the Word to bear upon given circumstances, situations, and people. Thus great emphasis was placed upon the qualifications and selection of such visitors/ecclesiastical supervisors in view of their gifts and experience of applying the Word to given situations.

Visitation in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is circumscribed by the truth that Christ alone has the power in His kingdom and Christ exercises His power through His Word. As the power in a congregation does not rest in the pastor, the power in the Synod does not rest in church government, in votes, or the Synod’s elected visitors. As this is the very heart of the relationship between a pastor and congregation, it is also the heart of the Synod’s polity, as evidenced in the relationship between the Synod and its members and the relationship between ecclesiastical supervisors and those supervised. God’s Word is to rule—not the “visitor”! A congregation and a synod have no pope(s)!

The Synod also expects a responsible exercise of ecclesiastical supervision without any member, entity, agency, officer, board, or commission meddling (1 Pet. 4:15; cf. 1 Pet. 5:2–3—“assigned portion”) in the responsibility of the ecclesiastical supervisor/visitor. In the Synod’s polity, the *office of visitation*, ecclesiastical supervision, is exercised only by those “called” (entrusted, charged) to do so and not by vigilante groups and political forces (constituency), neither public opinion nor public agitation.

B. The Nature and Function of Visitation

In his 1879 essay, “Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod,” Walther indicated, “A Synod that is ‘faithful to the Confessions’ must also ‘supervise the faithfulness of its members.’” In this convention essay, Walther clearly bases the supervision polity of the Synod on Scripture and the Confessions as well as the provision and practice of the Early Church and the Reformation as evidenced by “church-visitations,” “visitorial responsibility,” and the “true episcopal and supervisory Office.”

In this essay, Walther stated, “However, for the welfare of the church we set up a system of supervision. ... The church must be beautifully united by the bond of love; it must work together under the best possible system of supervision.” Walther also quoted Gerhard, “In our churches, however, we maintain a system of supervision among church workers, ... and we insist that such supervision must be continued, so that there are ‘some bishops’ [supervisors], ‘some presbyters’ [pastors], ‘some deacons’ etc. ... The establishment of a

system of supervision among church workers promotes harmony and unity, prevents divisions that arise from self-love and ambition on the part of lower-level (*niedrigerer*) church workers and curbs the presumption of those who want to destroy the tranquility of the church.”

Pieper made this statement concerning visitation:

Through it [*visitation*] we work to assist one another so that the Word of God and nothing but the Word of God rules in our midst. The visitors see to it that in their circuits everything is done in the congregations according to God’s Word; the district presidents have a similar duty in the entire district, and the synodical president, with certain limitations, in the entire Synod. For this very purpose we do not elect visitors and presidents from among such people who are well schooled in official resolutions and especially in the synodical *Handbook*, but from among people who have had rich experience in the Word of God and, above all, who have the ability to present it and to apply it in regard to specific situations. These offices of supervision which have been established by our synodical Constitution are not to enlarge upon God’s Word, but to serve God’s Word, that is, to set God’s Word in operation and motion. (1896 *Convention Proceedings*)

The ecclesiastical supervisor conducts his office on the basis of God’s Word as the only rule and norm of faith and of practice in the church. Thus the outward means of assistance in the *office of visitation* is giving evangelical counsel, care, guidance, protection and support and to convince and teach—marks of our life together in the Synod (cf. Constitution Art. III 8, 9). *Visitation* has no dictatorial or coercive authority and control, nor is *visitation* a policing or enforcing function and activity. The visitor is not a law enforcement agent. Outside of the Word, the visitor has no authority. The *office of visitation* is driven by the Gospel and centered in Christ. *Visitation* exists to encourage and build up the congregations and ministers and to strengthen their participation in God’s mission.

What was originally conceived as a highly spiritual office instituted for the proper supervision of doctrinal and moral standards of the Synod gradually emerged over the years into that of a Synod agent in the lowest level of the administrative structure (Suelflow, *Synodical Survey Commission*, 1962).

The 2001 Synod convention resolved “To Clearly Delineate [the] Ministry of Visitation in [the] Bylaws” (Res. 8-01), now reflected in Synod Bylaw 4.4.4:

- a) He shall arrange in advance for an official visit to each congregation of his district at least once every three years and otherwise as he deems it necessary. He may call upon the circuit counselors and vice-presidents to assist him with the triennial visitation of congregations.
- (b) In his official visits, he shall seek to bring about to the greatest possible degree the achievement of the Synod’s objectives as expressed in Article III of its Constitution.
- (c) He shall conduct his official visits in an evangelical manner.
- (d) He shall come to the pastor and the congregation as a brotherly advisor, reminding them of the joy of serving in the mission and ministry of the church.
- (e) In his visits, he shall include fraternal discussion in regard to worship and communion attendance; participation by the congregation in missions and the work of the church at large; the congregation’s evangelism and education endeavors; its cultivation of sound stewardship

principles; all aspects of compensation for professional church workers; the need for maintenance of purity of doctrine; the strengthening of the bond of Christian fellowship; and the provision of resources, opportunities, and assistance so God’s people can grow in their faith, hope, and love. (emphases added)

The same 2001 resolution resolved that the Council of Presidents develop guidelines to define the intent and purpose of congregational visits and to provide a foundation for training the visitors.

The 2004 convention made clear the essence of ecclesiastical supervision as provided in Bylaw 1.2.1 (g):

The responsibility, primarily of the President of the Synod and district presidents, to supervise on behalf of the Synod the doctrine, life, and administration of its members, officers, and agencies. Such supervision, subject to the provisions of the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, includes visitation, evangelical encouragement and support, care, protection, counsel, advice, admonition, and, when necessary, appropriate disciplinary measures to assure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are followed and implemented. Thus, ecclesiastical supervision is also the presenting, interpreting, and applying of the collective will of the Synod’s congregations. Ecclesiastical supervision does not include the responsibility to observe, monitor, control, or direct the day-to-day activities of individual members of the Synod, whether in the conduct of their work or in their private lives (cf. Bylaw 2.14.1 [a]). Further, those constitutional articles and bylaws pertaining to ecclesiastical supervision shall determine the full definition of ecclesiastical supervision.

C. Urgency

Luther’s 1528 Preface to “Instructions for Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony” stated:

While we cannot issue any strict commands as if we were publishing a new form of papal decrees, but are rather giving an account or report which may serve as a witness and confession of our faith, we yet hope that all devout and peaceable pastors who find their sincere joy in the gospel and delight to be of one mind with us will act as St. Paul teaches in Phil. 2:2], and will heed our prince and gracious lord. We hope they will not ungratefully and proudly despise our love and good intention, but will willingly, without any compulsion, subject themselves in a spirit of love to such visitation and with us peacefully accept these visitors until God the Holy Spirit brings to pass something that is better, through them or through us.” (emphasis added)

“Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (Philippians 2:2).

Notes

1. In the broad sense, the word “*visitation*” can be understood to mean the overall ecclesiastical responsibility of oversight or supervision (*episcopate*—cf. preface to Visitation Articles). In the narrow sense the word can be understood to mean an official formal visit as a part of the office of ecclesiastical supervision.
2. *Luther’s Works*, vol. 40, pp. 262–319.
3. Cf. 2010 *Handbook* Constitution Art. III 8–9, XI B, XII; Bylaws 3.3.1.1–3.3.1.1.1, 3.3.1.2–3.3.1.3, 4.4.4–4.4.6.
4. Much of the content in this and the two preceding paragraphs was gleaned from *Synodical Survey Commission*, Suelflow, 1962.

1. WITNESS

1-01

To Conduct Synod-Wide Study of *A Theological Statement of Mission*

WHEREAS, 1979 Res. 1-21 “[Resolved,] That each school of the Synod in cooperation with the Board for Missions ... develop an all-pervasive mission vision and outreach”; and

WHEREAS, 1989 Res. 1-01 “[Resolved,] That the message ‘that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself’ continue to be powerfully and sweetly proclaimed so that all our members are united in their conviction that telling everyone what He has done is our highest priority and deserving of our ongoing commitment and constant prayers”; and

WHEREAS, 1989 Res. 3-01 “[Resolved,] That the Synod strongly urge all of its members, at every level, to commit themselves to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the mission which God has entrusted to His church”; and

WHEREAS, 1992 Res. 1-01 “[Resolved,] That the Synod reaffirm its commitment to missions in all nations and cultures and focus its priorities, planning, and action in accord with the emphases, basic assumptions and 15 goals as outlined in the mission blue print [for the Nineties]”; and

WHEREAS, The 1992 convention adopted Res. 3-01:

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention asked the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to “initiate, facilitate, and develop a theological Statement of Mission” which will “reflect the urgency, vitality, and joy of our historic confession of Christ’s forgiveness by grace alone through faith alone as taught in Scripture alone” (Res. 3-02, 1986 *Proceedings*); and

WHEREAS, The CTCR, in November 1991, completed and distributed *A Theological Statement of Mission* (1992, CW, pp. 322–30) in response to this request; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has called on its members to give high priority to God’s mission in keeping with His will that His church seize every opportunity to give an uncompromising, yet winsome, testimony to the Gospel of Jesus Christ which declares that He alone is the Savior of the world and the only way to heaven; therefore be it

Resolved, That *A Theological Statement of Mission* prepared by the CTCR be commended to the Synod for study and use as a tool to aid the various units of the Synod for the development and/or evaluation of their own mission statements; and be it further

Resolved, That all members of the Synod be encouraged to develop a clearer understanding of their involvement in God’s mission and be moved to participate in it with greater joy, fervor, and enthusiasm.

and

WHEREAS, 2004 Res. 1-01A “[Resolved,] That fulfilling God’s mission today requires all entities of the church to prepare individuals to learn the cultures and languages around us in order to equip all the saints (Eph. 4: 12) for mission and discipleship in our current age, so that all honor and glory is afforded our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who grows His church (1 Cor. 3:6) as souls lost are won by knowing that there is only one name under heaven by which one may be saved and that is the name of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:9–11)”; and

WHEREAS, 2010 Res. 1-02 “[Resolved,] That the Synod in convention encourage every baptized child of God to be a bold witness and a faithful confessor of the faith in these challenging times”; therefore be it

Resolved, That in the next three to four years, under the leadership and coordination of the Council of Presidents, every district carry out an in-depth study of the 1991 CTCR document *A Theological Statement of Mission* through its convocations, conferences, and/or

conventions, and that every circuit convocation and forum, every congregation, and every school of the Synod be encouraged to study, discuss, and use this document, which was commended by the 1992 convention of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That all members of the Synod be encouraged to develop a clearer understanding of their involvement in God’s mission and be moved to participate in it with greater joy, fervor, and enthusiasm.

Texas District Board of Directors

1-02

To Encourage Mission Support among LCMS Congregations

WHEREAS, Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has given to His Church the Great Commission and actively calls His followers to “[g]o therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, Baptism and teaching occur at the local level within the life and ministry of each congregation; and

WHEREAS, We open our eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest (John 4:35); therefore be it

Resolved, That all district presidents of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod encourage all circuits to work together to sponsor at least one of the following: a missionary, a church plant, a specialized ministry, or a mission, supporting the initiative for at least four years; and be it further

Resolved, That all congregations work individually or partner locally, nationally, or internationally with the purpose of at least doubling the number of collective Baptisms or adult confirmations by October 31, 2017, over their 2011 levels.

Southeastern District

1-03

To Encourage Church Multiplication as Means of Making New Disciples

WHEREAS, Church planting or church multiplication is part of God’s strategy to make disciples (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, Jesus Himself, as Lord of the Church, has promised to build His Church (Matt. 16:18); and

WHEREAS, The local church is God’s mission agency in its local context (Eph. 3:10); and

WHEREAS, God has designed all healthy living things, including His Bride, the Church, to multiply; and

WHEREAS, A plentiful harvest demands aggressive disciple-making and church multiplication in order to reach a diverse population (Matt. 9:37; John 4:35); and

WHEREAS, Religious demographers note that in the U.S., nearly 70 congregations die each week, and a district needs to plant the equivalent of at least four percent of its congregations each year to thrive (David Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, 2008); and

WHEREAS, New churches re-energize and refocus existing congregations on the mission of God; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS at its 2004 convention determined to start 2,000 new churches in North America by 2017; and

WHEREAS, Resources and assistance for church multiplication and outreach are available from the Center for U.S. Missions, the

Lutheran Church Extension Fund, the Five-Two Network, Lutheran Hour Ministries, and districts and other agencies; therefore be it

Resolved, That on a regular basis, congregations and their leaders ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest fields, especially asking that the Lord give them His vision to see the plentiful harvest fields around them; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations and their leaders be encouraged to work in cooperation with other congregations and their circuits to multiply churches locally; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be encouraged to support church multiplication efforts in their districts with their prayers, offerings, and other types of appropriate support for new church starts in the districts; and be it finally

Resolved, That congregations explore and utilize the resources available from their districts, the Center for U.S. Missions, the Five-Two Network, and the Lutheran Church Extension Fund in these multiplication efforts.

Board of Directors
Minnesota South District

1-04

To Assist and Encourage Members to Intentionally Speak of Jesus

WHEREAS, The risen Lord Jesus invites His followers to engage in “making disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18–20), and St. Peter encourages every believer to be ready “to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give reason for the hope that you have” (1 Pet. 3:15); and

WHEREAS, Those who are called to faith are also called to be witnesses (Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, The Holy Spirit is the One who, by means of the spoken and written word of Christ, calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies His church (Rom. 10:17; Luther’s explanation of the Third Article); and

WHEREAS, The first LCMS President, Dr. C. F. W. Walther, proclaimed it to be the holy desire and duty of every Christian to bring souls to Christ, stating, “Through holy baptism, every Christian has been consecrated, ordained, and installed into the ministry to teach, admonish, and comfort his neighbor. Through holy baptism each Christian has obtained not only the authority, power, and right, but also the high, holy obligation ... of rousing himself to care and to help so that others may be brought to Christ,” and again, “Every Christian is a missionary, sent out by God into his own circle to convert others to Christ” (sermon preached in 1842, “Bringing Souls to Christ: Every Christian’s Desire and Duty”); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS boldly declares, “In grateful response to God’s grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and world” (1995 convention); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS seeks to engage the priesthood of all believers in the mission of God with the goal of reaching 100 million unreached and unconnected people worldwide by 2017, including 50 million in North America; therefore be it

Resolved, That LCMS congregations and schools seek to assist and encourage their members and families to share their faith in ways appropriate to their stations in life and their contexts; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations and schools identify and utilize means to train and equip their members and families to share with

confidence and courage the hope they have in Christ, namely the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in His name; and be it finally

Resolved, That the people of the LCMS be encouraged to identify and pray daily for at least three unchurched or unconnected people they know personally, while intentionally seeking opportunities to speak of Jesus with friends and neighbors.

Board of Directors
Minnesota South District

1-05

To Promote Gospel Witness through Bible Study Campaign

WHEREAS, As members of the LCMS, we believe, teach, and confess the Word of God to be at the center of all that we do and all that we are; and

WHEREAS, We affirm the truth of what our Savior taught in John 8, that His disciples will “hold to His teaching” and subsequently “know the truth”; and

WHEREAS, To “hold to His teaching” and to “know the truth” explicitly imply that we do these by being students of His Word; and

WHEREAS, It is through the Word that our gracious Lord equips, empowers, and moves us to “make disciples of all nations” by baptizing and teaching, thus making it essential that if we are going to be a “church body in mission” we will need first to be a “church body in the Word”; and

WHEREAS, Current information reveals that perhaps only as few as twenty percent of the confirmed membership of the LCMS are engaged in regular weekly study of God’s Word through participation in an organized Bible study; and

WHEREAS, Our failure to be a “church body in the Word” is hindering our being a “church body in mission”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Minnesota North District, in response to Resolution 8-09 of the 2010 Synod convention and in keeping with Bylaw 4.2.1 (d) of our Synod’s *Handbook*, bring this serious matter of mission and ministry to our entire church body for action at the next convention of Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod, when next gathered in convention, confess our neglect of God’s Word, express genuine sorrow for how our neglect has hindered the carrying out of the Great Commission, and collectively seek and ask God’s forgiveness in Christ for this our sin of omission; and be it further

Resolved, That the Minnesota North District of the LCMS request that our beloved Synod undertake a concerted effort to provide resources useful for engaging the members of our congregations in regular Bible study; and be it further

Resolved, That we also request that our Synod provide leadership in this effort with the introduction of a specific campaign with the goal of raising up our involvement in the study of God’s Word, so that what is written about the Christians in Berea (Acts 17) could rightfully be said of the members of the LCMS: “Now the Bereans were of more noble character ... for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day” (v. 11); and be it finally

Resolved, That we seek the Lord’s blessings upon this effort to move back into His Word in order that we may grow through the Word in our ability and desire to witness to those who are lost and perishing without Christ, “the Word [that] became flesh” (John 1:14), for the building of His kingdom so that they, too, might have everlasting life in Christ.

Minnesota North District

1-06

To Encourage Continued Emphasis on Prison Ministry

WHEREAS, The importance of ministering to those who are in prison has been stressed by our Lord Jesus in Matthew 25:36, “I was in prison and you visited Me,” and by the example of the Early Church as reflected in Hebrews 10:34, “For you had compassion for those who were in prison”; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 LCMS convention resolved, by the next triennium, to sponsor a prison and jail ministry training and equipping retreat for clergy and lay volunteers; and

WHEREAS, The 2012 Prison and Jail Ministry Conference will be organized by the Southern Illinois District and LCMS Human Care (Board for National Mission), and the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League at its 35th Biennial LWML Convention voted to fund this Prison and Jail Ministry Conference (\$27,500); and

WHEREAS, In response to the first Synod-wide prison and jail training retreat, “Catch the Vision,” held in 2005, in which at least 25 of the Synod’s 35 districts participated, those attending this event commented how “refreshing it was to see so many others in the Synod who are committed to bring the compassion of Christ and the Gospel to those who are incarcerated” and to their families; and

WHEREAS, During this two-day event, a brainstorming session enthusiastically supported having these types of conferences in years to come and forming an online support network in the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Each district of the Synod has within its region some large prison institutions and many jail settings; and

WHEREAS, Prison and jail ministry addresses God’s Word not only to prisoners but also to ex-prisoners, their families, prison staff, and victims of crime, and prison ministry directly affects more and more of our congregations and church members; and

WHEREAS, Prison and jail ministry also offers many opportunities to share the Gospel with persons who do not yet know Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, The Bible states that Jesus said, “As you did it to the least of these, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40); and

WHEREAS, Many of our districts are seeking to be faithful to our Lord’s mandate to visit those in prison by their support of prison ministry for over 100 years; and

WHEREAS, Crime has touched virtually every congregation of the Synod by way of membership, relatives, or friends experiencing the crisis of imprisonment; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has a goal of mercy for the unreached and uncommitted peoples with the Gospel; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention encourage all districts to have a prison ministry coordinator for each respective district, either volunteer or compensated, for the purpose of networking, supporting, and encouraging prison ministry among the districts of the LCMS; and be it further

Resolved, That the convention give thanks to God for the increased efforts of the Synod, its districts, and its congregations to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with prisoners, ex-offenders, families of prisoners, prison staff, and victims of crime; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Southern Illinois District in convention (2012) submit this resolution as an overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.
Southern Illinois District

1-07

To Urge District Administrations to Foster Pastoral Visits to Correctional Facilities

WHEREAS, There exists an acute and ongoing need for Lutheran pastors to minister to persons incarcerated for crimes they have committed; and

WHEREAS, All Christians are saints by God’s grace, but by nature they are sinners who could find themselves behind bars and in need of visitation; and

WHEREAS, Gaining access to correctional facilities in order to provide pastoral care can be a daunting task, especially to pastors without experience in such work; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention urge its district administrations to research the correctional systems and facilities in the states where they operate and to provide pastors with guidelines and resources to help them serve in this way; and be it further

Resolved, That all congregations of the Synod encourage and support their pastors in this vital work.

Circuit 11 Forum
Kansas District

1-08

To Help Prepare LCMS Congregations and Pastors for Persecution

WHEREAS, Members of LCMS congregations in the U.S. have not been persecuted on a broad scale in the past; and

WHEREAS, Members of LCMS congregations are being persecuted more now and will be persecuted more in the future; and

WHEREAS, Members of LCMS congregations need more help on how to respond to this persecution; and

WHEREAS, Christians in other countries are going through great persecutions for Christ; and

WHEREAS, The Bible is very clear that times will be getting rougher for Christians as we come closer to Christ’s return; and

WHEREAS, The Bible also declares that it will look like all Christians are going to turn away from the Lord just before the end because of the pressure of unbelief; and

WHEREAS, We have answers in Christ and His Word; therefore be it

Resolved, That Concordia Publishing House publish materials to help members of LCMS congregations as well as pastors get more training on how to respond to persecution in our society; and be it further

Resolved, That the materials contain not only how we hold to the trust of Scriptures and Christ Himself, but also training on how to defend the trust and spread the truth, especially the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it finally

Resolved, That this overture be presented to the next Synod convention for approval.

Zion
Morris, MN

1-09

To Encourage Joint Ministry Ventures

WHEREAS, Many congregations and ministries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have endured a most difficult economic

downturn, making local support of individual ministries more challenging at times; and

WHEREAS, Our teaching of the individual autonomy of the congregation is often beneficial but can also, because of our sinful pride, deter thorough consideration and discussion of joint ministry ventures, which should often be considered by local ministries because of economic efficiencies; and

WHEREAS, The devil works to destroy the Church by dividing congregations from one another rather than having them live and minister together in humble respect and in faithful joint ministry under God's blessing; and

WHEREAS, Congregations and pastors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod should be willing to work together in the unity of the Spirit and in the spirit of Synod, a true “walking together”; therefore be it

Resolved, The 2013 LCMS convention encourage its congregations and members to pray for the Holy Spirit (James 1:5; Luke 11:13), study the Scriptures, and seek to have a humble spirit to perceive God's will in these matters; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations and their pastors, circuits, and other ministries be encouraged to share ministry ventures; and be it further

Resolved, The Synod supply ideas and help when asked for assistance and suggest ideas and offer help where they see such joint ministry ventures as a possibility; and be it finally

Resolved, That where possible, these joint ministry ventures be pursued, recognized, and publicized with the blessing and prayers of all God's people in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Michigan District

1-10

To Encourage Bilingual Capabilities

WHEREAS, Christ has given His mandate to make disciples of “all nations” by baptizing and teaching (Matt. 28:19); and

WHEREAS, Scripture tells us that there will be gathered before the throne of God and before the Lamb an uncountable multitude “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (Rev. 7:9); and

WHEREAS, Part of loving our neighbors as ourselves may include getting to know at least something of their language and customs; and

WHEREAS, Tens of millions of our neighbors do not know English as their first language; and

WHEREAS, Representatives who knock on doors in the neighborhood of many of our churches and schools will often hear the response, “No speak English!”; and

WHEREAS, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS is historically an immigrant church, with worship services and Bible teaching often conducted in the mother tongue many decades after our forefathers came to this country; therefore be it

Resolved, That church-worker students at our seminaries and in the Concordia University System be actively and continually encouraged to study Spanish or another modern language spoken by an immigrant population in the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That our Lutheran high schools be encouraged to promote the study of a second language; and be it further

Resolved, That our Lutheran preschools and elementary schools be encouraged to expose children to other languages and cultures; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Southern Illinois District in convention submit this resolution as an overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Southern Illinois District

1-11

To Amend Bylaw 6.2.1 (d) re Sending Workers to Foreign Mission Fields

Preamble

Bylaw 3.8.3 adopted by the 2010 Synod convention established the Board for International Mission as the only sending agency through which workers and funds are sent to the foreign mission areas of the Synod.

WHEREAS, The Board for International Mission writes polices that affect the work and workers that are sent to foreign mission fields; and

WHEREAS, There are many organizations and agencies related to the Synod that send church workers in foreign mission areas; and

WHEREAS, It is God pleasing to carry out our mission in an organized and coordinated manner to avoid confusion and offense and to best utilize the treasures given to us by God; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has established protocol documents with our partner churches in foreign mission fields; and

WHEREAS, These protocol documents establish the relationships between the LCMS and partner churches; and

WHEREAS, The agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations of the Missouri Synod are bound by these protocol documents by way of their affiliation with the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, The agencies, auxiliaries, and recognized service organizations benefit from the expertise of the Office of International Mission in their own endeavors in the foreign mission field and through their status with the LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Bylaws of the LCMS be amended by adding the following paragraph (d) to Bylaw 6.2.1:

6.2.1 (d) All RSO and auxiliary personnel serving overseas, contracted and called, including missionaries, shall abide by the protocol documents that exist between the LCMS and its partner churches and shall abide by polices established by the Board for International Mission.

Board for International Mission

1-12

To Analyze Ministry Done among American Indians

WHEREAS, Our Lord has commissioned His Church to “[g]o therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, Our Lord has taught His Church to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 19:19); and

WHEREAS, Many congregations of the North Dakota District are located within close proximity to American Indian reservations; and

WHEREAS, A report entitled “Survey of Grant Giving by American Indian Foundations and Organizations,” recently released by Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP), states that even with gaming revenues, poverty among Indians has risen during the past decade and now more than half of all Indians on reservations live below the poverty level, more than four times the national average; and

WHEREAS, There has been a rise in the abuse of women and children on many reservations, resulting in homelessness, health issues, suffering, and in some cases even death (cf. “Tiny Little Laws” by Kathy Dobie in *Harpers Magazine*, February 2011); and

WHEREAS, American Indians are a people in great need of the Gospel; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod’s Board for National Mission analyze all work done on Indian reservations across the United States and Canada and give recommendations as to the most effective means of mission and ministry to the American Indian population.

North Dakota District

1-13

To Encourage Captioning of All Video Materials

WHEREAS, The LCMS, its districts, and Concordia Publishing House (CPH) make frequent and excellent use of video media in communications and study resources; and

WHEREAS, A significant portion of the LCMS is deaf, lately deafened (including the aged, who may have diminished capacity to hear), or hard of hearing, leading them to struggle to use or ignore these communications and resources; and

WHEREAS, This portion of the LCMS would benefit from captioned video resources and communications, thereby increasing the effectiveness or use of said communications and resources; and

WHEREAS, The video resources provided by the LCMS, its districts, and CPH are seldom captioned; and

WHEREAS, Adding captioning after the video materials are released is cost prohibitive and frequently degrades the video quality of the resources; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS, its districts, and CPH be encouraged to provide all of their video materials with captioning included, not only for the deaf community, but also for the lately deafened and hard of hearing.

Jacksonville Circuit
Central Illinois District

1-14

To Include Campus Ministry as Mission and Ministry Emphasis

WHEREAS, Our Synod President, Rev. Matthew Harrison, wrote in his Pastoral Letter Regarding Campus Ministry (Oct. 13, 2011), “The church is losing her young people. This is a concern we all share. While some fall away during high school, by far the greatest losses occur during the college years. Our young adults are bombarded by a secular worldview that is antagonistic to their Christian faith. College campuses have become a place where the truth of God’s Word is mocked, the divinity of Christ is questioned, and the church is scorned”; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Harrison continues, “Now is the time to renew our efforts. While many have faithfully labored in campus ministry, they have not always received our support. The Synod simply cannot afford to sit on the sideline while faithful campus congregations are being closed. College students need Word and Sacrament ministry. They need faithful pastors and workers who will care, teach, and prepare them for life in, but not of, the world. In short, they need Jesus ... this is not a time for us to abandon campus ministry but the

time to more fully embrace and expand it. Please continue to support all the campus ministries throughout the Synod”; and

WHEREAS, Our Rocky Mountain District has only one dedicated, full-time campus ministry (University Lutheran Chapel—Boulder, serving our students at the University of Colorado, Boulder); and

WHEREAS, University Lutheran Chapel—Boulder serves our students by proclaiming the truth of God’s Word and administering His Sacraments rightly; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Rocky Mountain District board of directors and praesidium be encouraged to continue to support University Lutheran Chapel; and be it further

Resolved, That the board of directors and praesidium be encouraged to find ways to encourage and support campus ministries at the other universities and colleges in our district both through the work of our congregations that are in close proximity to those places and through the work of the Rocky Mountain District at large; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Rocky Mountain District present an overture to the next convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to include campus ministry as one of the chief mission and ministry emphases for the next triennium of the Synod.

Rocky Mountain District

1-15

To Commend and Support Campus Ministry at University of Minnesota

WHEREAS, Our forebears in the faith built strategically located chapels to conduct Word and Sacrament ministry at major college campuses across our country and to promote Lutheran Christian evangelism among students and community members; and

WHEREAS, Ministries at these chapels are a refuge and a help to Lutheran and other Christian college students, many of whom are away from home for the first time, and to others who are brought to faith in our gracious God in that context; and

WHEREAS, These ministries serve students from all over the country and from international locations as well, and thus their ministries are a service to the Synod at large and indeed to the Church as a whole; and

WHEREAS, One such active congregation, University Lutheran Chapel in Minneapolis, MN, serves one of the biggest public universities in the country, provides a vibrant town/gown ministry, has been the source of dozens of pastoral and diaconal students for service in our Synod, and has provided leadership in theological studies that have been helpful to many other congregations; and

WHEREAS, This faithful congregation’s strategically located campus church home was sold by the Minnesota South District’s board of directors for demolition by a developer who paid \$3,250,000 for it; and

WHEREAS, The congregation was left without a church building; and

WHEREAS, Although the Minnesota South District board of directors did not provide any funds for the continuation of this congregation, the Minnesota South District in convention granted the congregation part of the proceeds (\$2,000,000) from the final sale price of \$3,250,000; and

WHEREAS, On-campus property is extremely expensive, but campus ministry effectiveness is immeasurably assisted by the presence of such a church location; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS thank the congregation and pastor of University Lutheran Chapel—Minneapolis for their service to our students and to the broader Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS grant this congregation \$1,250,000 to assist them in building a replacement campus chapel and to more justly compensate them for their loss; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS express our sincere thanks to God and to all of the campus congregations and pastors of the Synod for their service to the Church and particularly for their service to students who are blessed to attend universities that have them; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS encourage the title holders of existing campus ministry chapels to regard these properties as sacred trusts on behalf of the Church at large and to retain them for posterity to the glory of God.

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
San Jose, CA

1-16

To Commend and Support Ministry of Lutherans in Africa

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded His church to “[go] therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, An overwhelming need exists among Lutheran pastors, evangelists, and deaconesses throughout Africa for basic doctrinal teaching that agrees “with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3); and

WHEREAS, Lutherans in Africa was founded in 2010 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization by the Rev. James May, a rostered LCMS pastor and former missionary in French West Africa, to form African Christians to be teachers of the faith; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans in Africa currently works in 20 African countries, teaching confessional Lutheran doctrine and training African pastors to be the teachers in their own communities; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans in Africa works in conjunction with Lutheran Heritage Foundation—Africa to translate, publish, and distribute confessional Lutheran resources; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans in Africa desires to expand its ministry to additional “tribes and peoples and languages” (Rev. 7:9) on the African continent; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention give thanks to the triune God for the faithful ministry of Lutherans in Africa; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention commend Lutherans in Africa for its faithful mission work on the African continent; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention encourage the Synod’s congregations, pastors, and laity to support Lutherans in Africa through their prayers and financial offerings.

Divine Shepherd
Bolingbrook, IL

1-17

To Endorse Work of Luther Institute of Southeast Asia (LISA)

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned His followers to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19); and

WHEREAS, He has equipped and empowered them with His unfailing presence and life-giving Spirit (Matt. 28:20; Luke 24:48ff.; Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, The Lord has opened a door to bring the Good News of salvation to the peoples of Southeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, The emerging churches in Thailand (The Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church [TCLC]) and Cambodia (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia [ELCC]) desire theological education to equip leaders to assist them in going through this opened door; and

WHEREAS, A theological education program, LISA, has been initiated to respond to this opportunity; and

WHEREAS, LISA is committed to theological education that is solidly grounded in the Holy Scriptures, clearly centered in our Lord Jesus Christ, in keeping with our evangelical Lutheran convictions, designed to equip its students for effective ministry that is faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, and responsive to the needs of the people there; and

WHEREAS, LISA is governed by a board of directors that is representative of various entities involved in the work in Southeast Asia, including the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cambodia, Lutheran Church—Canada, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Garuna Foundation, and the Lutheran Heritage Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Opportunities to expand the work of LISA to people groups beyond the Thais and Cambodians, such as the Laotians, Burmese, Hmong, and Vietnamese, are being explored and pursued as the Lord enables; and

WHEREAS, This important endeavor for forming leaders to build up the Church and to share the Good News more widely is in need of our prayers, encouragement, and financial support; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod renew its commitment to the Lord’s work in Southeast Asia and encourage its districts, congregations, and individuals to support the work of LISA through their prayers, encouragement, and financial support; and be it further

Resolved, That representatives of the LISA program be welcomed into our congregations to tell the story of the Lord’s work there, that God’s people here may be informed of its progress and learn how they can help spread His Word on its forward way; and be it finally

Resolved, That we conclude the consideration of this resolution with prayer, in keeping with our Lord’s admonition in Matthew 9:37–38, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

Florida-Georgia District

1-18

To Support the Work of Mission: Haiti

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture records the Great Commission: “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18–20); and

WHEREAS, The people of Haiti are included in “all nations”; and

WHEREAS, Mission: Haiti has, since its inception in 1999, upheld Scripture as the rule and norm for faith and life and maintained an unqualified subscription to the Lutheran Confessions while serving the spiritual, educational, vocational, material, and other needs of the people of Haiti; and

WHEREAS, Mission: Haiti works with both the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELCH) and the Lutheran Church of Haiti (LCH); and

WHEREAS, Mission: Haiti has been designated the official sponsoring and organizing body for mission trips in cooperation with LCH; and

WHEREAS, Mission: Haiti seeks to partner with LCMS World Mission, and LCMS World Relief and Human Care has partnered with Mission: Haiti on significant projects; and

WHEREAS, Mission: Haiti is expanding its services in Haiti, which includes sponsoring visiting LCMS pastors (who educate future Haitian Lutheran pastors), instructing teachers, planting churches, providing VBS programs in outlying villages, drilling water wells, constructing schools and orphanages, providing medical clinics, providing livestock to families, and more; and

WHEREAS, Mission: Haiti is firmly committed to supporting only self-sufficiency projects that protect the dignity of Haitians and do not create dependency on “handouts”; and

WHEREAS, Mission: Haiti is in a unique position to serve as a catalyst for cooperation (material, logistical, and otherwise) between the LCH and the ELCH; and

WHEREAS, The proclamation of the Gospel by Mission: Haiti personnel has led, directly or indirectly, hundreds of Haitians out of the darkness of voodoo into the marvelous light of Jesus; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS, its districts, and its congregations be encouraged to partner with Mission: Haiti and to provide material, financial, logistical, and other types of assistance; and be it further

Resolved, That individuals and congregations of the Synod be encouraged to pray for Mission: Haiti; and be it finally

Resolved, That pastors and laypeople be encouraged to consider participating in Mission: Haiti mission trips to spread the Gospel and render care in Haiti.

Florida-Georgia District

2. MERCY

2-01

To Allow Extension of Calls to Specialized Pastoral Ministers

WHEREAS, The LCMS currently calls ordained pastors to serve as full-time active-duty military chaplains through the Board for International Mission; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS had called Veterans Administration (VA) chaplains and Federal Bureau of Prison (BOP) chaplains through the former Board for Mission Services, but the LCMS restructuring has resulted in moving VA and BOP chaplains to the Office of National Mission; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS CTCR has recognized the validity of the divine call in specialized fields of service such as chaplains:

The call to proclaim Law and Gospel does not take place in a vacuum. It occurs within specific contexts and situations. According to the second principle [recognition of the congregation's needs] we may conclude that, in addition to regular Word and sacrament ministry within congregations, the church's need for particular gifts or specialized skills at times is best met by something less than an open-ended call. We may proceed in this way [and have already done so] as long as we do not undermine the divine institution of the office or hinder in any way the proclamation of the whole counsel of God. Such has been the case within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for much of its history with regard to theological professors, district and Synod officials, military chaplains, campus pastors, missionaries, church planters, etc. Several examples can illustrate such situations." (*The Divine Call*, Feb. 2003, p. 39)

and

WHEREAS, LCMS specialized pastoral ministers (rostered institutional chaplains, pastoral counselors, and teachers of chaplaincy and pastoral counseling) do not serve outside of the Church's healing ministry of Christ, but rather are an integral part of a long tradition in the LCMS of providing specially trained ministers to carry out the mission and ministry of the Church in very challenging and demanding settings in life; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS currently endorses specialized pastoral ministers through the Office of National Mission but does not call ordained or commissioned ministers to serve as specialized pastoral ministers through the Board for National Mission, which has resulted in ordained and commissioned ministers currently serving in ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education without a divine call for ministry; and

WHEREAS, The former Board for Human Care Ministries had thoroughly studied this matter in consultation with the Secretary of the Synod and the Synod's legal counsel over several years; and

WHEREAS, The former Board for Human Care Ministries appointed LCMS World Relief and Human Care staff to submit an overture to the 2010 LCMS convention to amend bylaws to allow the extension of calls to specialized pastoral ministers (2010 Res. 6-03); and

WHEREAS, Res. 6-03 was not presented to the convention but was withdrawn by Floor Committee 6 because the committee was informed by a CCM board member that the passage of Res. 8-08A had made Resolution 6-03 moot; and

WHEREAS, The current bylaws for the Board for National Mission do not provide for the calling of workers for the ministries in domestic areas; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.8.2 be amended by the addition of the following paragraph after the bulleted items under the first paragraph as follows:

PROPOSED WORDING

Upon recommendation of the Office of National Mission, the board shall serve as a calling agency for institutional and agency chaplains and other nonforeign specialized ministers (e.g., Veterans Administration chaplains, Bureau of Prison chaplains, hospital chaplains, pastoral counselors, teachers of chaplaincy and pastoral counseling) after consultation with the appropriate district president(s).

and be it further

That Bylaw 2.11.1 (i), which provides for active membership on the roster of Synod, be amended to read as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.11.1 (i) A military or institutional chaplain or other specialized ministry ~~minister~~ endorsed and called by the Synod, ~~including endorsement by one of its districts in consultation with the appropriate district president(s).~~

Board for National Mission

2-02

To Show Support for "Religious Liberty: Free to Be Faithful" Campaign

WHEREAS, Recent years have witnessed increasing intrusions into our First Amendment God-given right of free exercise of religion, which run contrary to our strongly held faith-based convictions—issues such as the definition of marriage; same-sex marriage; requiring social service agencies to accord equal status to traditional marriage couples and same-sex couples; and the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which will, as presently written, require employers to cover contraception, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs (although presently the Concordia Health Plans have a grandfathered status which does not require this coverage); and

WHEREAS, The Bible instructs us to obey the governing authorities (Rom. 13:1–7 and 1 Pet. 2:13–17), paying taxes and giving government officials due honor; however, in the case of competing directives the Scriptures exhort us, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29 ESV); and

WHEREAS, It is time to stand up and to let our voices be heard on these issues, informing those in government that our First Amendment rights are being trampled on; and

WHEREAS, The church has a prophetic duty to provide leadership to the flock, speaking winsomely on issues of faith so that members of the LCMS might know the issues and support those political candidates and positions that safeguard our precious freedom of religion; and

WHEREAS, On October 5, 2012, the LCMS launched the "Religious Liberty: Free to Be Faithful" campaign "aimed at inspiring LCMS rostered and lay members to take action to protect the freedom of religion" (10/5/12 launching letter); therefore be it

Resolved, That our Synod gathered in convention show our strong support by delegate vote for this campaign and for our Synod leadership as they speak on these issues; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage our pastors and as well as Synod leaders to speak not only within the walls of our sanctuaries but also in the public square so that our nation might know what we stand for and that God's Word has dictated our beliefs.

Circuit 3
North Wisconsin District

2-03

To Encourage Christian Citizenship and Vigilance re Termination of Life through Government-Mandated Health Programs

WHEREAS, Christians are citizens of two kingdoms, one spiritual, as believers of Jesus Christ, and the other earthly, subject to the laws of their country, their state or province, and the various local governments within whose boundaries they reside; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans understand that, as citizens of two kingdoms, Christians are, first and foremost, subject to God's Word and His will, and are to stand firm on the eternal and everlasting truth; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans understand that God has established earthly governments and that Christians are to be loyal citizens, adhering to the laws of their country and recognizing the authority of their government, provided the actions and laws of the government do not contradict or contravene the eternal and everlasting truth, by so doing rendering "unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21); and

WHEREAS, Christians, in recognition of God's establishment of earthly government, are to actively pray for their leaders and those in positions of authority in government that they may govern in accordance with God's Word and in furtherance of the general welfare, so that all may enjoy the blessings of God's grace and mercy; and

WHEREAS, Christians, when their government takes actions which are contrary to and in violation of the eternal and everlasting truth, are to stand firm and faithful to God's Word and His will; and

WHEREAS, Actions taken by federal, state, or local governments that mandate that religious employers provide contraceptives which include abortifacients under their employee health insurance plans (such as 77 Fed. Reg. 8725—HHS Mandate) contravene the limitations on secular authority which God has established, which limitations are affirmatively recognized in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Any inclusion of abortifacients encourages and makes employers complicit in the termination of unborn life, in violation of the laws of God as revealed in God's Word; therefore be it

Resolved, That the member congregations of the Nebraska District of the LCMS and all Christians be encouraged to earnestly pray for federal, state, and local elected and appointed officials, that they may carry out their duties faithfully, in a manner consistent with God's Word and His will, for the general welfare and benefit of their citizens; and be it further

Resolved, That the district in convention calls upon the members, congregations, and all entities of the LCMS and all Christians to be loyal citizens, adhering to the laws of the United States of America and the state and all local governments, so long as the actions and laws of said governments do not contradict or contravene the eternal and everlasting truth set forth in God's Word; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2012 district convention calls upon the members, congregations, and all entities of the LCMS to be vigilant regarding any and all laws and regulations, whether adopted by federal, state, or local government, that are in violation of God's Word and His will, such as those which would result in the termination of unborn life; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2012 district convention calls upon the members, congregations, and all entities of the LCMS and all Christians to actively oppose any attempt to contravene the limitations on secular authority which God has established and which have been affirmed

in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America; and be it finally

That the 2012 Nebraska District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to adopt this resolution.

Nebraska District

2-04

To Oppose HHS Mandate re Provision of Abortifacient Drugs and Intrauterine Devices (IUDs)

WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures clearly teach that human beings are created in the image of God, formed and knit together by God Himself in the womb, and therefore prohibit every sort of murder, including abortion (Gen. 1:26–27; 9:6; Ps. 139:13; Ex. 20:13; Matt. 5:21–22; James 3:9–10); and

WHEREAS, According to God's good order, human life is conceived by the union of man and woman (Gen. 1:27–28; 2:18–24; 4:1); and

WHEREAS, Science describes the beginning of human life as fertilization—that is, the formation of a human embryo, a unique human being, takes place the moment sperm and egg are joined; and such human being exists prior to implantation in the mother's womb;¹ and

WHEREAS, All intrauterine devices (IUDs) and many hormonal forms of birth control, including all so-called emergency contraceptive pills ("morning after pills") are either outright abortifacients or include as part of their published physiological mechanism for preventing pregnancy the inhibition of an embryo's implantation in the uterus, thereby causing the death of a human being by abortion;² and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has mandated virtually all health insurance programs, including those serving or managed by denominations of the Christian Church and entities thereof, to make available to their clients sterilization, hormonal birth control drugs (including emergency contraceptive pills), and IUDs; and

WHEREAS, Conscience being bound by the Word of God, no Christian can support or provide services or products that cause the death of an innocent human being, such as happens to unborn babies with the above named products; and

WHEREAS, While Christians are called to obey political authorities (Rom. 13:1–8, AC XVI 6), when human authority violates God's will, Christians are bound to "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:28–29, AC XVI 7); and

WHEREAS, the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms does not promote quietism, but affirms that civil government is to be concerned with things other than the Gospel and should not exercise its authority in the church (AC XXVIII 11–12), and commands the Christian to use political laws and public redress for the benefit of temporal life (Ap XVI); and

WHEREAS, The aforementioned HHS mandate does not comply even with United States law, which prohibits the federal government from establishing religion or preventing the free exercise thereof (First Amendment of The Constitution of the United States of America) and, if left unchecked, represents the secular government's infringement on First Amendment rights and threatens religious freedom as stated in the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Now is the time for Christian citizens and churches to make our voices heard in this matter, lest, by our inaction, our freedom to worship God in accord with the Holy Scriptures be taken away; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Matthew Harrison, the President of the LCMS, has already “made the good confession before Caesar,” having testified before the Congress of the United States regarding the HHS mandate on February 16, 2012 (recordings of his testimony are available at www.lcms.org/hhsmandate); and

WHEREAS, The official statement from the Office of the President of the LCMS, dated February 14, 2012, states in part,

We remain opposed to this mandate because it runs counter to the biblical truth of the sanctity of human life. We are committed to working to ensure that we remain free to practice the teachings of our faith, that our religious rights are not violated, and that our rights of conscience are retained. Freedom of religion extends beyond the practice of our faith in houses of worship. We must be free to put our faith into action in the public square, and, in response to Christ’s call, demonstrate His mercy through our love and compassion for all people according to the clear mandate of Holy Scripture.

The government has overstepped its bounds. This controversy is not merely about “birth control” and the Catholic Church’s views about it. It’s about mandating that we provide medications which kill life in the womb. And moreover and perhaps even more ominous, consciences and rights of its citizens. We can no longer expect a favored position for Christianity in this country. But we can, as citizens of this great nation, fight for constitutional sanity against secularizing forces. As we have vividly experienced in discriminatory state legislation with respect to homosexual adoption, we, and our institutions (and those of other religious citizens of good will), are being robbed of the right to the free exercise of religion absent government intrusion or threat. The next assault will come upon church-related retirement facilities. How much longer will it be legal in this country to believe and act according to the dictates of biblical and creedal Christianity?

Jesus bids us, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17). We will pray for and support our government where we can, but our consciences and lives belong to God.

(The full text of this statement and the previous February 3, 2012, statement from Rev. Harrison’s office can be found at www.lcms.org/hhsmandate); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Council of Presidents, in a resolution dated February 2, 2012, resolved:

Resolved, that the Council of Presidents of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod stands with President Matthew Harrison in full support of his testimony before the Congressional Committee on Government Oversight and Reform; and be it finally

Resolved, that the Council of Presidents commends to the Synod President Harrison’s statements in defense of religious liberty and freedom of conscience;

Therefore be it

Resolved, That in accord with the resolution of the COP of the LCMS, the South Dakota District of the LCMS also “stands with President Matthew Harrison in full support of his testimony before the Congressional Committee on Government Oversight and Reform” and requests our district president to issue a letter of thanks to President Harrison on behalf of the congregations of the South Dakota District for his bold confession of the faith before Caesar; and be it further

Resolved, That the South Dakota District of the LCMS express clearly its opposition to the HHS mandate in question; and be it further

Resolved, That the president of the South Dakota District of the LCMS formally petition the congressional delegation from South Dakota to oppose this mandate and to introduce and/or support legislation prohibiting it; and be it further

Resolved, That the laity and church workers of the congregations of the South Dakota District be encouraged to express their opposition

to this mandate by requesting their congressional representatives and other government office-holders to use all lawful means available to oppose and/or overturn this mandate; and be it further

Resolved, That, in accord with 1 Timothy 2:1–2, all members and church workers of the congregations of the South Dakota District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be encouraged to pray for President Obama, Governor Dugaard, and all the elected and appointed officials of our government; and be it further

Resolved, That, as we live in perilous times, the prince of darkness unleashing his full fury against the Church as the return of our Lord Jesus Christ in glory grows nearer, while we expect even greater opposition and persecution for the Church, we thank the Lord of the Church for the victory He has already given us over all that would separate us from His love (Rom. 8:35–39) and pray the Lord’s continued blessing on His church militant; and be it finally

Resolved, That following the adoption of this resolution, the assembly will rise and sing “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word” (LSB 655).

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;

Curb those who by deceit of sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow’r make known
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing Your praise eternally.

O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.

Notes

1. LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee, “Response to Resolution 6-10: Guidance on Contraceptive Methods,” n.d., <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=864> (Accessed February 20, 2012), 3; Maureen Condit, “A Biological Definition of the Human Embryo,” chapter 11 in Persons, Moral Worth, and Embryos: A Critical Analysis of Pro-Choice Arguments, ed. Stephan Napier (Springer Science +Business Media, 2011).

2. LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee, “Response to Resolution 6-10”; Walter I. Larimore and Joseph B. Stanford, “Postfertilization Effects of Oral Contraceptives and Their Relationship to Informed Consent,” *Arch Fam Med* 9 (February 2000): 126–133 www.polycarp.org/larimore_stanford.pdf; Donna J. Harrison and James G. Mitroka, “Defining Reality: The Potential Role of Pharmacists in Assessing the Impact of Progesterone Receptor Modulators and Misoprostol in Reproductive Health,” *The Annals of Pharmacotherapy* 45 (January 2011), <http://www.the-annals.com/content/45/1/115.full.pdf+html>.

South Dakota District

2-05

To Emphasize Biblical Teaching of Marriage and Family

WHEREAS, God instituted marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman as husband and wife (Gen. 2); and

WHEREAS, God instituted marriage for the procreation of children (Gen. 1:28), the avoidance of sin (1 Cor. 7:2), and so that man and woman may find delight in one another (Gen. 2:18); and

WHEREAS, The institution of marriage is foundational for family and community; and

WHEREAS, The home is an integral partner in passing on the faith to the next generation (Deut. 7:6–9; 11:18–21; Ps. 78:4–7; Joel 1:3; Eph. 6:4); and

WHEREAS, Actions in several areas of society are threatening and undermining the biblical foundation of marriage and family; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS in convention has voiced support for the biblical foundation of marriage; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS reaffirm its support for the biblical foundation of marriage and the family; and be it further

Resolved, That this biblical truth be clearly proclaimed, taught, and supported in each congregation and ministry in the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS continue to provide a clear and emphatic witness to and an emphasis on the Scripture’s teachings concerning marriage and the family in the next triennium.

Michigan District

2-06

To Remove RSO Status of Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois

WHEREAS, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois has a rich Lutheran heritage of working with children and families, beginning from 1873, when an orphanage was incorporated; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois has throughout its history been faithful to the Word of God in all matters pertaining to its social ministry practice; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois agreed to abide by the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act; and

WHEREAS, The Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act grants same-sex couples “civil union” status and includes them as a protected group under state anti-discrimination statutes, which means all Illinois foster care and adoption agencies must be willing to license and/or place children with same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois provides foster care for the state of Illinois and is not exempt from licensing same-sex couples for foster care; and

WHEREAS, The Word of God is clear regarding homosexuality; and

WHEREAS, This action by Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois is contrary to the Word of God that addresses this issue; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 6.2.1 of the LCMS states, “The granting of recognized service organization status by the Synod signifies that a service organization, while independent of the Synod, fosters the mission and ministry of the church, engages in program activity that is in harmony with the programs of the boards of the Synod, and respects and does not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod”; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois is a recognized service organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That Illinois LCMS congregations pray for Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois that it may follow the Word of God faithfully in all of its practices; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS continue to work with lawmakers to change the laws of the state and nation so that RSOs of the LCMS may be exempt on issues that violate the Word of God; and be it further

Resolved, That Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois be removed from being an LCMS RSO because it is going against God’s Word and the practice of the LCMS; and be it further

Resolved, That Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois be welcomed back with open arms into being an LCMS RSO when it complies with the Word of God and the practice of the LCMS; and be it further

Resolved, That Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois remove any reference to the LCMS from its Web site and publications; and be it further

Resolved, That other LCMS districts consider a similar stance with regard to RSOs not adhering to God’s Word; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS remain committed to showing love and compassion to children in foster care and adoption agencies.

Circuit 9W
Northern Illinois District

2-07

To Direct Concordia Plans to Reimburse Funeral Costs When Children Die Before Birth

WHEREAS, God forms us in the womb (Jer. 1:5), creating a unique person long before we are ever born, as is affirmed by the unique DNA a child and mother have; and

WHEREAS, We are conceived with sin (Doctrine of Original Sin, Psalm 51:5), and life can end even before we take our first breath¹; and

WHEREAS, Many of our church workers are covered by Concordia Plans, which provide a death benefit for dependent children who die but not for children who die before birth; and

WHEREAS, There are often costs associated with funerals for children who are born dead, costs that often are difficult to meet for our church workers, are in addition to medical deductible and co-pay costs, and can cause additional stress for our workers at a difficult time; and yet a family will often incur these funeral expenses for the death of their pre-born child by having a funeral service or choosing to bury their child themselves instead of having the hospital bury their child in a common grave²; and

WHEREAS, Providing funeral benefits for children born dead would be consistent with our Synod’s clear confession of the personhood of the unborn³, would show respect for the deceased child, and would show care and compassion for our workers; therefore be it

Resolved, That we, the Minnesota North District, petition the 2013 LCMS convention to direct Concordia Plan Services to reimburse actual funeral expenses for a child who dies before birth, not to exceed one-half of the benefit provided for dependents who die.

1. Most states base life on having breathed. If a child takes even one breath outside the womb it is considered a person and issued a birth certificate.
2. In Minnesota, proper disposal of a stillborn child’s remains is required by law and is the hospital’s responsibility unless the parents assume it on their own.
3. One example is the 1979 Res. 2-39: “The living but unborn are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception.”

Minnesota North District

2-08

To Speak Out Against Violence in United States

WHEREAS, The massacre in December 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, has many wondering, “What is going wrong in America?” and “How do we stop the violence?”; and

WHEREAS, The early political response has been a call for armed guards in schools, greater gun control, more stringent oversight of the emotionally disturbed by the various social welfare agencies, etc.; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent at this time as well as an opportunity before us that the church should address the issue at the moral and spiritual level because the Bible gets at the root of such problems; and

WHEREAS, Over the past 200 years, God has been devalued in America—Deism acknowledged that God had made it all, but since has stepped aside; then some began questioning the historicity of Holy Scriptures, weakening the biblical foundation of Western civilization; in 1859 Charles Darwin explained how life began without God at all: evolution, now taught in our nation's public schools; Karl Marx wrote about a new social order, communism, which assumed no god except the state, put into practice in Russia and China in the twentieth century; in the 1930s John Dewey and other intellectuals concocted the *Humanist Manifesto I*, which said there is no god and man is the measure of all things—so that, now, the trail of how God was systematically removed from our mainstream culture is only too clear; and

WHEREAS, Without God, all that's left is evil which is passed on from generation to generation through original sin to all human beings; and

WHEREAS, Our culture is saturated with violence on television, movies, video games, and various other venues, which only stimulate the passions within; and

WHEREAS, God is not dead nor is the world beyond His control, although many have been deceived into thinking this way, and the Bible provides not only moral values but also purpose, hope, and a future; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS continue to winsomely proclaim the pro-life message, which values all human life from conception to grave as being created in the image of God and is, therefore, of great value to God and worthy of our protection and esteem; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS should join her voice to those calling for less violence in the media, heeding the scriptural admonition to flee temptation; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS continue to preach a message of revival and hope in her churches and throughout our country as opportunity avails.

Christ, Trego, WI; Circuit 3 Forum, North Wisconsin District

2-09

To Give Thanks and Praise to God for LIRS 75th Anniversary

WHEREAS, In 1939, Lutherans in the United States, committed to the mercy work of the church, rose up to help Lutheran refugees from Europe displaced by World War II; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), in partnership with Lutheran congregations across the country, has resettled over 400,000 refugees in its 75 years of ministry; and

WHEREAS, The mission of welcoming the stranger (Matt. 25:36) continues to catch fire in the hearts of Lutherans who never tire of the mercy work to protect, embrace, and empower migrants and refugees through ministries of service and justice; and

WHEREAS, LIRS, in partnership with Lutheran congregations, continues to serve over 10,000 refugees and 20,000 detained torture survivors, victims of trafficking, and unaccompanied children every year; and

WHEREAS, The ministry of LIRS is still sorely needed in today's war-strewn, conflict-ridden world; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod declare Sunday, June 22, 2014, as Refugee Sunday in which congregations offer thanks and praise to God for the 75 years of mercy work for migrants and refugees through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod invite congregations to tell the stories of their acts of welcome to refugees and migrants—signs of witness, mercy, and life together; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod utilize its communications mechanisms to share these stories and inspire action throughout the 75th anniversary year; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod encourage congregations and organizations to engage with and support the LIRS mission of welcoming the stranger through gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Board for National Mission

2-10

To Speak Boldly re Employment of Women in Military Combat

WHEREAS, On January 24, 2013, the U.S. Department of Defense announced its intent to lift our nation's 65-year-old ban against sending women into combat—an exclusion which the Supreme Court upheld in 1981; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, a presidential commission re-examined the use of women in combat. It conducted hearings inviting theological input. The LCMS did not contribute or attend. The final report found that no major American religious establishment had adopted a theological position or spoken clearly on this issue. In 1993–1994, the Secretary of Defense ordered the military services to permit women to compete for some combat assignments and to open some specialties formerly reserved to men. Regretfully, we in the LCMS must acknowledge: our silence wrongly implied consent to these changes, which we did not intend and must extend no longer; and

WHEREAS, We recognize our nation's freedom, prosperity, and security as gracious gifts from God's generous hand. These lie beyond the achievement of human capabilities alone. Dependent upon His mercies, we dare not defy His will; and

WHEREAS, God ordered His creation of man and woman in a good relationship with Himself and one another that His order of redemption does not erase, but confirms and fulfills. God designed woman as His vessel for bearing life. To employ a woman as an instrument of death and destruction inverts His design; to ignore His order is damnable abomination; and

WHEREAS, Moses' fourth book (Numbers) established the principle: only men are to be counted for warfare. In cases of aggression, Israel's army was to drive intruders back to their own cities, then extend an offer of peace. If this was not accepted, only men were put to the sword; women and children were to be excepted (Deut. 20:12–15); and

WHEREAS, Advocates of women warriors often cite Judges 4 for support. In fact, this account is incomprehensible without the underlying presumption that men, not women, have the duty to go forth into combat. The Lord exposes the cowardice of Barak through Deborah and shames him by delivering the enemy leader into the hands of a woman, Jael. God sends neither woman into combat. He declares particular scorn for women as warriors at several points in Holy Scripture (e.g., Is. 19:16; Jer. 50:31; 51:30; Nah. 3:13). From Deuteronomy 22:5, Dr. Martin Luther concludes: "A woman shall not bear the

weapons of a man, nor shall a man wear female clothing ... [S]uch things are not to be done as a matter of serious and constant habit and custom, but due uprightness and dignity are to be preserved for each sex ... Through this law ... [Moses] seem to reproach any nation in which this custom is observed" (AE 9:219–220); and

WHEREAS, Christ confirms and fulfills this Old Testament pattern, as the New Testament makes clear. Just as Jesus gave up His life, died, for His Bride, so also husbands should give up their lives, die, for their wives (Eph. 5:25); and

WHEREAS, The common sensibility of "gentlemen" includes a special and particular responsibility to guard, protect, and defend women. People of every nation and any faith should counsel and encourage men to obey their innate impulse and outward duty: put "women and children first." For men to employ women in their own physical defense and in killing can only be considered among the most profound abuses of women; and

WHEREAS, The spilling and shedding of human blood is far more than a "job" offering legal "employment." To escape condemnation as mercenary murder, the call to arms for the taking and risking of human lives must only be conducted as a moral enterprise against evil threats, toward just ends, by just means. Among the fundamental

principles of just war is the need to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants; women have always been presumed to be the latter. America must not ignore this basic presumption and dare not attempt to overrule it. To employ women in military combat is intrinsically immoral and barbaric; therefore be it, As pastors and congregations of the LCMS, we confess as sin our failure clearly and boldly to speak to this issue of women in combat. We repent. We seek now to state our clear theological position on this issue and sound the clear trumpet of God's warning (1 Cor. 14:8); and be it further, From Holy Scripture we are convinced: God does not sanction and will not bless the purposeful exposure of women to any hostile environment that compromises His own created order, good design, and high and holy callings. We hereby declare our conscientious objection to any policy or practice that considers women eligible for assignment into combat situations or conscription; and be it finally, To all who defy God's clearly-expressed will in this matter, we declare His warning (Ez. 33): Hear the Word of the Lord and repent, lest you incur His condemnation, for on the final day you will face His judgment.

Zion, Lincoln, IL; Lincoln Circuit, Central Illinois District; Williamsburg Circuit, Iowa District East; Quincy Circuit, Central; Illinois District; Trinity/Calvary Parish, Millersburg/Deep River, IA; Jacksonville Circuit, CI District

3. LIFE TOGETHER

3-01

To Support, Commend, and Increase Witness, Mercy, and Life Together Ministry of Lutheran Schools

WHEREAS, Elementary and secondary schools in the LCMS have a long and distinguished history in America, participating in Christ's mission of His church for 175 years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther's words ring as true in the 21st century as when he wrote them: "For if the devil is to be dealt a blow that really hurts, it must be done through young people who have come to maturity and knowledge of God, and who spread His word and teach it to others" ("To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," 1524); and

WHEREAS, Lutheran schools bear witness to the importance our forebears gave to Dr. Luther's imperative in the same 1524 document that "for the sake of the Church, we must have and maintain Christian schools"; and

WHEREAS, Schools in the LCMS have been established to encourage, support, equip, and empower parents in their duty and responsibility to bring their children up "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4); and

WHEREAS, Schools in the LCMS strive to connect the congregation to the community they serve through daily instruction, activities, and programs; and

WHEREAS, Congregations and Lutheran day schools within the LCMS also operate 2,300 early childhood centers and preschools, serving more than 129,000 children; and

WHEREAS, LCMS congregations operate 946 elementary schools serving 107,000 students; and

WHEREAS, 130 domestic and international Lutheran high schools touch the lives of students and families alike; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran schools provide a strong witness to their communities through rigorous academic programs, competitive athletic programs, and a passion for the arts; and

WHEREAS, In Lutheran schools families outside the church are often drawn to life together with LCMS families, thus facilitating a Gospel witness; and

WHEREAS, The purpose and mission of Lutheran schools is to equip children, youth, young adults, and their parents to fulfill the great commission of Jesus Christ by baptizing and teaching, and to this end prepare them for service and leadership in Lutheran congregations, all of which support our Synod's theme of Witness, Mercy, Life Together; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention congratulate its Lutheran schools and their associated students, parents, teachers, administrators, and congregations across the nation for their ongoing contributions to education; and be it further

Resolved, That this convention affirm Dr. Luther's urgent call to maintain Christian schools; and be it further

Resolved, That our Lutheran schools be urged to excellence in all areas of the educational enterprise (pedagogy, assessment, technology, etc.); and be it further

Resolved, That the commitment to proclaiming the pure Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as taught in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions be a major focus of the ethos of the school, that hope and healing may be applied to the students and families of our Lutheran schools; and be it further

Resolved, That this convention unequivocally and passionately encourage all church leaders (pastors, commissioned workers of all

kinds, and laity) to support and increase, both at the Synod and local levels, the education ministry that is Lutheran schools; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2012 convention of the Indiana District of the LCMS send this resolution to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Indiana District

3-02

To Empower Blue Ribbon Committee on Lutheran Schools

WHEREAS, Lutheran schools from nursery school through high school are the second-largest parochial school system in the US; and

WHEREAS, A combination of factors, including parishes with aging and declining congregational membership, lower percentages of congregational students in Lutheran schools, lower school enrollments in many school districts due to changing demographics, charter schools, and cost factors involved in operating a Lutheran school have negatively impacted urban, rural, and suburban Lutheran schools; and

WHEREAS, These factors have led to what amounts to a wholesale retreat from Lutheran education in urban areas across the country and increasing pressure on rural and suburban schools economically; and

WHEREAS, The critical ministry of Lutheran Christian education and catechesis in a quality educational setting is in crisis in many areas of the LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Office of National Mission, through the Department of Schools of the LCMS, be empowered to convene a blue ribbon committee on Lutheran schools; and be it further

Resolved, That such blue ribbon committee be composed of LCMS educators and others from within and without the LCMS for the most comprehensive analysis possible; and be it further

Resolved, That the economic needs not only of congregations but also of commissioned, rostered workers and teachers be taken into account in this analysis; and be it further

Resolved, That beyond a comprehensive analysis, a set of collaborative and creative options for the future of Lutheran schools in the 21st century be developed during this triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That creative solutions and implementations being undertaken be analyzed as "pilot projects" by the blue ribbon committee; and be it finally

Resolved, That the report, analysis, and recommendations toward creative collaborative educational options for Lutheran schools be presented to the delegates at the 2016 LCMS convention for adoption and implementation.

St. Peters
Brooklyn Park, NY

3-03

To Partner and Support Raising Children in Christian Faith

WHEREAS, God desires for all people to be saved; and

WHEREAS, The Church is the Body of Christ and is given the responsibility to go and make disciples of all nations; and

WHEREAS, God has given the privilege and responsibility to parents to raise their children in the Christian faith; and

WHEREAS, The church has made it a practice to take over the instruction of children in the faith; and

WHEREAS, Parents have become accustomed to this practice; and

WHEREAS, Many parents do not feel equipped to teach their children to live in the Christian faith; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS recognize that the church has contributed to taking away the responsibility and support from parents, which has contributed to the decline of young people in the church; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS direct the youth, children, and family ministries office to explore methods for the church body to partner and support parents rather than replace parents as the primary faith influencers in their children's lives; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS designate funding for current research in successful ministries worldwide that partner and support rather than replace parents as primary faith influencers in their children's lives; and be it further

Resolved, That Concordia Publishing House create current resources that integrate this partnership throughout the stages and ages of children's lives for congregations to access to enhance this partnership; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS designate funding for curriculum and resource development that exemplify the partnership between homes and the church; and be it finally

Resolved, That a concentrated effort be made to offer training and conferences adaptable to the different areas of the country in order to equip congregations and families in supporting parents and raising children in the faith.

King of Glory
Williamsburg, VA

3-04

To Encourage Urban Ministry Awareness, Support, and Involvement

WHEREAS, God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4); and

WHEREAS, The Gospel—in the Word and Sacraments (Holy Baptism and Holy Communion)—is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16) and therefore has sway over men's hearts in every place and every time and every culture, according to the Holy Spirit's bidding; and

WHEREAS, We as God's people are called upon to believe in, serve as messengers of, and be God's display of the power of the saving Gospel in our lives as it is also proclaimed and demonstrated through God's love and life within us in deeds of compassion and mercy; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Spirit attends the truthful proclamation of the Word, the right administration of the Sacraments, and the demonstration of His (1 Cor. 6:19) and Christ's (Gal. 2:20) indwelling presence through our obedience to His Word, as seen in the forgiveness we offer one another and others in our "life together," in deeds of compassion and mercy, and in our witness; and

WHEREAS, The United States has many urban areas where the Gospel needs to be lived, demonstrated, and proclaimed; and

WHEREAS, Congregations and districts of the LCMS have been instrumental in starting urban ministry initiatives to meet these needs, such as Michigan's Acts 2 Enterprise, Ohio's Building Hope in the City, and Texas' LINC Houston; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage and direct its officers and staff to continue to take seriously God's mission in the urban setting through special urban initiatives and especially through continual, urgent, special, and focused prayer and planning; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the LCMS join in these prayers for God's blessing upon urban ministry and, where possible, join in the work that needs to be done in the urban setting through that planning; and be it finally

Resolved, That the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod further support in whatever means or ways possible these urban ministry efforts, or, as the Apostle Paul says in Galatians 6:10, "As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Michigan District

3-05

To Initiate Urban Mission Strategies through Office of National Mission

WHEREAS, Growth in large cities across the United States includes diverse populations who have not been exposed to or inculcated in Means-of-Grace Lutheran community life together; and

WHEREAS, LCMS congregations in these large urban areas desire to engage the world with the Gospel of hope; and

WHEREAS, The Office of National Mission is tasked with strategizing and coordinating with local congregations and district leadership to enable and equip workers and congregations for the task of Gospel mission with a variety of resources; therefore be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 2013 LCMS convention task the Office of National Mission with continuing to develop and undertake strategies specific to the urban context across the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That select urban leaders in congregations and at the district level be recruited to work with the Office of National Mission in this regard; and be it finally

Resolved, That a report be received at the 2016 LCMS convention including not only the strategies but also the outcomes of efforts to renew and revitalize urban mission and ministry in the LCMS.

St. Peters
Brooklyn, NY

3-06

To Provide Staff and Material Resources in Support of Rural Ministry

WHEREAS, Many of the Synod's congregations are located in rural rather than metropolitan areas; and

WHEREAS, Rural ministry is distinctively different from suburban and metropolitan ministry; and

WHEREAS, Recent ministry trends have focused on life in metropolitan areas, and resources for the rural environment have not been as extensive; and

WHEREAS, Rural congregations often face financial and staffing challenges not faced by metropolitan congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention affirm the ministry being accomplished by our rural congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS staff be directed to identify and promote resources for rural ministry, including helping clusters of rural congregations explore ways of engaging in collaborative ministry for their area and the establishment of a list of retired pastors, Synod-wide, who would like to be included as those available to take a call to a semi-retired position in these rural areas, thus making it possible

to match up willing earthly shepherds with those congregations less able to support a full-time pastor.

Shepherd of the Hills
Isabella, California

3-07

To Encourage and Support Ministry of All Congregations Regardless of Demographics and Size

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has promised, “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or more are gathered in My name, there am I among them” (Matthew 18:19–20); and

WHEREAS, The church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered (AC, Art. VII); and

WHEREAS, Each congregation, therefore, in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered, has all the dignity, gifts, and authority of the church of Christ, regardless of demographics or size; and

WHEREAS, “Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, [who] works faith, when and where it pleases God, in those who hear the Good News that God justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake” (AC, Art. V); and

WHEREAS, The dissolution of a congregation, regardless of demographics or size, would eliminate the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments in a given location, thus eliminating the means by which the Holy Spirit is given; and

WHEREAS, Christian congregations have supported one another in times of need from the time of the Early Church, as seen in Acts 2:42–47 and 2 Corinthians 8; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS be encouraged to support one another in their ministries, financially or spiritually or otherwise, regardless of demographics or size; and be it further

Resolved, That the circuit counselors of the Montana District be directed to ascertain the welfare of their congregations and address any support that may be necessary, reporting any dire need to the district president; and be it further

Resolved, The Montana District president be directed to make known to the board of directors and to member congregations any areas of need, so that support may be shared among sister congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Montana District continue to uphold the equal dignity, gifts, and authority of all member congregations, regardless of demographics or size, and to try to prevent the dissolution of any member congregations; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Montana District in convention memorialize the LCMS 2013 convention to encourage these or similar efforts in every district.

Montana District

3-08

To Advocate Koinonia Project Implementation as Mission and Ministry Emphasis

WHEREAS, Dr. Matthew Harrison, both before and after his election to the presidency of the Synod, described the potential for a process called the Koinonia Project, which seeks to bring about agreement under God concerning controverted matters of doctrine and practice through disciplined study of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and intense brotherly conversation; and

WHEREAS, “The Koinonia Project cannot be a political process, but must be a spiritual process centered in the Word of God, repentance and prayer, forgiveness and charity. A resolution of the Synod will not resolve our problems” (draft of the Koinonia Project dated 3/2/11); and

WHEREAS, The goals of the Koinonia Project are laudable goals for which we all fervently pray; and

WHEREAS, The Koinonia Project has been in its initial stages since the 2010 Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 convention adopted Res. 8-30B, “To Study Article VI of Synod’s Constitution” (“Conditions of Membership”), and Res. 8-32B, “To Study Article VII of Synod’s Constitution” (“Relation of the Synod to Its Members”); and

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 4.2.1 (d) states: “The district convention shall, through delegate vote, forward to the national convention a list of two or three triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the national convention”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Missouri District encourage widespread support for and participation in the Koinonia Project throughout all levels of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the Missouri District forward the Koinonia Project to the 2013 LCMS convention for consideration as a triennial mission and ministry emphasis, and that the Koinonia Project include, as content for its implementation, Article VI (“Conditions of Membership”) and Article VII (“Relation of the Synod to Its Members”).

Missouri District

3-09

To Acknowledge, Thank God for, Build Upon, and Guard Our Doctrinal Unity

WHEREAS, We, the LCMS, have been blessed by the Lord of the Church with a vast body of Christian doctrine in which we are in agreement (such as, the Trinity; the deity of Christ; the virgin birth of Christ; the physical resurrection of Christ; the inerrancy of the Bible; justification by grace alone through faith in Christ alone based on Scripture alone; the Sacraments as means of grace; the real presence; eschatology [teaching on end times]; and other doctrines); and

WHEREAS, This unity is the work of the Holy Spirit alone; and

WHEREAS, Such great agreement in doctrine is lacking in many other denominations; and

WHEREAS, We desire that the areas of doctrine and practice that still divide us be resolved in a God-pleasing manner under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; therefore be it

Resolved, That we give thanks to the Lord of the Church for preserving His pure and saving doctrine among us; and be it further

Resolved, That we commit ourselves under the guidance of God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions to engage in discussion

concerning those areas of disagreement that do exist among us, as we will be doing in the Koinonia Project; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2012 convention of the Northern Illinois District of the LCMS send this resolution to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Northern Illinois District

3-10

To Respect and Put Best Construction on All Things with Each Other

WHEREAS, In these turbulent times, Synod officials, pastors, congregations, and individual Christians are often called upon to make difficult decisions in complex and critical situations; and

WHEREAS, Our Lord admonishes us to address private offenses privately first (cf. Mt. 18:15); and

WHEREAS, St. Paul addressed a public offense swiftly and publicly first (Gal. 2:11–14); and

WHEREAS, The Word of God does not always directly address or provide final answers in many such situations; therefore be it

Resolved, That we encourage each other to approach such situations with prayer, the study of God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions, the counsel of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and the desire to act boldly and faithfully on behalf of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That we recognize that because such situations vary from place to place, local pastors, congregations, and officials are ordinarily in a better position to make responsible decisions than those who are farther away; and be it further

Resolved, That we put the best construction on each other’s decision and avoid negative judgments and charges against each other in such circumstances except where there has been a clear violation of the Word of God; and be it further

Resolved, That when we disagree with the decisions of a pastor, congregation, or official in such situations, we encourage one another to address those differences personally and privately before making our disagreements public or bringing formal charges against each other; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2012 Northern Illinois District convention request the next Synod convention to affirm our godly work of developing greater mutual respect and giving of the best construction for each other, especially in recognizing and dealing responsibly and charitably with cases of discretion.

Northern Illinois District

3-11

To Continue Witness, Mercy, Life Together as Triennial Mission and Ministry Emphasis

WHEREAS, The 2010 Synod convention adopted a process whereby the triennial emphasis is established by suggestions forwarded through the adoption of resolutions at the congregational level, then by circuit forums, then district conventions, and finally by the Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, No triennial emphasis could be adopted at the 2010 Synod convention because this process had been newly established; and

WHEREAS, The Synod President and his staff developed an emphasis for this first triennium based on the ancient description of the Church; and

WHEREAS, Congregations, circuits, and districts of the Synod are asked in *Bylaw* 4.2.1 to submit mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, The current mission and ministry emphasis of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* holds much potential for further spiritual growth and implementation throughout the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Indiana District encourage the LCMS President and 2013 Synod convention to continue the mission and ministry emphasis of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* for the LCMS for the 2013–16 triennium.

Indiana District

3-12

To Encourage Triennial Mission and Ministry Emphases

WHEREAS, 2010 Res. 8-09 recognized the benefit of congregations, circuits, and districts becoming more engaged in setting the mission and ministry goals of the national church body so that the Synod can better walk together; and

WHEREAS, Res. 8-09 mandated a change in the LCMS bylaws to include *Bylaw* 4.2.1 (d), which states: “The district convention shall, through delegate vote, forward to the national convention a list of two or three triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the national convention”; and

WHEREAS, With regard to the mission emphasis, the theme of the 2012 convention of the LCMS South Dakota District is “Called into Partnership: For Witness” based on Acts 1:8; and

WHEREAS, Jesus stated His own mission in Luke 19:10 by saying, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost”; has extended that mission to His Church in Mark 16:15, where He says, “Go into all the world, and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation”; and has stated in Acts 1:8, “You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”; and

WHEREAS, All believers, including pastors, are called to “proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9b), and pastors are also called “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12a); and

WHEREAS, Many pastors could benefit from additional training in evangelism outreach; and

WHEREAS, Also with regard to the ministry emphasis, many current national issues, including same-sex marriage, abortion, and various so-called “church and state issues,” such as the nation’s infringement of rights understood to be protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, directly involve the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms; therefore be it

Resolved, That the President of the Synod, whose oversight of the Synod includes seminary education (*Bylaw* 3.3.1.3 [f] [3]), be encouraged to request that both LCMS seminaries expand intentional training in evangelism outreach as part of their curricula, in order that pastors may become more proficient both in doing the work of an evangelist (cf. 2 Tim. 4:5) and in training others as evangelists and witnesses; and be it further

Resolved, That the South Dakota District in convention encourage the LCMS to establish an Office of Church and State Affairs both to provide resources for congregations and individuals living out their lives as Christians in two kingdoms and to keep current with church

and state issues, including informing members of the U.S. Congress of the church's concerns over those matters which may impact First Amendment rights.

South Dakota District

3-13

To Adopt Witness, Mercy, Life Together as Mission and Ministry Emphases

WHEREAS, At its 2010 convention, the LCMS adopted a process whereby the triennial emphasis is established by suggestions forwarded through the adoption of resolutions at the congregational level, then by circuit forums, then by district conventions, and finally by the Synod's conventions; and

WHEREAS, No triennial emphasis could be adopted at the 2010 convention because this process had been newly established; and

WHEREAS, The Synod President and his staff developed Witness, Mercy, Life Together as the emphasis for the 2010–13 triennium; and

WHEREAS, Districts of the Synod are required by Bylaw 4.2.1 (b) to submit mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the Synod convention; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montana District assembled in convention submit the mission and ministry emphases of Witness, Mercy, Life Together for consideration by the 2013 LCMS convention as the continued mission and ministry emphases for the LCMS for the 2013–16 triennium.

Montana District

3-14

To Suggest Triennial Mission and Ministry Emphases to Synod

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 4.2.1 (b) states: "The district convention is the instrument to receive overtures (Bylaws 3.1.6.2–3.1.6.2.5), including overtures and recommendations for synodwide mission and ministry emphases submitted by member congregations and adopted by a circuit forum"; and

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 4.2.1(d) states: "The district convention shall, through delegate vote, forward to the national convention a list of two or three triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the national convention"; and

WHEREAS, The Church is called by her Lord to share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed in the culture in which she lives, and today's American culture is providing great opportunities for evangelism among many diverse populations and in a great variety of ways, including technological means unknown to previous generations; and

WHEREAS, One of the objectives of our Synod is to "aid congregations to develop processes of thorough Christian education and nurture and to establish agencies of Christian education such as elementary and secondary schools" (Constitution, Art. III 5), and such Lutheran schools over the generations have been very effective in training young people in the ways of the Lord but are now facing great challenges in our changing culture and times of financial stress; and

WHEREAS, The President of the Synod and his staff developed the current mission and ministry emphasis of Witness, Mercy, Life Together, which still holds much potential for further growth and implementation throughout the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Minnesota South District suggest to the 2013 LCMS convention a mission and ministry emphasis on evangelism, both in word and in deed, asking the Office of National Mission to develop resources to teach and train congregations to engage their local communities in all their diversity, with special emphasis on the use of technology such as social media to create a positive awareness of our Synod and our congregations, as a way to share the Gospel of Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That the Minnesota South District suggest to the 2013 LCMS convention a mission and ministry emphasis on Christian education, especially that which serves to strengthen the ministries of Lutheran early childhood centers, elementary schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries by providing resources through the Office of National Mission, so that schools and congregations may be better equipped to meet the challenges of the day and most effectively share the caring Christ with students and their families; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Minnesota South District suggest to the 2013 LCMS convention that it carry on with the current mission and ministry emphasis of Witness, Mercy, Life Together, continuing to develop the implementation of the Gospel mission of the Church.

Minnesota South District

3-15

To Consider Three Triennial Ministry and Mission Emphases

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 2010 Res. 8-09 called for "mission and ministry emphases" from districts on a triennial basis; and

WHEREAS, Mission and ministry emphases were solicited from the circuits of the Eastern District; and

WHEREAS, The Eastern District did select mission and ministry emphases at its 2012 convention, to be referred by memorial to the 2013 LCMS convention; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention consider the following three triennial mission and ministry emphases:

- Men's ministry, encouragement and resources
- Small church, ministry support and material
- Evangelism training

And be it further

Resolved, That these mission and ministry emphases be referred to the Board for National Mission for direction and implementation.

Eastern District

3-16

To Submit Triennial Mission and Ministry Emphasis

WHEREAS, Bylaw 4.2.1(d) states: "The district convention shall, by delegate vote, forward to the national convention a list of two or three triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the national convention"; and

WHEREAS, The Synod President and his staff developed an emphasis for this first triennium based on the ancient description of the Church; and

WHEREAS, The current mission and ministry emphasis of Witness, Mercy, Life Together holds much potential for further growth and implementation throughout the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2012 Wyoming District Convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to consider continuing the current theme of Witness, Mercy, Life Together for the 2013–16 triennium.

Wyoming District;
Central Illinois District

3-17

To Adopt Campus Ministry as a Mission and Ministry Emphasis

WHEREAS, The 2010 LCMS convention encouraged congregations, circuits, and districts to submit mission and ministry emphases; and

WHEREAS, The number of students continues to grow at colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, Our college students are exposed to greater challenges to their faith in increasingly secular campus settings; and

WHEREAS, Colleges and universities remain fields ripe for harvest; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod adopt campus ministry as one of its mission and ministry emphases for the next triennium.

Central Illinois District

3-18

To Recommend Mission Focus for LCMS in 2013–16

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach that the mission fields are ripe for harvest but the workers are few (Matthew 9:38); and

Whereas, The immediate mission fields are among us, as well as around the world (Acts 1:8); and

Whereas, The number of unchurched people in the United States is significant; and

Whereas, A majority of LCMS congregations are located in communities with populations of 15,000 or less (Rural/Small Town Ministry Web page, <http://www.lcms.org/rstm>); and

Whereas, The family serves as a primary location of faith formation (Deuteronomy 11:19); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has encouraged circuit forums and districts to recommend mission and ministry emphases to the Synod each triennium; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Nebraska District in convention recommend that the 2013–16 mission focus of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and her member congregations be to seek those who have not heard the healing balm of the Gospel and to seek those brothers and sisters in Christ who have become disconnected from the gifts of God in Christ offered through the church, to include specific emphases on Family Life Ministry and Rural/Small Town Ministry.

Nebraska District

3-19

To Recommend Mission and Ministry Emphases for National Ministry Priorities

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 4.2.1 (d) requires that districts in convention shall through delegate vote forward to the national convention a list of triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration; and

WHEREAS, During the latter part of 2011 and early 2012, a straw poll was conducted through the circuits and pre-convention meetings of the Southeastern District; and

WHEREAS, The results of that polling revealed an overwhelming support for outreach, evangelism, faith sharing; renewal, revitalization, refreshing of existing congregations; resources for developing disciples; and planting new missions; and

WHEREAS, The Southeastern District in convention has affirmed the priority of these top four mission areas; and

WHEREAS, The Southeastern District is actively promoting and supporting these top four priorities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention request the Synod to consider the following mission and ministry emphases in developing national priorities for mission and ministry in the coming triennium: outreach, evangelism, faith sharing; renewal, revitalization, refreshing of existing congregations; resources for developing disciples; and planting new missions.

Southeastern District

3-20

To Suggest Triennial Mission and Ministry Emphases

WHEREAS, In walking together as the Synod, we have agreed to move toward a unified triennial mission and ministry emphasis (Bylaw 4.2.1 [d]); and

WHEREAS, The North Dakota District tasks its Planning Council to formulate an integrated district work plan; and

WHEREAS, The Church has always had a vision before her (e.g., Luther, Walther, Constitution, Art. III Objectives, Synod Presidents); and

WHEREAS, The Church has set her vision from the Word of God and the Confessions in addressing the culture and issues of the day (e.g., Luther—Rome and the Turks; Chemnitz—waning Lutheranism; Walther—Lutheranism in a new land); and

WHEREAS, The district has/is experiencing financial concerns; and

WHEREAS, Pastors are expressing a growing concern for their life in the ministry dealing with depression, burnout, anxiety, declining memberships; and

WHEREAS, The Rural Ministry Task Force has identified four areas of focus: pastors; equipping the people for outreach; networking in the sharing of ideas; and a joint vision as a district; and

WHEREAS, The Planning Council in 2010 defined three areas of focus for the district: Bible-based; mission-minded; and grateful stewards; and

WHEREAS, The district adopted similar focus areas in 2006 and 2009; and

WHEREAS, The board of directors, with the outside help of Dr. Ross Steuber from Concordia University Wisconsin, defined three critical areas of mission and ministry in the North Dakota District: pastors, outreach, and stewardship; and

WHEREAS, The 2011 Planning Council concurred with the board and defined three outcomes for the district: faithful pastors, bold witnesses, and empowered stewards; and

WHEREAS, President Matthew Harrison and his administration have set before the Church Witness, Mercy, Life Together; and

WHEREAS, The board of directors has filtered faithful pastors, bold witnesses, and empowered stewards through Witness, Mercy, Life Together; and

WHEREAS, The district has published and promoted these outcomes through weekly bulletin inserts, the Web site, pastors conferences, Winkels, a printed Bible study, etc.; therefore be it

Resolved, That the North Dakota District adopt these three outcomes, filtered through Witness, Mercy, Life Together, as the vision and focus of mission and ministry for this new triennium, to be forwarded to the Synod as suggestions for synodwide triennial emphasis (Bylaw 4.2.1 [d]); and be it further

Resolved, The Witness, Mercy, Life Together goals for the faithful pastors, bold witnesses, and empowered stewards outcomes be embraced by the North Dakota District.

North Dakota District

3-21

To Advocate New and Heightened Emphasis on Church Planting

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in grateful response to God’s grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, strives vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and world; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS global mission focus has been on Gospel proclamation for the purposes of outreach, church planting, leadership training, strategic mission development and global multiplication—multiplying the number of believers sharing their faith; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has encouraged all LCMS congregations to become “mission outposts,” where the unchurched are lovingly connected to Jesus; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS recognizes North America as the third largest mission field on the globe; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CNH District in convention (2012) memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to continue to encourage and challenge all LCMS congregations to go about the work of proclaiming the Gospel increasingly, intentionally, vigorously, and prayerfully, making disciples of all the nations and being witnesses of Christ in our churches, schools, communities, and the world through the Synod’s mission endeavors, and do so equally vigorously in both the national and international realms; and be it further

Resolved, that the CNH District in convention (2012) urge the President of the LCMS to advocate a new and heightened focus on church planting; and be it finally

Resolved, That the President of the LCMS work vigorously to see to it that pastors, church workers, laymen, and laywomen of the Synod be provided opportunities to be educated, trained, equipped, and encouraged for rural, urban, intercultural, and all types of mission work, in the United States, North America, and to the nations of the world.

California-Nevada-Hawaii District

3-22

To Establish Triennial Mission and Ministry Emphasis for Synod

WHEREAS, The 2010 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod adopted a process whereby a triennial emphasis is established by suggestions forwarded through the adoption of overtures at the congregation level, then by circuit forums, then by district conventions, and finally by the Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, National tragedies reinforce the need for the LCMS to be active in proclaiming the Gospel in the public square; and

WHEREAS, Congregations are asked in Bylaw 4.2.1 to submit mission and ministry emphases for consideration; and

WHEREAS, The occurrence of a national tragedy and its aftermath do not always allow sufficient time for a congregation to submit a relevant overture through a circuit forum and a district convention, and yet there is need for the LCMS to respond promptly and properly; and

WHEREAS, It is our aspiration that the mission and ministry of the LCMS uphold our responsibility and freedom to be active in the proclamation of the Gospel in the public square; therefore be it

Resolved, That Proclaiming the Gospel in the Public Square be adopted as a mission and ministry emphasis for the Synod’s 2013–2016 triennium.

Circuit 38, Texas District; Trinity, Roselle, II

3-23

To Recommend Mission and Ministry Emphases to Synod

WHEREAS, The Synod has encouraged congregations to recommend mission and ministry emphases to the Synod for each triennium; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod focus on the following mission and ministry emphases for its next triennium: campus ministry; family life ministry; immigrant ministry; renewed focus on activities and resources that support and enhance congregational worship; renewed encouragement to congregations to serve needs in their immediate neighborhoods.

Pacific Hills
Omaha, NE

3-24

To Facilitate Placement of Returning Missionaries and Military Chaplains

WHEREAS, Ordained missionaries and military chaplains have very diverse experience and skills in preaching the Gospel to various peoples; and

WHEREAS, Ordained field missionaries and military chaplains serve in a temporary position which eventually comes to a conclusion and are available and desire pastoral calls; and

WHEREAS, It is poor stewardship that these gifts from God are not being fully utilized because a pastoral call has not been received in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, Smooth transitions upon return from missionary service may encourage more pastors to seek to expand their ministry experience by making themselves receptive to missionary service; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montana District in convention memorialize the LCMS to direct district presidents to make full and timely use of the list of returning ordained missionaries and military chaplains, as provided by the Office of International Mission, when supplying candidate lists to calling congregations.

Montana District

3-25

To Update Content of 1991 Explanation to Small Catechism

WHEREAS, *An Explanation of the Small Catechism*, the Synod's question and answer exposition of Luther's Small Catechism (Enchiridion), is based on similar works that evolved from one to the next as each subsequent work was published over the centuries; and

WHEREAS, *An Explanation*, because of its concise treatment of the chief parts of Christian doctrine and its application of that doctrine to current issues, is frequently used both for instruction in the Christian faith and as a resource for those so instructed; and

WHEREAS, The last revision to the content of *An Explanation* is that copyrighted 1991 (authorized in 1986 by Res. 2-17 before the revision was completed), available from Concordia Publishing House with proof texts primarily from either the New International Version or the English Standard Version; and

WHEREAS, There is a need to update *An Explanation* in light of many changes in church and society over the more than two decades that have passed; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct and authorize Concordia Publishing House to propose such needed revisions to the content of the 1991 *An Explanation of the Small Catechism*, leaving intact the 1986 wording of the Small Catechism (Enchiridion) itself and continuing to use primarily the English Standard Version for proof texts (or other appropriate translations as necessary); and be it further

Resolved, That Concordia Publishing House present its proposed revisions to the Synod in time for ample review and response from the field (and make necessary further revisions) before presenting a revised *An Explanation* for consideration at a subsequent convention of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the revised *An Explanation* not be published (except for review and in the *Convention Workbook*) nor be offered for sale prior to its being approved by doctrinal review and then accepted by a majority vote by the Synod in convention; and be it finally

Resolved, That the eventual publication of the revised *An Explanation* not preclude Concordia Publishing House from continuing to publish and sell the previous editions from both 1943 and 1991 (with proof texts primarily from either the New International Version or the English Standard Version).

Pilgrim Lutheran Church
Kilgore, TX

3-26

To Reject Use of NIV 2011 in Catechism

WHEREAS, Biblica and Zondervan publishing houses have produced a new (2011) translation of the New International Version (NIV) of Holy Scripture; and

WHEREAS, This version alters the meaning of many verses from the 1984 translation; and

WHEREAS, The Enchiridion of Luther's Small Catechism uses the 1984 translation which is no longer published by Biblica and Zondervan; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Nebraska District encourage the LCMS and its corporate entity Concordia Publishing House to secure permission for continued use of the 1984 version of the NIV; and be it further

Resolved, That the Nebraska District memorialize the Synod in convention to select a faithful translation of the Holy Scriptures to be used in the Enchiridion if permission is not obtained.

Nebraska District

3-27

To Direct CPH to Place 1986 Catechism into the Public Domain

WHEREAS, The text of Luther's Small Catechism is the primary teaching tool of the Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, The text is intended to be used in the home and church, and spread abroad as freely as possible; and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures themselves encourage us to write the text of the catechism on our doors and walls (Deuteronomy 6:6ff.; see Luther's Preface to the Large Catechism); and

WHEREAS, Wherever the catechism is read, studied, printed, sung, written, posted, repeated, and learned, the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of faith and love; and

WHEREAS, The congregations of the LCMS, in love for one another and the unity of the Spirit, have a common translation of the Small Catechism (1986); and

WHEREAS, The copyright limitations placed on the 1986 translation of Luther's Small Catechism limit its distribution (for example, on the Internet, church Web sites, catechism study books and worksheets, audio recordings, posters and artwork, etc.); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention direct the Board of Directors of Concordia Publishing House to place the 1986 translation of Luther's Small Catechism into the public domain; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be submitted as an overture to the 2013 convention of the Synod.

Southern Illinois District

3-28

To Encourage Study of Lutheran Confessions to Celebrate Reformation

WHEREAS, The 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther will be observed in 2017; and

WHEREAS, It is most appropriate for us as members of the LCMS to join in the celebration of that anniversary; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 4-02 of the 2009 district convention, "To Encourage Study of the Lutheran Confessions in Celebration of the Reformation," stipulated that this resolution be reintroduced to the 2012 and 2015 district conventions; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Minnesota South District encourage every congregation of the district to hold regular, ongoing studies of all writings contained within the Book of Concord of 1580 (*i.e.*, the Lutheran Confessions); and be it further

Resolved, That the Minnesota South District encourage each congregation of the district to encourage all of its members to attend these studies regularly; and be it further

Resolved, That this memorial be reintroduced at the 2015 Minnesota South District convention as a reminder of what we have agreed to do in preparation for the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Minnesota South District memorialize the 2013 Synod convention to encourage every congregation of the Synod to hold regular, ongoing studies of all writings contained within the Book of Concord of 1580 and to encourage all of their members to regularly attend those studies.

Minnesota South District;
Minnesota North District

3-29

To Reinstate Full Obituaries in *The Lutheran Witness*

WHEREAS, The Scriptures encourage us: “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7 RSV); and

WHEREAS, “Life Together,” along with “mercy” and “witness,” is a continuing emphasis of our church body, and that reality can be strengthened by helping us remember those servants of our Lord, ordained and commissioned partners in the Gospel, who have been called to heaven in recent months; and

WHEREAS, 2010 Res. 6-08 led to ending the long-standing, compassionate, and family-supporting policy of publicizing the brief summary obituaries of those “faithful departed soldiers of the cross” in the monthly issue of our official publication; and

WHEREAS, It is totally inappropriate to dismiss those “faithful departed soldiers of the cross” without providing a readily available, relevant, print remembrance of their service to the vast majority of readers of *The Lutheran Witness*; and

WHEREAS, The information currently provided—in an attempt to “save space” for other items—is reduced to two lines, name and two dates and a reference to non-specific Web sites (to which many readers do not have current information or access) to find the helpful information; and

WHEREAS, The 2012 convention of the Eastern District resolved to memorialize the 2013 Synod convention “To Reinstate Full Obituaries in *The Lutheran Witness*”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention strongly encourage *The Lutheran Witness* to strengthen our “life together” by returning to the former practice of publicizing for the entire Synod the brief summary obituaries of those servant-leaders who have been called home to the Lord.

Eastern District

3-30

To Rescind 2010 Res. 6-08 re Publishing Obituaries

WHEREAS, The Scriptures encourage us: “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7 RSV); and

WHEREAS, From its very beginning the Synod has recognized the contributions of dedicated servants of the cross by publishing obituaries in its official publications, listing areas of service and other gifts that have benefited the life and ministry of the church; and

WHEREAS, These obituaries serve the dual purpose of (1) honoring the gifts God has brought to the church through the lives of these our sisters and brothers and (2) informing the church of the deaths of church workers so their families may be ministered to by the body of Christ; therefore be it

Resolved, That *The Lutheran Witness* continue to publish obituaries in a timely manner; and be it further

Resolved, That Res. 6-08 of the 2010 convention be rescinded; and be it finally

Resolved, That the names of survivors and congregations served by the deceased be included in the print and electronic versions of *The Lutheran Witness* when the deaths of rostered workers are reported.

Southern Circuit Forum
Montana District

3-31

To Affirm Work of Transforming Churches Network

WHEREAS, Transforming Churches Network (TCN) is currently under the auspices of our LCMS Board for National Mission; and

WHEREAS, TCN is a recognized service organization (RSO) of the LCMS and partners with 32 of our LCMS districts; and

WHEREAS, TCN’s statement of faith is consistent with and supportive of the doctrine and confession of the LCMS as found on their public Web site; and

WHEREAS, TCN hosts and resources important training events in and around our church body for those who are involved in church revitalization efforts; and

WHEREAS, TCN is an important coordinating arm for districts and churches around the LCMS who are trying to work together in mission to enliven and revitalize churches through the sound teaching of the Scripture, the use of the Sacraments, and the Lutheran Confessions, while utilizing faithful and encouraging practices to focus congregations and their leaders upon making disciples of all nations, beginning in their own communities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CNH District of the LCMS affirm its support for the Transforming Churches Network in its 2012 convention; and be it further

Resolved, That TCN be given opportunity in our CNH District publications to give updates and communication in regards to its work so that clear communication regarding its work might be available to our district and by extension to the church body at large; and be it further

Resolved, That the CNH District encourage our board of directors to send ongoing funding from our district budget annually to TCN; and be it finally

Resolved, That the CNH District memorialize the LCMS in convention encouraging the entire church body to reaffirm its support of the Transforming Churches Network in our 2013 convention.

CNH District

3-32

To Revoke RSO Status of Transforming Churches Network

WHEREAS, The Transforming Churches Network (TCN) is listed on the Synod’s Web site as a recognized service organization (RSO); and

WHEREAS, While TCN is concerned for the health of existing LCMS congregations, the determinative factors of a congregation’s health is based chiefly on numerical measurements and sociology, such as attendance numbers and financial giving, but not on its adherence to the teaching of the Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, TCN has roots deeply embedded in Baptist theology; and

WHEREAS, TCN advocates changing the main emphasis of a pastor’s duties from “being the lead caretaker of the existing congregation to the lead missionary to lost people in the community” (“Pastor Survey,” TCN, question 7a [<http://portal.tcnbackup.com/Portals/0/5%20Pastor%20Survey.pdf>]), thus diminishing the pastoral care of the Law and Gospel that pastors have historically provided to members of the congregations they serve (John 21:15–17); and

WHEREAS, TCN initially asks pastors to see how comfortable they are with this statement, “If we do not achieve the 5% growth goal in the next 24 months, and 5% growth annually thereafter, I will put my name out for another call” (“Pastor Survey,” question 8 d), thus suggesting that the man who is divinely called to be a pastor is only effective if he meets preset worldly standards, even though both Jesus and Paul did not always find such worldly success in their ministries (John 6:60ff.; 2 Tim. 4:9–16; Acts 17:1–9); and

WHEREAS, TCN also asks congregation leaders to determine if “[t]he leaders of this church hope to initiate a style of worship service that appeals to unreached people” (“Leader’s Survey,” TCN, question 3 e [<http://portal.tcnbackup.com/Portals/0/6%20Leaders%20Survey.pdf>]), thus suggesting that a congregation’s worship style should be based on sociology instead of the Word of God as it has been taught in the Lutheran Confessions, or that a congregation’s worship style should be changed even if it exclusively uses the approved hymnals of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Spirit alone is responsible for converting people to saving faith by His Word and Sacraments, when and where He pleases; and

WHEREAS, Jesus in Matthew 23:15 says: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves,” which teaches that a strong missionary zeal without the proper biblical and Christ-centered doctrinal teaching is spiritually dangerous; and

WHEREAS, We as Christians are called to be in this world but not of it; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention revoke RSO status of TCN; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod President inform all district presidents of the theological dangers inherent in the premise, methods, and materials of TCN and to remove all district support of it on Web sites, newsletters, etc.

Holy Cross
Albany, OR

3-33

To Provide Assurances re Transforming Churches Network

Background

The February 2010 *Reporter* carried a letter by Prof. David Berger of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, regarding the Transforming Churches Network (TCN), a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS. In it, Professor Berger raised a number of specific points. His letter was followed by a brief letter in which the executive director of TCN offered a general response but addressed none of the specifics from the Berger letter.

To quote Prof. Berger’s letter as printed in *Reporter*:

To lay to rest any concerns expressed in various quarters about the TCN corporation and its work, especially given its close relationship to LCMS World Mission, the following assurances are important:

Because every aspect of helping congregations to “look outward,” i.e., to proclaim the Gospel beyond their doors, has theological implications and is grounded in theological prepositions, all TCN consultants and personnel subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions, and its resources (print and online) conform to Lutheran doctrine and practice.

TCN vigorously promotes Word and Sacrament ministry, including catechetical instruction (teaching) and Baptism of children and adults, as foundational to both a congregation’s outward focus and its internal spiritual health.

TCN recognizes that the varied services in [the Synod’s hymnals], grounded in Scripture and in the historic practice of the communion of saints, clearly communicate the Gospel: TCN thus discourages altering worship form and content to appeal to those whose first need is to be instructed in the faith, including how that faith is expressed and fed in the Divine Service.

TCN promotes an open congregational polity that encourages all members to be alive in their faith in the work of the congregation and advises against vesting governance in a small, centralized body or in the pastor, whose call is to serve as spiritual shepherd of the flock.

TCN upholds the scriptural principle of Christian vocation, i.e., the life of a Christian is one of faithful service to neighbor and family; in fulfilling various callings with our God-given abilities, we are “masks of God” through which/whom He calls others to Him. Cf. Eph. 4:11ff., 1 Thess. 4:10ff.

TCN acknowledges that evangelism, God’s work of calling people to faith, neither supersedes nor replaces the Gospel itself—the good news of Christ’s saving work for sinners—as the heart and core of the church’s proclamation.

Finally, TCN counsels against using membership size or growth as a standard of “accounting” for the faithfulness and spiritual health (or “success”) of a pastor or a congregation (cf. Eph. 1:4–14, Romans 8:28–30) and warns against turning grateful and loving witness, either corporate or individual, into a Law-driven activity.

and

Whereas, Prof. Berger’s letter concluded, “Is it possible to check on these details and provide assurances regarding TCN theology?”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Carrollton Circuit Forum memorialize the Synod to make the following assignment to the Office of National Mission: to check on the details from Prof. Berger’s letter and provide assurances regarding TCN theology to the 2016 LCMS convention.

Carrollton Circuit Forum
Missouri District

3-34

To Evaluate Transforming Churches Network

WHEREAS, The Transforming Churches Network (TCN) is listed on the Synod’s Web site as a “Recognized Service Organization”; and

WHEREAS, Although it is concerned for the health of existing LCMS congregations, TCN determines a congregation’s health based chiefly on numerical measurements and sociology, such as attendance numbers and financial giving, but not on its adherence to the teaching of the Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, TCN advocates changing the main emphasis of a pastor’s duties from “being the lead caretaker of the existing congregation to the lead missionary to lost people in the community” (“Pastor Survey,” TCN, question 7a <http://portal.tcnbackup.com/Portals/0/5%20Pastor%20Survey.pdf>), thus diminishing the pastoral care of the Law and Gospel that pastors have historically provided to members of the congregations they serve (John 21:15–17); and

WHEREAS, TCN initially asks pastors to see how comfortable they are with this statement, “If we do not achieve the 5% growth goal in the next 24 months, and 5% growth annually thereafter, I will put my name out for another call” (“Pastor Survey,” question 8d), thus suggesting that the man who is divinely called to be a pastor is only

effective if he meets preset worldly standards, even though both Jesus and Paul did not always find such worldly success in their ministries (John 6:60ff.; 2 Tim. 4:9–16; Acts 17:1–9); and

WHEREAS, TCN also asks congregation leaders to determine if “The leaders of this church hope to initiate a style of worship service that appeals to unreached people” (“Leader’s Survey,” TCN, question 3e [<http://portal.tcnbackup.com/Portals/0/6%20Leaders%20Survey.pdf>]), thus suggesting that a congregation’s worship style should be based on sociology instead of the Word of God as it has been taught in the Lutheran Confessions, or that a congregation’s worship style should be changed even if it exclusively uses the approved hymnals of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Spirit alone is responsible for converting people to saving faith by His Word and Sacraments, when and where He pleases; and

WHEREAS, Jesus in Matt. 23:15 teaches that a strong missionary zeal without the proper biblical and Christ-centered doctrinal teaching is spiritually dangerous; and

WHEREAS, We as Christians are called to be in this world but not of it; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the CTCR, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne to give a theological evaluation of the premise, methods, and materials of Transforming Churches Network; and be it finally

Resolved, That this theological evaluation be completed and published in *The Lutheran Witness* within a year of the completion of this convention.

Zion

Chippewa Falls, WI

3-35

To Promote Only Doctrinally Pure Mission Resources

WHEREAS, The LCMS Constitution requires the “exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school” as a condition for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod (Art. VI 4); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Constitution also requires the “renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description,” which includes “participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities” (Art. VI 2c); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Constitution is also “the constitution of each district of the Synod” (Art. XII 2); and

WHEREAS, Several districts of the LCMS currently promote a program on the district Web sites called “Natural Church Development” (NCD), often indicating how many of their congregations are in the NCD survey process and working on their minimum factor growth; and

WHEREAS, The Web site of Natural Church Development International is a non-Lutheran mission program; and

WHEREAS, The Web site of this NCD program says about itself that it “is not a value-neutral methodology, but there are clear theological assumptions and decisions behind it” (<http://www.ncd-international.org/public/FAQ-NCDTheology.html>, accessed July 25, 2011); and

WHEREAS, The Web site of this NCD program says about itself that “[c]learly, the theology behind NCD is neither specifically Baptist nor Methodist nor Pentecostal nor Lutheran, but it is

a theological paradigm” (<http://www.ncd-international.org/public/FAQ-NCDTheology.html>, accessed July 25, 2011); and

WHEREAS, The resources promoted by Natural Church Development International have a theological stance that is contrary to the pure Lutheran teaching (such as NCD’s misunderstanding of saving faith as “an experience of God” according to Schwarz’s book, *The Threefold Art of Experiencing God* [<http://www.ncdinternational.org/public/BooksThreefold.html>, accessed July 25, 2011]); and

WHEREAS, The theology of the Lutheran Church according to her confessional writings is the correct biblical teaching, without error; and

WHEREAS, The use of materials from non-Lutheran mission programs undermines the Lutheran and biblical confession of the faith and leads those who are weak in faith to assume that our Lutheran church agrees with such non-Lutheran programs; and

WHEREAS, Romans 16:17 urges Christians to note and avoid those who teach “contrary to the doctrine which you learned,” and also 1 Tim. 4:16 admonishes us to “[t]ake heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct all districts of the LCMS to cease promotion of Natural Church Development and its doctrinally impure materials; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention remind all districts that in accord with our Constitution, only doctrinally pure, Lutheran mission resources should be promoted in our districts and the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That those LCMS congregations who have participated in Natural Church Development be informed by representatives from their district office or their circuit counselor that this program is contrary to the pure Lutheran teaching.

Holy Cross
Albany, OR

3-36

To Encourage Use of LSB Orders of Service for Official Synod Gatherings

WHEREAS, God calls us to the divine service that He might distribute to us His gifts; and

WHEREAS, The Augsburg Confession states: “For the sake of love and tranquility, to avoid giving offense to another, so that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion” (AC XXVIII 55, *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, p. 87), it is proper to employ church ordinances that serve this end; and

WHEREAS, LCMS Constitution Art. III 7 states that the Synod shall “encourage congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice, but also to develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith”; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul enjoins Christians to recognize that Christian liberty is governed by Christian love (1 Cor. 8:7–13; Rom. 12:10; Gal. 5:13); and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther advised the Christians of Livonia: “We should consider the edification of the lay folk more important than our own ideas and opinions. Therefore, I pray all of you, my dear sirs, let each one surrender his own opinions and get together in a friendly way and come to a common decision about these external matters, so that there be one uniform practice throughout your district instead of disorder. . . . For even though from the viewpoint of faith,

the external orders are free and can without scruples be changed by anyone at anytime, from the viewpoint of love, you are not free to use this liberty, but bound to consider the edification of the common people, as St. Paul says ... 'All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful' (1 Corinthians 6:12)" (AE 53:47; see also Formula of Concord SD X 9; Apology XV 51–52); and

WHEREAS, In the same letter, Luther instructs: "Now when your people are confused and offended by your lack of uniform order, you cannot plead, 'Externals are free. Here in my own place I am going to do as I please.' But you are bound to consider the effect of your attitude on others. By faith be free in your conscience toward God, but by love be bound to serve your neighbor's edification" (AE 53:48); and

WHEREAS, In explanation of AC VII, "It is enough for the true unity of the church," the Apology of the Augsburg Confession states, "We believe that the true unity of the Church is not injured by dissimilar ceremonies instituted by humans. ... However, it is pleasing to us that, for the sake of peace, universal ceremonies are kept," and further, "We are not discussing now [in AC VII] whether it is helpful to keep [ceremonies humanly instituted] because of peace or bodily profit. We speak of something else. The question at hand is whether the observances of human traditions are acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God" (Apology VII and VIII 33–34); and

WHEREAS, Nearly 70 percent of all LCMS congregations have adopted *Lutheran Service Book* (2010 *Convention Workbook*, p. 46); therefore be it

Resolved, That "for the sake of love and tranquility" (AC XXVIII 55), we encourage that all divine services conducted during official gatherings of the Synod or its districts use an order of service from or outlined by *Lutheran Service Book*.

Lutheran Church of Our Savior
Cupertino, CA

3-37

To Encourage Harmony in Worship

WHEREAS, The Scriptures say that in Christian worship "all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures say, "'All things are lawful,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up" (1 Cor. 10:23); and

WHEREAS, The Formula of Concord states that the Church "in every time and place has the right, power, and authority to change, reduce, or expand [church] practices according to circumstances in an orderly and appropriate manner, without frivolity or offense, as seems most useful, beneficial, and best for good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the building up of the church" (FC SD X 9); and

WHEREAS, The Augsburg Confession states that "it is lawful for bishops or pastors to establish ordinances so that things are done in the church in an orderly fashion. ... It is fitting for the churches to comply with such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquility" (AC XXVIII 54–55); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Constitution states that one of the "conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod" is "exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school" (Art. VI); and

WHEREAS, Controversy has raged in the church for some time concerning pastors and congregations who write their own orders for public worship or draw them from sources other than those mentioned in the Synod's Constitution; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Minnesota North District in convention hereby solemnly encourage public worship services exclusively according to the rites and services of the Synod's three hymnbooks/agenda (The Lutheran Hymnal, Lutheran Worship, and Lutheran Service Book) as well as the supplemental hymnbooks/agenda prepared by the Synod's Commission on Worship (Worship 1969; Hymnal Supplement 1998; All God's People Sing!); and be it finally

Resolved, That services offered at conferences and conventions of the Minnesota North District utilize Lutheran Service Book (our current approved hymnal) for both liturgy and hymns.

Wadena Circuit Forum, Minnesota North District;
Grace, Paris, TX; Wadena Circuit Forum,
MNN District; Rocky Mountain District

3-38

To Petition for Inclusion of Church Year Collects in *Lutheran Service Book*

WHEREAS, Professor Carl Schalk in "A Brief History of LCMS Hymnals (before *LSB*)" notes the importance of evangelical Lutheran hymn books to our forefathers, writing that "the German Lutherans brought with them the hymnals of their homelands. Hymnals ... could be found among the immigrants' treasured possessions"; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran hymn books also serve as a Lutheran's private prayer books; for example, the Preface to *The Lutheran Hymnal* states, "THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL is intended for use in church, school, and home"; and "It is our sincere prayer that these treasures may be cherished by God's people wherever the English tongue is used in public or private worship"; and

WHEREAS, The three English hymnals prior to *Lutheran Service Book* (the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* [1931], *The Lutheran Hymnal* [1941], and *Lutheran Worship* [1982]) each contained the collects for the Church Year, but *Lutheran Service Book* does not; and

WHEREAS, The inclusion of the collects for the Church Year would both encourage the use of *Lutheran Service Book* in private devotions and connect the church's regular Divine Service to those daily devotions; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention petition Concordia Publishing House and LCMS Worship to conduct a survey of the Synod to gauge interest in revising *Lutheran Service Book* to include the Church Year collects; and be it further

Resolved, That should the survey demonstrate a Synod interest in this revision, Concordia Publishing House and LCMS Worship collaborate on a revision of *Lutheran Service Book* that includes the Church Year collects, to be offered as soon as feasible.

Zion
Fort Wayne, IN

3-39

To Continue to Use Synod-Approved Hymnals, Agendas, and Appropriate Diverse Resources in Worship

WHEREAS, Art. VI 4 of the Constitution of the LCMS states that a condition of membership in the LCMS is "exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school"; and

WHEREAS, Art. III 7 of the Constitution states that an objective of the LCMS is to "encourage congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice, but also to develop an appreciation of a variety

of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith”; and

WHEREAS, *Lutheran Service Book* and other approved hymnbooks and resources are wonderful resources; and

WHEREAS, Appropriate diverse worship resources are available and being used under pastoral supervision in the congregations and schools of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That thanks be given for the doctrinally pure resources received and used under both Art. VI 4 and Art. III 7 of the LCMS by its member congregations and workers; and be it further

Resolved, That efforts continue in the development of every appropriate and approved resource for the upbuilding of the local congregations in their life together.

St. Peters
Brooklyn, NY

3-40

To Encourage Faithful Use of Creative Worship Aids

WHEREAS, Art. III of the Constitution of the LCMS encourages congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice, but also to develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith; and

WHEREAS, Some within the Synod have attempted to emphasize uniformity in practices, while completely ignoring and even opposing the development of an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage congregations to continue to strive for uniformity in church practice but also to make intentional efforts to develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS Worship continue the work of the former Commission on Worship in response to 2007 Synod convention Res. 2-02A, “To Provide Guidance and Direction for Use of Diverse/Contemporary Worship Resources,” by evaluating contemporary (current) songs and providing for the Synod a list of appropriate songs for worship (see <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=524> for the publication “Song Evaluation Results Chart”); and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention encourage those involved in responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith to continue those practices and customs and to share them with the entire Synod as the Synod seeks to fulfill its covenants as contained in Art. III.

Trinity
Roselle, Illinois

3-41

To Encourage More Diversity in Worship Forms and Hymnals

WHEREAS, A great diversity of worship practices in our Synod can assist the Synod in reaching the lost; and

WHEREAS, Art. III of the Synod’s Constitution indicates that the Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs

which are in harmony with our common profession of faith; therefore be it

Resolved, That the pastors, church musicians, and congregations of the Synod encourage diversity in worship forms and hymnals which can assist in reaching lost people by developing an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith.

Trinity
Roselle, IL

3-42

To Express Thanks to Office of National Mission and President’s Office Staff

WHEREAS, The 2010 LCMS convention resolved to realign the national Synod ministries around two mission boards (Res. 8-08A); and

WHEREAS, This mandate required extensive across-the-board changes which included the elimination of existing program boards and some staffed commissions; and

WHEREAS, This resolution involved making hard and painful decisions that affected the lives of many faithful servants in the church; therefore be it

Resolved, That sincere thanks be given to the Office of the President and the Office of National Mission Staff for all their work and efforts in implementing the resolution to restructure the Synod to make our work together more efficient and effective in accomplishing our mission “vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and world” (Mission Statement of the Synod) without interruption; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod continue to pray for God’s guidance and blessings on the Office of the President and the Office of National Mission that, per policies developed by the Board for National Mission, the church’s witness, acts of mercy, and life together may glorify our risen Lord and benefit the people gathered around Word and Sacrament in the congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Board for National Mission

3-43

To Address Responsible Internet Use in Congregations

WHEREAS, We believe, teach, and confess that we are redeemed by the grace of Jesus Christ and are called to newness of life in Christ; and

WHEREAS, Statistics on Internet pornography and other ungodly usage indicate that such abuse is rampant in our culture (2008 Ambassadors of Reconciliation Bible Study: “Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society,” Billings, MT); and

WHEREAS, Christians and church workers are susceptible to temptations (i.e., pornography, gambling, etc.) accessible via the Internet and technological media; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul encourages the believers with these words in Ephesians 5:3–4: “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving”; and

WHEREAS, Our Michigan District document, “Partners in Ministry: Ethical Conduct for Professional Church Workers” (p. 7, section E) encourages upright behavior, stating:

The professional church worker is committed to appropriate social behavior.

The professional church worker honors the Sixth Commandment and its meaning as he/she recognizes his/her own sexuality, remembering that the ultimate gift of sexual expression is found only in marriage.

The professional church worker avoids pornography and impure speech and refrains from inappropriate physical contact;

and

WHEREAS, Implementation of a similar resolution was well received at the 2011 Michigan District LCMS All Pastors’ Conference; and

WHEREAS, Research on social behavior indicates accountability to another person as the most effective means of ensuring appropriate social conduct; therefore be it

Resolved, That all of the delegates assembled for the 2013 LCMS convention be encouraged to lead their respective congregations and circuits to recognize the above dangers; and be it further

Resolved, That each of the congregations of the LCMS be encouraged to warn and instruct their members about such abuses and how they can be avoided and overcome; and be it further

Resolved, That LCMS congregations be encouraged to pursue Internet accountability software and encourage usage for their members; and be it further

Resolved, That member congregations be encouraged to employ Internet accountability software on congregation-owned computers and other types of electronic devices; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS encourage church workers to do the same on their personal computers and Internet devices.

Michigan District Pastors Conference

4. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

4-01

To Endorse Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia

Preamble

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia (ELCL) was begun by mission efforts of the LCMS, with the first missionaries entering Liberia in 1978. Though these initial efforts were disrupted by the Liberian civil war in the late 1980s and through the 1990s, mission efforts were continued by LCMS missionaries with Liberian refugees who had relocated to Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone. These refugees returned after the conflict deescalated. Other Liberian individuals established LCMS ties through Orphan Grain Train, Lutheran Bible Translators, and LCMS congregations that gave assistance to Liberian refugees in the United States.

Although there have been no LCMS missionaries living in Liberia for the last fifteen years or so, there are now 137 congregations with over six thousand baptized and confirmed members and twelve Lutheran schools. These congregations came together in May 2009 to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia (ELCL) as a result of a merger of four semi-independent Lutheran groups. The ELCL is led by Rev. President/Bishop Amos Bolay, who graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 2004 with a master of theology degree. Its current ordained personnel, consisting of thirteen pastors, have received their training at LCMS partner seminaries in Nigeria and South Africa.

In October of 2011, President/Bishop Bolay traveled to St. Louis to attend the LCMS International Disaster Conference and to request formal discussions toward the goal of formalizing altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS. In December of 2011, the LCMS responded by sending Drs. Albert Collver, David Erber, Joel Lehenbauer, and Michael Rodewald to Liberia for church fellowship discussions with Bishop Bolay and the ELCL's executive committee and church council. The ELCL representatives pointed out that they have seen themselves as an LCMS mission church despite the disruption in relationships caused by the Liberian civil war and strongly desired to formalize their relationship with the LCMS. President Bolay emphasized the strong commitment of the ELCL to be and remain faithful to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions in doctrine and practice, and stated their desire for assistance in preparing orthodox Lutheran pastors to strengthen their witness.

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia (ELCL) traces its origin to the efforts of LCMS missionaries; and

WHEREAS, Despite the turmoil of a civil war, the ELCL has been established as a strong, growing Lutheran church; and

WHEREAS, The ELCL seeks in every way to be and remain a scripturally faithful, confessional Lutheran church body; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in obedience to God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions, endeavors to seek out other Lutheran churches that believe, teach, and confess the same true faith; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS already enjoys church fellowship with many other Lutheran churches throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, The ELCL was established as an independent Lutheran church in 2009; and

WHEREAS, The ELCL formally requested church fellowship discussions with the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Representatives of the LCMS conducted a formal visit to the ELCL in 2011, finding that there is full agreement in doctrine

and practice between the LCMS and the ELCL and that no obstacles to altar and pulpit fellowship exist; and

WHEREAS, At its 2010 convention, the Synod adopted Res. 3-04A "To Amend Bylaw 3.9.6.2.2 re Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with Small, Formative, or Emerging Confessional Churches," which recognizes that in certain cases a streamlined approach to altar and pulpit fellowship with such emerging churches would be beneficial; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 *Handbook* (Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2[c]) now provides that "When a small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the President of the Synod as chief ecumenical officer) requests recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod, after consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the commission, such recognition may be declared by the President of the Synod subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention"; and

WHEREAS, At its April 2012 meeting, on the basis of a report from Drs. Collver and Lehenbauer, the CTCR formally recommended church fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia (ELCL) to the Synod President; and

WHEREAS, President Harrison declared fellowship that same month after consultation with the Praesidium; and

WHEREAS, Appropriate protocol documents guiding interactions between the LCMS and ELCL have been developed; therefore be it

Resolved, That we acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our churches under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks that despite political turmoil, war, and economic deprivation, God, by His grace, has equipped and prepared the members of the ELCL to give a faithful, confessional Lutheran witness in Liberia; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God that doctrinal discussions between official representatives of the LCMS and the ELCL have revealed that complete agreement exists between our two churches in doctrine and practice; and be it further

Resolved, That this convention endorse the Synod President's declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship between The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia; and be it further

Resolved, That we pray for God's blessings in the coming years on this agreement in the confession of the Gospel that we enjoy as partner churches; and be it finally

Resolved, That in celebration and thanksgiving of this partnership in the Gospel, the convention assembly signify its approval by rising and singing the Doxology.

Commission on Theology and Church Relations

4-02

To Endorse Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Preamble

Before the Russian Revolution of 1917, there were millions of Lutherans in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltics, and other territories that would eventually comprise the Soviet Union. Some have estimated that there were 1.2 million Lutherans within Russia and Siberia proper, and another 2–3 million in the other territories. Yet, by 1937, every Lutheran congregation had been liquidated and their pastors arrested, exiled, or executed. The Communists were quite effective in nearly destroying Lutheranism in Russian lands.

In 1996, representatives from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne began a relationship with a group of Lutherans in Siberia. This partnership was one of cooperation, initiated by those in Siberia, for the purpose of theological education and seminary development. Since that time, a number of Missouri Synod pastors and professors have traveled to Siberia, and a group of pastors and laypeople in the Missouri Synod founded the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society to assist this emerging church, the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC). The SELC was officially licensed by the Russian government in 2002, and Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin was consecrated that same year. The name of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church was formally adopted in 2007. With about 2,000 individual members, 22 parishes and mission stations, and 17 clergy, the SELC is a small church numerically. It covers a geographical area, however, that extends five thousand miles from east to west.

In January 2010, representatives of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) met in St. Louis for discussions toward the goal of formal altar and pulpit fellowship at the request of Bishop Lytkin. In October 2010, Drs. Albert Collver, Timothy Quill, and Joel Lehenbauer conducted an on-site visit to the SELC, hosted by Bishop Lytkin and other SELC leaders at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk. Bishop Lytkin expressed appreciation for his church body's relationship with the Missouri Synod and reaffirmed the desire that this relationship be formalized. Theological discussions at this meeting revealed no barriers to the establishment of altar and pulpit fellowship between the LCMS and the SELC.

WHEREAS, The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church traces its origin to the Lutheran churches in the territories that would eventually be incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); and

WHEREAS, These once-thriving churches and their pastors suffered greatly from Communist persecution in the USSR; and

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran confession has now been reestablished in these regions by God's grace; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in obedience to God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions, endeavors to seek out other Lutheran churches that believe, teach, and confess the same true faith; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS already enjoys church fellowship with many other Lutheran churches throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has enjoyed a working relationship with the Lutherans who are now part of the SELC since 1996, providing teachers and lecturers in theology; and

WHEREAS, The SELC was established as an independent Lutheran church in 2002 and subsequently requested formal church fellowship discussions with the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Representatives of the LCMS conducted a formal visit to the SELC in October 2010 and concluded that there is complete agreement between our two churches in doctrine and practice and therefore no obstacle to altar and pulpit fellowship; and

WHEREAS, At its 2010 convention the Synod adopted Res. 3-04A "To Amend Bylaw 3.9.6.2.2 re Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with Small, Formative, or Emerging Confessional Churches," which recognizes that in certain cases a streamlined approach to altar and pulpit fellowship with such emerging churches would be beneficial; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 *Handbook* (Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2[c]) now provides that "When a small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the President of the Synod as chief ecumenical officer) requests recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship

with the Synod, after consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the commission, such recognition may be declared by the President of the Synod subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention"; and

WHEREAS, At its December 2010 meeting, on the basis of a report from Drs. Collver and Lehenbauer, the CTCR formally recommended church fellowship with the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) to the Synod President; and

WHEREAS, President Harrison declared fellowship that same month after consultation with the Praesidium; and

WHEREAS, Necessary protocol documents guiding interactions between the LCMS and SELC have been developed; therefore be it

Resolved, That we acknowledge with gratitude the unity of confession that has been given to our churches under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks that despite great persecution in the past, God, by His grace, has equipped and prepared the members of the SELC to give a faithful, confessional Lutheran witness in Siberia; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God that doctrinal discussions between official representatives of the LCMS and the SELC have revealed that complete agreement exists between our two churches in doctrine and practice; and be it further

Resolved, That this convention endorse the Synod President's declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship between The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church; and be it further

Resolved, That we pray for God's blessings in the coming years on this agreement in the confession of the Gospel that we enjoy as partner churches; and be it finally

Resolved, That in celebration and thanksgiving of this partnership in the Gospel, the convention assembly signify its approval by rising and singing the Doxology.

Commission on Theology and Church Relations

4-03

To Review AALC Relationship

WHEREAS, The primary objective of Synod is, "under Scripture and Lutheran Confessions," to "conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10)" (Constitution, Art. III 1); and

WHEREAS, The true unity of the Church is found in the pure teaching of the Gospel and right administration of the sacraments (AC 7); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and The American Association of Lutheran Churches (The AALC) declared themselves to be in full altar and pulpit fellowship in 2007, jointly stating that the two church bodies are in full agreement in doctrine and practice; and

WHEREAS, "No resolution of the Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears to be inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned" (Art. VII 1); and

WHEREAS, Three congregations of the Montana District of the LCMS minister in communities in which there are also AALC congregations; and

WHEREAS, There are significant questions on the part of our pastors and congregations concerning the doctrine and practice of The AALC congregations, including significant differences in

Communion practice, unionistic worship practices, and teaching on lodge membership; therefore be it

Resolved, That where formal altar and pulpit fellowship ties have been established but true unity remains in question, the congregations of the district patiently and humbly seek that true unity with neighboring congregations through joint study under the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions; And be it further

Resolved, That congregations of the district be reminded that in situations where resolutions of the Synod are truly inexpedient to the faithful teaching and practice of the member congregation, such resolutions of the Synod are not to be followed; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Montana District of the LCMS memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to direct the Synod President to reconsider fellowship with The AALC.

Montana District

4-04

To Evaluate Fellowship with AALC

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention from 1967 through 1995 has repeatedly reaffirmed its historic position of close(d) Communion; and

WHEREAS, The 2007 LCMS convention entered into fellowship with The American Association of Lutheran Churches (The AALC), which officially does not practice close(d) Communion (“Do you practice open or closed communion? We practice ‘responsible communion,’ which is neither open nor closed” [<http://taalc.org/FAQ/CommunionInTheAALC.html>]); and

WHEREAS, Remaining in fellowship with a church body that does not practice close(d) Communion is inconsistent with our LCMS practice of close(d) Communion; and

WHEREAS, The AALC sends its theological students to Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne for pastoral education and maintains its national office on its campus; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the CTCR, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne to give a theological evaluation and opinion about reentering discussions with The AALC and remaining or breaking fellowship with The AALC, to be presented at the 2016 LCMS convention; And be it further

Resolved, That the Synod encourage the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne to discuss the matter of our differences in whom we admit to the altar in Holy Communion with The AALC students and officials in their midst.

Zion Lutheran
Chippewa Falls, WI

4-05

To Address Doctrinal and Fellowship Differences with AALC

WHEREAS, The LCMS declared altar and pulpit fellowship with The American Association of Lutheran Churches (The AALC) at the 2007 LCMS convention, approving Res. 3-01; and

WHEREAS, A congregation of The AALC has opened in Gillette, Wyoming, such congregation being named Abiding Grace; and

WHEREAS, It is known that Abiding Grace is being served by a layman, defined by the AALC Policy and Procedures Manual (chapter 8, page 14, found on the AALC Web site, [TAALC.org](http://taalc.org)) as an

“Unrostered Licensed Lay Minister” who is “approved for temporary, short-term Word and Sacrament ministry”; and

WHEREAS, On the AALC Web site, in response to the question “Do you practice open or closed communion?” the following answer is given, “We practice ‘responsible communion,’ which is neither open or closed. That is, according to the Bible we have a responsibility to tell people what we believe (‘we receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ with the bread and wine, for the forgiveness of sin’), based on Matthew 26:26–28, Mark 14:22–24, Luke 22:19–20, 1 Corinthians 10:16–17, 1 Corinthians 11:23–28. The person has responsibility to check with the Bible to ensure that it does teach that, and that the person agrees with that. Administration is left with the local pastor as part of his pastoral care”; and

WHEREAS, Augsburg Confession Art. XIV, “Ecclesiastical Order,” which confesses that “nobody should preach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless he is regularly called,” is being violated by a layperson being allowed to administer the Lord’s Supper and to publicly preach in the church; and

WHEREAS, The stated communion practice of The AALC is incongruent with that of the LCMS as stated in adopted 2007 Res. 3-09, which says in part, “*Resolved*, that all pastors and congregations who have established and practice communion fellowship contrary to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions be encouraged by the 2007 LCMS convention to immediately cease such practice and return to the faithful practice and administration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion by practicing close(d) Communion”; and

WHEREAS, The Wyoming District president, at the request of the Powder River Circuit of the Wyoming District, has made repeated attempts to contact The AALC for answers to the question of why these practices are permitted, but no answers have been provided to clarify or explain; therefore be it

Resolved, That all congregations and pastors of the Wyoming District be aware of these existing doctrine and fellowship issues; And be it further

Resolved, That the Wyoming District memorialize the LCMS to address these doctrine and fellowship differences with the leadership of The AALC as soon as possible; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Wyoming District memorialize the LCMS that if the doctrine and fellowship differences cannot be resolved, altar and pulpit fellowship with The AALC be declared broken.

Wyoming District

4-06

To Restore to Synod Conventions Sole Authority for Declaring Fellowship

WHEREAS, Altar and pulpit fellowship should not be entered into lightly, as our fellowship shows our unity in all aspects of faith and doctrine; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 LCMS convention passed Res. 3-04A, which added paragraph (c) to Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2, stating, “(c) When a small, formative, emerging confessional Lutheran church body (identified as such by the President of the Synod as chief ecumenical officer) requests recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod, and after consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the commission, such recognition may be declared by the President of the Synod subject to the endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention,” this potentially conflicts with Bylaw 3.1.1, which states, “Only a national convention of the Synod shall authorize affiliation or association and

the discontinuance of such affiliation or association of the Synod with other church bodies, synods, or federations”; and

WHEREAS, Said resolution’s sixth WHEREAS clause, “Current procedures require a time-consuming, costly, and often unwieldy process before altar and pulpit fellowship with such small, formative, or emerging confessional Lutheran church bodies could be considered by the Synod in convention,” does need to be examined; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Nebraska District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to request that the CTCR evaluate the current process for declaring altar and pulpit fellowship and to present to the 2016 LCMS convention a revised and streamlined (through efficient use of technology and other resources) process, which may reduce the costs and time required to work toward altar and pulpit fellowship through an action of the Synod in convention; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Nebraska District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to remove bylaw paragraph 3.9.5.2.2 (c).

Nebraska District

4-07

To Enter into Dialogue with Church of the Lutheran Brethren

WHEREAS, Scripture makes the appeal that “there be no divisions among you, that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Cor. 1:10); and

WHEREAS, The Church of the Lutheran Brethren is of sound doctrine; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod enter into dialogue with the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

First Evangelical
Fontana, CA

4-08

To Assist Emerging Lutheran Churches

WHEREAS, God’s Word encourages us to help others in the faith: “Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God” (3 John 5–6 ESV); and

WHEREAS, God would have Christians serve as models for one another in their lives of discipleship: “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us” (Phil. 3:17 ESV); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been blessed abundantly by our Lord in resources and in its rich theological heritage; therefore be it

Resolved, That our Synod reach out to emerging Lutheran church bodies throughout the world, who can be blessed by our assistance in theological guidance and practical experience.

Immanuel
Orange, CA

4-09

To Study and Increase Emphasis on Priesthood of All Believers

WHEREAS, 2004 Res. 1-02 stated, “WHEREAS, Our Lord has given to all who are baptized the opportunity and responsibility to spread

the Gospel (2 Cor. 3:2–3) as part of the priesthood of all believers, declaring the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His wonderful light (1 Pet. 2:9)”; and

WHEREAS, 2004 Res. 1-01A “Resolved, That the Synod, acting in convention, affirms the historical Lutheran understanding of the priesthood of all believers that God, through the work of His Son by the power of the Holy Spirit, has made all believers “a royal priesthood” to ‘declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light’ (1 Pet. 2:9)”; and

WHEREAS, Res. 1-03 “To Prepare New Study and Increase Emphasis on Priesthood of All Believers,” which was overwhelmingly adopted by the 2007 Synod convention, stated:

WHEREAS, All Christians are called by God as priests for the nations by virtue of their Baptism (Exod. 19:5, 6; 1 Peter 2:9); and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther declared that all believers are priests called by God to declare the works of God (Luther’s Works, American Edition, vol. 30, pp. 62–65); and

WHEREAS, The historic doctrine of the LCMS has clearly affirmed the priesthood of all believers as stated in the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod* (adopted 1932): “Since the Christians are the Church, it is self-evident that they alone *originally* possess the spiritual gifts and rights which Christ has gained for, and given to, His Church. Thus St. Paul reminds all believers: ‘All things are yours,’ 1 Cor. 3:21, 22, and Christ Himself commits to all believers the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 16:13–19; 18:17–20; John 20:22, 23, and commissions all believers to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments, Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23–25. Accordingly, we reject all doctrines by which this spiritual power or any part thereof is adjudged as *originally* vested in certain individuals or bodies, such as the Pope, or the bishops, or the order of the ministry, or the secular lords, or councils, or synods, etc.” (p. 14); and

WHEREAS, This doctrine must be clearly reaffirmed and articulated in all parts of our Synod and faithfully applied and elaborated in reference to missionary work entrusted to God’s people; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in its 2007 convention direct the Commission on Theology and Church Relations in consultation with the Board for Mission Services to prepare a comprehensive study document which clearly presents the biblical teaching of the royal priesthood and Luther’s teaching on vocation in the light of the mission challenges of today; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be given high priority by the CTCR; and be it finally

Resolved, That after approval by the Synod in convention, this document be used by the whole church, its congregations and church workers, and by the LCMS seminaries and universities in instructing students about the royal priesthood especially in its relationship to the unreached.

and

WHEREAS, The CTCR expects to conclude the 2007 convention assignment in the very near future; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CTCR be encouraged to complete this study document as soon as possible; and be it finally

Resolved, That the document be studied and discussed Synod-wide, including (but not limited to) by the congregations of the Synod and circuit and district theological convocations and conferences prior to the next convention of the Synod, for the sake of presenting to the CTCR suggestions and reactions to the study document, which is to be reported by the CTCR at the next convention of the Synod, at which time the document will also be presented by the CTCR for approval by the Synod in convention (cf. last resolve of 2004 Res. 1-03) for use by the whole church.

Texas District Board of Directors

4-10

To Seek to Clarify Ministry of the Word in Connection to Laity

WHEREAS, The Synod adopted the threefold emphasis of “Witness, Mercy, Life Together” following the 2010 convention; and

WHEREAS, Article V of the Augsburg Confession states that the ministry of Word and Sacrament was given by Christ to the Church rather than simply to the pastoral office, while Article XIV, with reference to the pastoral office, states that no one should teach or preach publicly without a proper call (*rite vocatus*); and

WHEREAS, The New Testament, while envisioning a distinct pastoral office, does not limit the task of witness only to the apostles, but recounts the efforts of the entire church, including lay leaders in the field of witness (Stephen in his martyrdom, Philip as evangelist to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos, the women as the first witnesses to the disciples of the resurrection), and we note especially how Acts 8:1 records about the church in Jerusalem: “They were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles”; and in Acts 8:4, “Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word” (the Greek is *euangelizomenoi ton logon*, from which the English word “evangelize” derives, meaning to announce, proclaim the word of the good news); and

WHEREAS, The salvation that Jesus Christ the Son of God achieved (AC III) is for the world (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:15, 19; Col. 1:19–20; 1 Tim. 2:3–7; etc.); and

WHEREAS, The way in which the Spirit engenders faith in people and bestows the benefits of what Christ has done is through the proclamation of what he has done for the salvation of the world (Rom. 10:8–17; 1 Cor. 12:3; AC IV, V); and

WHEREAS, God has called his people “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession,” and has given them, with that gracious, undeserved identity, power “that you may proclaim [*exenggeilate*] the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9); therefore be it

Resolved, That the leadership of our church body (those teaching at our seminaries and colleges, the Synod’s President and Vice-President and their staffs, district presidents and their staffs, pastors and their staffs) undertake such action as will engage, equip, and empower the laity for their vital role in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ in their homes, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, places of entertainment and travel, hospitals, nursing homes and doctors’ offices, and wherever people may gather, that all the world may hear; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR complete as soon as possible the study called for by the 2007 Synod convention [Res. 1-03, “To Prepare New Study and Increase Emphasis on Priesthood of All Believers,” *Proceedings*, pp. 111f.] providing theological clarity for this ministry of the laity that dare not be minimized, highlighting the power of Baptism for undertaking it, and our vocations as ideal places for carrying it out; and be it finally

Resolved, That the CTCR review the emphasis of Witness, Mercy, Life Together, specifically bringing clarity to the role of the laity in relation to witness and Word-based ministries.

Florida-Georgia District

4-11

To Retain Trinitarian Formula When Baptizing

WHEREAS, Holy Baptism has been instituted by our Lord Christ as a means of grace (Matt. 28:19–20; Titus 3:5; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3–5; etc.); and

WHEREAS, Holy Baptism “is not a matter of choice (an adiaphoron), but a divine ordinance” (Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. III, p. 280); and

WHEREAS, Christ our Lord has given us the baptismal formula, commanding us to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, This trinitarian formula in administering Holy Baptism is “by all means to be retained and that no one should be permitted capriciously to change these words and use other words in baptizing” (Pieper, vol. III, p. 261); and

WHEREAS, The custom of changing these words and using other words in baptizing has been accepted in other church bodies; and

WHEREAS, Holy Baptism is necessary “for someone to be accepted (as a member) into the congregation” (Walther, *Pastoral Theology*, p. 261); and

WHEREAS, A change in the wording of the trinitarian formula introduces doubt in the hearts of both the one who has received such a Baptism and the LCMS pastor and congregation to which the person wishes to be joined; therefore be it

Resolved, That congregations of the LCMS faithfully confess and retain the trinitarian formula in baptizing and refrain from capriciously changing these words and making use of other words in the baptismal formula; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS Council of Presidents (COP) keep pastors and congregations informed as to the changing and evolving baptismal practices of other denominations; and be it finally

Resolved, That this information from the COP be used to guide pastors and congregations of the LCMS in the receiving of new members, that they be examined and cared for in a most loving and pastoral manner.

Michigan District

4-12

To Affirm and Ascertain the Use of Trinitarian Baptism

WHEREAS, Our Lord commanded His Church to baptize “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit”; (Matt. 28:19); and

WHEREAS, Holy Baptism is the definitive birthing event in the life of a Christian; and

WHEREAS, One of the greatest assertions of the one holy Christian and apostolic Church is her recognition that a trinitarian Baptism is valid when water and our Lord’s words of institution are used within the confession of the triune God; and

WHEREAS, All who confess Christ’s name ought never receive a Baptism which is administered in a way that casts doubt on the efficacy of that Baptism; and

WHEREAS, In recent years Christian denominations and congregations have experimented with other baptismal formulas (e.g., Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier), thereby administering an act which cannot be recognized by other Christian congregations as a Christian Baptism; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montana District memorialize Synod in convention to direct the President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to initiate contact with other historically Christian denominations in order to verify that the congregations of those church bodies do, in fact, administer a Christian Baptism; that is, specifically a Baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as given us in Holy Scripture as the true confession of the name of the triune God.

Montana District

4-13

To Encourage Confession and Absolution for Pastors

WHEREAS, At the 2010 LCMS convention, newly elected President Matthew Harrison declared, “I wish to inform you that you have kept your perfect record of electing sinners as presidents of the Missouri Synod. I guarantee you I will sin and fail. I will fall short. I will sin against you. I wish also to say, that right now I forgive all who have in any way sinned against me or anybody else and plead your forgiveness for anything that I said or did that offended you”; and

WHEREAS, In confession, “it is not the voice or word of the man who speaks, but it is the Word of God, who forgives sin, for it is spoken in God’s stead and by God’s command” (AC XXV, Tappert, pp. 61–62); and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther gave pastoral reflection on this statement in answer to a question about whether he would reveal a sin if a woman confessed to killing her child: “By no means, for the forum of conscience is to be distinguished from the forum of the civil government. The woman didn’t confess anything to me; she confessed to Christ. But if Christ keeps it hidden, I should conceal it and simply deny I heard anything” (AE 54:395); and

WHEREAS, While no one should be forced to go to confession (“no one should be compelled to recount sins in detail,” Tappert, p. 62), it is also true that confession should be made available for those whose conscience is troubled (“The preachers on our side diligently teach that confession is to be retained for the sake of absolution, for the sake of terrified consciences” [Tappert, p. 63]); and

WHEREAS, Pastors may also become aware of sins that they themselves have committed and desire to confess them to another pastor, as Luther describes in the Small Catechism, and so receive absolution; and

WHEREAS, Pastors may be unsure regarding persons to whom they can confess, since they themselves have no specified pastor; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was formed in part to “provide evangelical [i.e., Gospel] supervision, counsel, and care for pastors” (Constitution, Art. III 8); and

Whereas, Our confessions call private absolution “the voice of the Gospel”; and

WHEREAS, The Synod in 2007 “resolved, that both laity and pastors be encouraged to make greater use of individual confession and absolution” (Res. 2-07A); and

WHEREAS, District presidents, in addition to their ordination vows to remain faithful to the Word of God and never to reveal sins confessed to them, are also responsible for the ecclesiastical supervision of the pastors in their districts, which includes “presenting, interpreting, and applying of the collective will of the Synod’s congregations” (Bylaw 1.2.1 [g]); and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention has stated that private absolution should be made available to pastors as well as laity so that they may make use of it; and

WHEREAS, While the practice of private confession and absolution might bring one into conflict with the kingdom of the left (i.e., the temporal authorities, as noted in the CTCR report “The Pastor Penitent Relationship,” p. 9), it is impossible that the practice of private confession and absolution could come into conflict with the kingdom of the right (i.e., the realm of spiritual authority), since it is “the voice of the Gospel” itself; and

WHEREAS, While pastors may occasionally have duties related to the kingdom of the left (e.g., serving as *ex officio* members of a board of trustees), pastors are given to the church to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments; similarly, while district presidents may have some certain left-hand kingdom duties (e.g., serving on a district board of directors), they are elected from among the clergy because they are primarily servants of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, The responsibility to “interpret the collective will of the Synod’s congregations” has led, in some cases, to confusion regarding the role that district presidents (and, by extension, their assistants the circuit counselors) should play in hearing the confessions of other pastors and speaking the absolution to them; and

WHEREAS, This confusion has led to serious reflection on the part of district presidents as to whether they are able to offer individual confession and absolution to other pastors, and also on the part of circuit counselors as to their proper role, with some saying that they can hear the confessions of pastors and others saying that they should not, lest it cause conflict between their ordination vow never to reveal sins confessed and their Synod bylaw duty that requires a district president to act if “he becomes aware of information or allegations that could lead to expulsion of a member from the Synod” (Bylaw 2.14.4); and

WHEREAS, This confusion is not good: “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (1 Cor. 14:33); and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention has an opportunity to express the collective will of the congregations of Synod and thereby offer guidance in this matter; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention state its commitment that in all activities, officers, and agencies of the Synod, the goal is that all might “hear the Word of the Gospel” (Acts 15:7, as referenced in the Preamble of the LCMS Constitution); and be it further

Resolved, That the work of the Gospel is never to be considered in conflict with the Constitution, Bylaws, or Articles of Incorporation of the Synod but rather the very reason for their existence, as Luther clearly states in the Large Catechism: “Therefore everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and signs” (LC II:55, Tappert, p. 418); and be it further

Resolved, That all Synod officials are reminded of their ordination vow to “never reveal sins confessed to them” and that the Synod in convention considers any bylaw provisions regarding knowledge of specific sins to be understood only as referring to knowledge that is gained outside of the confessional and that the seal of the confessional is to be kept, as Luther advised: “But if Christ keeps it hidden, I should conceal it and simply deny I heard anything”; and be it further

Resolved, That the pastors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be reassured that the Synod takes very seriously the spiritual welfare of her pastors and encourages them that when they feel a need to avail themselves of private absolution, they should do so; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors be encouraged in such circumstances to go to their district president or circuit visitor, and that those Synod officials be encouraged to either hear that confession themselves, keeping in mind their ordination vow never to reveal sins confessed to them, or, if they are uncomfortable hearing that confession themselves, that they will provide for the penitent pastor the name and contact information for another pastor who is able and willing to hear that confession and offer absolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the convention make clear that no one is being forced to confess sins, or even to privately confess, but that this resolution makes provision only for those pastors who have a desire to make use of private confession but who are unsure where they can go to make such a confession to another pastor and hear the word of absolution; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for all the means He has given to His church whereby the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ is received.

Wyoming District Pastors' Conference

4-14

To Assign CTCR Clarification of Terms Related to Afterlife

WHEREAS, The Old Testament people spoke of going to Sheol/Hades upon their death; and

WHEREAS, Revelation 20 distinguishes Hades from the final lake of fire that we would refer to as "hell"; and

WHEREAS, Little is understood by our laity about Christ's descent into "hell," and the ancient Church taught that Jesus was sent to Sheol to liberate the Old Testament redeemed; and

WHEREAS, The Latin version of the Apostles' Creed describes Jesus' descent as a descent to the "lowest places" and the term "hell" is used both for "Sheol" and "Gehenna," causing confusion; and

WHEREAS, Most modern Bible translations increase the confusion about Sheol by translating the term as either "hell" or "the grave," even though there is another Hebrew word for grave; and

WHEREAS, Many of our people are also unfamiliar with the Bible's teaching on the new earth and confuse heaven with the new earth; and

WHEREAS, Many of our hymns add to this confusion by using biblical descriptions of the new earth to describe heaven; and

WHEREAS, These topics have only received brief attention by the CTCR in a position paper, *A Statement on Death, Resurrection and Immortality* (1969), and within the document *The End Times* (1989), but neither study is exhaustive, and the first is not well-known or easily accessible; and

WHEREAS, Such a study would be timely considering recent books and articles in our society that deny the existence of eternal punishment; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CTCR be assigned to produce a document clarifying our understanding of the relationships between Sheol/Hades and Gehenna, what word should be translated as "hell," as well as the relationship between heaven and the new earth; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR also address whether Jesus' descent is best described as a descent into hell or as a descent into Sheol.

The Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer
Evansville, Indiana

4-15

To Encourage Prompt CTCR Response to Request for Study on Cremation

WHEREAS, In response to the need for theological and pastoral guidance regarding the practice of cremation, the 2010 LCMS convention tasked the CTCR, "in consultation with a group of congregational pastors and seminary faculties, to prepare a study on the practice of cremation and especially of its implications for our public witness" (Ov. 3-32, as approved in Omnibus Resolution A); and

WHEREAS, The need for such a study on cremation remains great in light of the significant number of Christians who continue to elect cremation over burial for themselves and their loved ones in spite of, or being unaware of, the implications cremation has regarding their public witness to their faith in the resurrection of those who die in faith; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR of one of our partner churches, Lutheran Church—Canada, has deemed the situation of cremation among its members to be serious enough to issue a theological and pastoral study of cremation; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR was given no specific deadline by which to complete this important task; therefore be it

Resolved, That the English District of the LCMS memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to ask the commission to complete its study on the practice of cremation on or before December 31, 2015.

English District

4-16

To Request CTCR Study of Proper Role of Men in Church and Home

WHEREAS, God has created man and woman equal—this flows from the Trinity—the Trinity has three persons who are equal. There is also an order in the Trinity. The Father has begotten the Son, Jesus Christ. This does not mean that the Son is less than the Father. Both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth'" (Gen.1:26); and

WHEREAS, Before the fall into sin, Adam and Eve were made by the Trinity. Since the fall, man has been trying to figure out the proper roles of man and woman. In Genesis 2–3, God talks with Adam and Eve about their relating to each other. In Holy Scripture, Genesis 3:16 states, "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." How is the word "desire" to be understood, and what is she going to desire? "Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:15). The desire is rule over the man, because in the structure of Genesis 3:16 desire and rule are connected. This is seen in Genesis 3:17, "And to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life'"; and

WHEREAS, In the Old Testament the role of men was to be protective and take care of the people entrusted to them. Men did not fulfill their role properly, as in Isaiah 10:1–2, "Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of

their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!” Isaiah is writing to God’s people that men are not taking care of the people God has given to them; and

WHEREAS, In Acts 6, men are given the role to take care of the widows of the church, and God has not changed that role of men. St. Paul makes this clear in Ephesians 5:25–29: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.” The husband is to die for the wife. Man has not done the role that God has given to him to take care of his wife completely. In the state of South Dakota, the state has passed laws to make sure the man takes care of his child. The laws provide child support to the mother. Also, congregations have noticed a decline in men accepting offices in the congregation; therefore be it

Resolved, That congregations in the Synod be encouraged to study the role of men in the congregation and the home; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention ask the CTCR to study the role of men in the home and church.

Mitchell Circuit
South Dakota District

4-17

To State That Women Are Not to Have Authority Over Men in the Church

WHEREAS, 2004 Res. 3-08A resolved “that women may serve in humanly established offices in the church as long as the functions of these offices do not make them eligible to carry out ‘official functions [that] would involve public accountability for the function of the pastoral office’”; and

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture plainly states in 1 Timothy 2:12 that women are not permitted to exercise authority over a man: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention state, in accordance with Scripture, that women may serve only in humanly established offices in the church that do not exercise authority over men.

Zion, Chippewa Falls, WI;
Holy Cross, Albany, OR

4-18

To Rescind 2004 Res. 3-08A re Service of Women and Request New CTCR Document

WHEREAS, The 2004 LCMS convention passed Res. 3-08A “To Affirm the Conclusions of the 1994 CTCR Report: *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices*”; and

WHEREAS, The Bible clearly teaches God-pleasing roles and functions for both men and women in family, culture, society, and the Church (Gen. 2:4–24; 1 Cor. 11:2–16; 14:33–36; Eph. 5:22–33; Luther’s Small Catechism, Table of Duties); and

WHEREAS, The 1994 CTCR report, *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices*, did not adequately address the place of the order of creation in its report, but instead “focused heavily on distinctive functions of the pastoral office by replacing

the basic biblical principle that women should not have authority over men with one application of that principle, that women should not become pastors” (Nathan Jastrum, “Man as Male and Female: Created in the Image of God” [*Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 68 No. 1, January 2004]; and “Dissenting Opinion on Women in Congregational Offices” [*Reporter*, St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, December 1994]); and

WHEREAS, 1 Timothy 2:12–13 states, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man. . . . For Adam was formed first, then Eve,” and this divine teaching is contradicted by the “Conclusions” of the 1994 CTCR report; and

WHEREAS, The 1994 CTCR report departed dramatically from the historic understanding of the Lutheran Church on the matter of the role of women in congregational offices by restricting the authority women are forbidden to have over men to the pastoral office; and

WHEREAS, The 1994 CTCR report and 2004 Res. 3-08A promote confusion, instability, and disunity and led the Synod President to object to the report, saying that “it suggests a modification in the present position of the Synod” (letter on CTCR report from Synod President A.L. Barry [*Reporter*, St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, December 1994]); and

WHEREAS, the teaching and truth of Scripture does not change; therefore be it

Resolved, That for the sake of remaining faithful to the Word of God in all its parts, for the unity of the Church, and for the edifying of our people and congregations, the Wyoming District encourage and support its congregations in remaining faithful to the biblical teaching and practice of the role of women in the Church; And be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Wyoming District of the LCMS reject the teaching, doctrine, and practice of women exercising authority over men in contradiction to the order of creation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Wyoming District bring Res. 3-08A to the attention of the CTCR and urge the 2013 LCMS convention to rescind 2004 Res. 3-08A; and be it finally

Resolved, That a new CTCR document based upon Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions and fulfilling 1995 Res. 3-10, which requested a comprehensive study of the scriptural relationship of man and woman, including the doctrine of creation in the image of God, its implications for dominion and subordination, and its application to the service of women in the Church, including suffrage and ordination, be presented for approval by the LCMS in convention.

Wyoming District

4-19

To Rescind 2004 Res. 3-08A

WHEREAS, The 2004 LCMS Convention passed Res. 3-08A “To Affirm the Conclusions of the 1994 CTCR Report: *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices*”; and

WHEREAS, The Bible clearly teaches God-pleasing roles and functions for both men and women in family, culture, society, and in the church (Gen. 2:4–24; 1 Cor. 11:2–16; 14:33–36; Eph. 5:22–33; Luther’s Small Catechism, Table of Duties); and

WHEREAS, The 1994 CTCR report did not adequately address the place of the “Order of Creation” in its report, but instead “focused heavily on distinctive function of the pastoral office by replacing the basic biblical principle that women should not have authority over men with one application of that principle, that women should not become pastors” (Nathan Jastrum, “Man as Male and Female:

Created in the Image of God” [*Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 68 No. 1, January 2004]; and “Dissenting Opinion on Women in Congregational Offices” [*Reporter*, St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, December 1994]); and

WHEREAS, 1 Tim. 2:12–13 states, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man. . . . For Adam was formed first, then Eve,” and this divine teaching is contradicted by the “Conclusions” of the 1994 CTCR report; and

WHEREAS, The 1994 report departed dramatically from the historic understanding of the LCMS on the matter of the role of women in congregational offices by restricting the authority women are forbidden to have over men to the pastoral office; and

WHEREAS, The 1994 report led the Synod President to object to the report, saying that it “suggests a modification in the present position of the Synod” (letter on CTCR report from Synod President A.L. Barry [*Reporter*, St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, December 1994]), and led five theological professors of the CTCR also to object that the majority report did not adequately address the “order of creation,” including the basic principle that women should not exercise authority over men; and

WHEREAS, The 1994 report of the CTCR and 2004 Res. 3-08A promote confusion, instability, and disunity by permitting women to serve in roles of elder, chairman, and vice-chairman of a congregation; and

WHEREAS, The teaching of Scripture does not change; therefore be it

Resolved, That for the sake of remaining faithful to the Word of God in all its parts, for the unity of the Church, and for the edifying of our people and congregations, the Central Illinois District encourage and support its congregations in remaining faithful to the historic, orthodox, and biblical Lutheran teaching and practice of the role of women in the Church; And be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Central Illinois District of the LCMS reject the teaching/doctrine/practice of women exercising authority over men in violation of the order of creation as expressed in 2004 Res. 3-08A; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Central Illinois District urge the 2013 LCMS convention to rescind 2004 Res. 3-08A of the 2004 LCMS convention.
Central Illinois District

4-20

To Reaffirm Scriptural Teaching re Women’s Role in the Church

WHEREAS, Major Lutheran bodies worldwide have rejected the apostolic injunction to the Church that the Office of the Holy Ministry is to be entrusted to qualified men only; and

WHEREAS, There is increasing pressure on our church body, from within and without, to compromise this position; and

WHEREAS, The 1992 LCMS convention (1992 Res. 3-04, 3-05) has encouraged groups, congregations, etc. within the Synod to discuss and express any concerns they may have; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod has always affirmed that the biblical doctrine of the ministry teaches that the pastoral office is to be held only by men, as found in 1 Cor. 14:34–35; 1 Tim. 2:11–14; and 1 Tim. 3:1–7; and

WHEREAS, Our Lutheran Confessions also affirm this biblical teaching concerning the pastoral office: “A bishop (pastor) must be blameless, the husband of one wife” (Triglotta 561:2); and

WHEREAS, The 1986 LCMS convention (Res. 3-10) stated that the Scriptures prohibit women from the pastoral office and its functions; and

WHEREAS, There are organizations (e.g., LWML) that provide opportunities for women to serve the Lord beyond local congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention reaffirm as the official doctrinal position of our church the Scriptural teaching that women may not hold the pastoral office or carry out the distinctive functions of this office (1 Cor. 11:14; 1 Tim. 2); and be it finally

Resolved, That all pastors, district officials, and professors of the LCMS must believe and teach that the Bible opposes the ordination of women into the Office of the Holy Ministry.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

4-21

To Review the Role of Women in Congregation and Synod Offices

Preamble

In 1969, the Synod addressed the subject of women in the church by adopting a resolution (1969 Res. 2-17) that was largely based on a 1968 report by the CTCR. However, the commission began thinking differently of these matters during the 1980s and ’90s. In 2004 Res. 3-08A, the Synod affirmed the conclusions of the then-latest (1994) CTCR report on the subject, even though a dissenting opinion to that report had been prepared by five theologians of the CTCR shortly after it was adopted. This overture is submitted in the hope that the Synod will “back up” and assign the CTCR, with the help of the seminaries, to issue a new report to the Synod which will contribute toward clearing up ambiguities and misunderstandings concerning this important subject.

WHEREAS, The Missouri District, in her 2003 convention, encouraged pastors to “catechize their congregations in the biblical doctrine held by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on the different roles of men and women” (2003 Missouri District Res. 1-10); and

WHEREAS, The Synod in adopting 2004 Res. 3-08A (“To Affirm the Conclusions of the 1994 CTCR Report: *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices*”) seems to have affirmed only the first of two long-employed criteria for determining whether women can serve in various lay congregational offices (see 1969 Res. 2-17) [*Explanation: Previously, the two criteria had been (1) By serving in a given office, does a woman do things which are distinctive functions of the pastoral office? and (2) Might a woman be violating the order of creation by serving in certain congregational offices in which she does not carry out distinctive functions of the pastoral office?*]; and

WHEREAS, In 1995 Res. 3-06A, the Synod directed the CTCR “in consultation with the faculties of the seminaries” to continue studying the issues in its 1994 report on *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices* and the resulting dissenting opinion that was signed by five theological professors on the commission; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR did not report to subsequent Synod conventions a record of resulting communication with or from the seminaries on this topic; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR has recently issued two documents relevant to this general subject:

1. *Authentein*, a relatively brief study on the meaning of this Greek word, which drew no conclusions concerning application in the contemporary church but which corrected an assertion in the 1968 CTCR *Women's Suffrage in the Church* report concerning the meaning of this term;

2. *The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church*, a more comprehensive report which, the CTCR's executive director said, focused "not so much on specific questions about the service of women in the church—topics covered in other CTCR documents—but on the scriptural relationship of man and woman both within and outside of marriage and church-service contexts" (*Reporter*, November 2008, p. 2);

AND

WHEREAS, The Synod is not in agreement about the role of women in the church and the practical application of the various resolutions of the Synod concerning women's roles; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Missouri District in convention expresses its desire that our Synod seek a God-pleasing resolution and lasting solution to the understanding of women's roles in the church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Missouri District memorialize the Synod to do the following:

1. Rescind 2004 Res. 3-08A and anything based upon it, such as policies or administrative procedures;

2. Assign the CTCR to fulfill the mandate given it in 1995 Res. 3-06A;

3. Assign to the faculties of her two seminaries the task of giving the CTCR input pursuant to the above assignment, this time by addressing formal "open letters" to the CTCR and making these letters available to the entire Synod at the time they are submitted to the CTCR;

4. Assign the CTCR to review critically all the recommendations in its 1994 report on *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices* and their basis in its 1985 *Women in the Church* document in light of the dissenting opinion of 1994, the seminary input mentioned above, the input of other concerned members of the Synod, and in light of scholarly studies concerning relevant biblical passages (many aided by ancient literature databases) that have appeared since 1985;

5. Assign the CTCR to issue a report to the Synod on this study in which the CTCR answers the following questions:

a. In addition to the correction already issued by the CTCR in its *Authentein* document, does the CTCR wish to correct the following statement (or the biblical analysis underlying this statement) from its 1968 *Women Suffrage in the Church* document? "To this point we would need to add the observation that some offices in the congregation implicitly expect the exercise of authority over others, including men. [Women h]olding such offices might indeed be in violation of what has been called the order of creation or of preservation" (p. 10).

(It should be noted that the CTCR has recently asserted, with respect to expressions of dissent from 2004 Res. 3-08A, "If the dissenters believe that *Scripture* clearly and definitively teaches that, due to the order of creation, women are forbidden to serve in certain humanly instituted offices in the church [even when these offices do not require them to carry out the distinctive functions of the pastoral office], then it is incumbent upon those dissenting to demonstrate where and how *Scripture* makes this clear. This, in the CTCR's judgment, the dissenters have not done" [*CTCR Response to Expressions of Dissent (2004–2006)*, pp. 25–26, emphasis original].)

If the CTCR wishes to correct the above-cited statement from the 1968 document, why? If not, why not?

b. Does the CTCR recommend that the Synod in any way modify the following declarations from its 1969 Res. 2-17? If so, why? If not, why not?

"2. The principles set forth in such [biblical] passages, we believe, prohibit holding any other kind of office or membership on boards or

committees in the institutional structures of a congregation, only if this involves women in a violation of the order of creation."

(It should be noted that the CTCR stated in 1985: "The only stricture would have to do with anyone whose official functions would involve public accountability for the functions of the pastoral office [e.g., elders, and possibly the chairman of the congregation]" [*Women in the Church*, p. 46].)

"4. We therefore conclude that the Synod itself and the congregations of the Synod are at liberty to alter their policies and practices in regard to women's involvement in the work of the church according to these declarations, provided the policy developed conforms to the general Scriptural principles that women neither hold the pastoral office 'nor exercise authority over men.'"

(It should be noted that the CTCR stated in 1985, with respect to 1 Timothy 2:11–15: "A careful review of this passage indicates that the terms 'teach' and 'exercise authority' parallel each other. They are intentionally linked. The kind of teaching referred to in the passage is tied to exercising authority. The authority forbidden to women here is that of the pastoral office" [*Women in the Church*, p. 35].)

c. What corrections might the CTCR offer concerning its reports issued after 1969, including *Women in the Church* (1985) and *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices* (1994)?

Missouri District;
Carrollton Circuit Forum, Missouri District

4-22

To Promote Study of Biblical and Confessional Position of LCMS re Office of Holy Ministry

WHEREAS, Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession states: "Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call"; and

WHEREAS, Article V of the same states: "So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given (John 20:22)"; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Confessions clearly distinguish between believers who are all priests before God to offer their spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5) and those whom Christ has called into specific offices with specific responsibilities to His Bride (Eph. 4:11–16; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 4:1; 12:28; 2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Tim. 4:12–16; Heb. 5:4, etc.) in such texts as:

Our teachers assert that according to the Gospel the power of the keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command, "As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:21–23)" (AC XXVIII 5);

According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian congregation the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest. All this is to be done not by human power but by God's Word alone. On this account parish ministers and churches are bound to be obedient to the bishops according to the saying of Christ in Luke 10:16, "He who hears you hears Me" (AC XXVIII 21);

When the sacraments are administered by unworthy men, this does not rob them of their efficacy. For they do not represent their own persons but the person of Christ, because of the church's call, as Christ testifies (Luke 10:16), "He who hears you hears Me." When they offer

the Word of Christ or the sacraments, they do so in Christ's place and stead (Apology VII 28);

The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent (Power and Primacy of the Pope 61);

For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing, and ordaining ministers. This right is a gift given exclusively to the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church (*ibid* 67);

and

WHEREAS, There continue to be issues of concern and controversy regarding the Office of the Holy Ministry; therefore be it

Resolved, That in faithfulness to God's Word and Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession regarding the Office of the Holy Ministry, the Synod be encouraged to develop resources for catechizing on the congregational, district, and Synod levels concerning this issue; and be it further

Resolved, That the President of the Synod, who has the responsibility "to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of the Synod" (Constitution, Art. XI B 3), be encouraged to use all means at his disposal to promote study and discussion of this vital issue.

Missouri District

4-23

To Restore Orthodox Lutheran Practice re Pastoral Calls

WHEREAS, Our forebears in the faith consistently followed the orthodox Lutheran practice of only removing a pastor, teacher, or other church worker from his or her call for three biblical causes: teaching false doctrine (Titus 1:9); scandalous conduct (1 Tim. 3:1–7); or willful neglect of official duties (2 Tim. 2:2 and 1 Cor. 4:1–2) (see John Fritz, *Pastoral Theology* [CPH, 1932], 55; see also Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* [CPH, 1989], 2:703; Martin Chemnitz, *Enchiridion* [CPH, 1981], 37; Johann Gerhard, *On the Ministry: Part One* [CPH, 2011], 252–260; C. F. W. Walther, *Pastoral Theology* [LNI, 1995], 278–279; Mueller & Kraus, eds., *Pastoral Theology* [CPH, 1990], 54); and

WHEREAS, Our forebears also consistently followed the orthodox Lutheran practice of waiting for a call to arrive in situations where they fraternally urged their pastor, teacher, or other church worker to accept another call more suited to his or her abilities, when either the work grew beyond his or her abilities, or he or she lost competence due to age, sickness, or accident—an exception to this being dismissal due to complete disability (see Fritz, *Pastoral Theology*, 55, discussion re "inefficiency"); and

WHEREAS, Our forebears also consistently followed the orthodox Lutheran practice of waiting for a call to arrive in situations where they fraternally urged their pastor, teacher, or other church worker to accept another call when on account of his or her own frailties and shortcomings the church worker had lost the confidence of a large portion of the congregation—an exception to this being cases where an evil-minded person had embittered the church worker, in which case the evil person was dealt with and the church worker encouraged to stay (Rom. 12:21) (see Fritz, *Pastoral Theology*, 52–53; discussion re "accepting a new call"); and

WHEREAS, In the past twenty years, congregations of the LCMS have increasingly abandoned these practices of the orthodox Lutheran

church, have removed their church workers without a valid biblical cause, or pressured their church workers to resign prior to receiving another call in the type of cases described above, leaving such faithful and competent church workers in the status of "C.R.M." for an indefinite period of time, where they have lost their position, their call, their reputation, and their livelihood; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, some congregations of the LCMS have removed their pastors or pressured them to resign, because their pastors upheld the biblical position that cohabitation is sexual immorality, even though such pastors offered several reasonable options for those involved in this sin (for such options, see Matthew C. Harrison, *Second Thoughts about Living Together* [CPH, 2005], 26); and

WHEREAS, Continued acceptance of the practice of removing pastors who oppose cohabitation will result in congregations being unable to resist homosexual marriage, since the same Bible passages that condemn homosexuality also condemn other sexual immorality; and

WHEREAS, Continued acceptance by the Synod of the practices of removing church workers without a valid biblical cause, or pressuring them to resign prior to receiving another call in the type of cases described above, will result in an erosion of respect for all offices in the Lutheran church, a decrease in the number of people willing to serve as pastors and teachers, lifelong enmity toward the Synod by former church workers, their spouses, and children, and ultimately a decline in the effectiveness and success of the Gospel outreach of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS reaffirm the orthodox Lutheran practice that congregations and their schools may **only** remove a pastor, teacher, or other church worker from his or her call for three biblical causes: teaching false doctrine (Titus 1:9); scandalous conduct (1 Tim. 3:1–7); or willful neglect of official duties (2 Tim. 2:2 and 1 Cor. 4:1–2); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm the orthodox Lutheran practice that congregations and their schools **wait for a call to arrive** in situations where they fraternally urge their pastor, teacher, or other church worker to accept another call more suited to his or her abilities, when either the work grows beyond his or her abilities, or he or she loses competence due to age, sickness, or accident—an exception to this being dismissal due to complete disability; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm the orthodox Lutheran practice that congregations and their schools wait for a call to arrive in situations where they fraternally urge their pastor, teacher, or other church worker to accept another call, when on account of his or her own frailties and shortcomings the church worker has lost the confidence of a large portion of the congregation—an exception to this being cases where an evil-minded person has embittered the church worker, in which case the evil person will be dealt with and the church worker encouraged to stay (Rom. 12:21); and be it finally

Resolved, That all bylaws, policies, rules, regulations, and documents of the Synod that pertain to these issues, especially those used by district presidents and circuit counselors, be revised accordingly.

Trinity
Evansville, IN

4-24

To Uphold Divinely Ordained Pastoral Office

WHEREAS, The pastoral office is a divinely mandated office (and not the creation of man) for the express purpose of creating and sustaining faith through God's appointed means (Matt. 18:19, 20; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 12:28; Eph. 4:11–16; 2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 13:17; AC Art IV, V, XIV); and

WHEREAS, Such faith is nothing other than the working of the Holy Spirit in and through the divinely appointed means to pronounce forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake (John 20:23; Matt. 16:19; AC Art. XXVIII 21, 22); and

WHEREAS, This office is established by Christ for the good of His Church, and those whom He has called into this office are likewise removed by our Lord mediately through His Church, not based upon the sinful whims of man but only for the biblical reasons of: (1) false doctrine, (2) immoral life, (3) and inability to fulfill the pastoral office (1 Tim. 1:8–11; 3:1–7; 4:12–16; Titus 1:5–9); and

WHEREAS, Implicit in the fact that it is a divinely established office is that the call into this office is permanent, not temporary, nor is it to be entered into based upon some contractual agreement rather than a divine call extended through the church; and

WHEREAS, The permanency of the pastoral office has always been upheld by the Evangelical Lutheran Church until recent times, as was well documented in a response to the February 2004 CTCR study document, *Theology and Practice of the Divine Call*, by two minority opinions written by two members of the CTCR. In their taking the CTCR to task, Kurt Marquart and Walter Lehenbauer stated the following regarding the Synod's historical understanding of the call, especially as it relates to the idea of "temporary calls":

1992 Resolution 3-09A mandating the study of the Call expressly stated that this was to be done "utilizing the writings of C. F. W. Walther (i.e., his book *Church and Ministry* and essay 'The Congregation's Rights [sic] to Choose Its Pastor'" (1992 *Proceedings*, 116). The intent clearly was to take seriously the balanced, historic, orthodox Lutheran consensus on church and ministry, for the clear exposition and defense of which Walther is rightly famous. The CTCR's document fails to do justice to standard Lutheranism's rejection of "temporary calls," as the following citations clearly show.

God nowhere has granted or permitted those who call the right to make such a contract. Hence, neither the one calling nor the one who is called may regard such a call or dismissal as divine" (C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, trans. J. T. Mueller (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 311., *Theologia positivopolemica*, part II, p. 530).

Neither is a congregation entitled to issue such a call [i.e., temporary], nor is a preacher authorized to accept it. Such a call is before God neither valid nor legitimate. It is an abuse [Unsitte]. It conflicts in the first place with the divinity, clearly certified in God's Word, of a true call into a preaching office in the church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28; Ps. 68:12; Is. 41:27). ... Such a call is not at all that which God has ordained in respect of the holy office of preaching, but is an entirely different matter, which hasn't got anything to do with it. For it is no mediate call through the church, but a human contract; it is no life's calling, but a passing function outside the divine order; an ecclesiastical, thus a human order, or rather an abominable disorder made contrary to the order of God. It is therefore, as stated before, without any validity, null and void, and one so called is not to be regarded as a servant of Christ and of the church. ... A shepherd and cowherd people may hire for a time, and when their service no longer pleases, they may at a definite time, but not always, dismiss them, if they wish: but so to treat a shepherd of souls is not within the power of any man. Nor may the servant of the Word himself accept the holy office in such a way, unless he wants to become a hireling. [C. F. W. Walther, *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* [*American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*], fourth ed., 1897, 41–45].

This temporary calling is a shameful perversion of the order which Christ Himself has created in the church. Nowhere is it revealed as the will of God that preachers and teachers should be so engaged that it depends on the good will and the decision of the others whether they may remain in their office or not. [J. P. Beyer, "Vom Beruf zum Amt der Kirchendiener," LCMS Eastern District *Proceedings*, (1889) 36–37].

From the beginning our Synod had to take a definite stand on this question. Among the conditions of membership in Synod the following is listed [in the Constitution]: "Regular (not temporary) call of the pastor." Chapter V, paragraph 11, we find this statement: "Licenses to preach which are customary in this country are not granted by Synod because they are contrary to Scripture and the practice of the Church" ... This has been the consistent practice of our Synod since that time and has been stated again and again in official papers presented at conventions and in our periodicals. [P. F. Koehneke, "The Call into the Holy Ministry," in *The Abiding Word* (St. Louis: CPH, 1946) 1:380].

The call is always permanent. The notion of a temporary call is inconceivable in the nature of the case, and therefore the matter is not even considered by Luther or the Confessions or any Lutheran theologian. ... As the immediate call in apostolic times was for life (until God Himself called the person to a new place), so it is with the mediate call. It is permanent and irrevocable, unless God Himself intervenes. [Robert D. Preus, "The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy," in *Church and Ministry Today*, ed. John A. Maxfield (Crestwood, MO.: Luther Academy, 2001), 33];

and

WHEREAS, The departure from faithful practice in upholding the pastoral office and the divine right of a congregation to maintain that office is evidenced in a myriad of ways today within the LCMS, including but not restricted to:

- Congregations firing pastors for no biblical cause and without due process;
- Congregations deposing pastors without cause and due process claiming that the pastor is "an employee at will" and the congregation is autonomous;
- A district president placing a pastor who is in office or who has been deposed from office, either rightfully or wrongfully, on a so-called "restricted status." If this is done prior to due process ... it is *per se* a violation of the minister's call according to AC XIV ("Order in the Church") or of his right to receive a call ...;
- A district president controlling the call list of a congregation. This is clear violation of the right of the congregation to have a decisive role in the call of the whole church, which was the concern of Luther, the Lutheran Confessions, and all previous dogmaticians;
- A district president or circuit counselor interfering in the ministry of a pastor by talking with members and hearing complaints against him without his knowledge or presence. This action, whether purposeful or accidental, is a violation of due process and of the minister's call;
- The issuing of a "temporary call" by a congregation either at the bequest of the district or on its own; and

WHEREAS, The number of pastors who have been unbiblically removed by their congregation and or district president is growing, even though specifics are often almost impossible to give due to the fact that the parties involved are reticent to go on record in fear of being permanently banned from receiving a call; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention call all Synod and district presidents and officials and all pastors and congregations to uphold the divinely ordained pastoral office by no longer dismissing pastors without cause; and be it further

Resolved, That the district presidents give priority to men who have been unbiblically removed when suggesting names to congregations calling a pastor, even including them with the list of candidates from the seminaries who receive calls through the placement process; and be it further

Resolved, That where district officials interfere in the office of pastor in a given congregation and encourage members to do likewise, that they be admonished to desist in such activity and seek the pastor's and congregation's forgiveness; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention move to correct all such ungodly activity and, through proper catechesis at the local and Synod

level, that the church at large recognize the gift of the pastoral office to the church by her Bridegroom, even her Lord Jesus Christ, all in faithfulness to His words to her in Matthew 28:18–20.

Zion, Chippewa Falls, WI; Wadena Circuit Forum,
MN North District; Holy Cross, Albany, OR

4-25

To Suspend Implementation of COP “Calls vs. Contracts” Document

WHEREAS, In February of 2009 the Council of Presidents (COP) adopted the document, Calls vs. Contracts for Ministers of Religion—Ordained, as guidelines for use by district presidents in accurately maintaining the roster of members; and

WHEREAS, The changes adopted at the 2010 Synod convention, especially the manner in which the President of the Synod is elected, has caused the Synod (district presidents) to take particular care at this time with the rostering of pastors; and

WHEREAS, The Calls vs. Contracts for Ministers of Religion—Ordained document was revised in September 2011; and

WHEREAS, The implementation of Calls vs. Contracts for Ministers of Religion—Ordained impacts the Synod, its congregations, and ministers of religion—ordained with the application of an important point of doctrine; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Minnesota South District in convention direct its board of directors to hold a district-wide theological conference on the Doctrine of the Call—specifically referencing the Doctrine of the Call in the document Calls vs. Contracts for Ministers of Religion—Ordained; and be it further

Resolved, That the Minnesota South District memorialize the Synod in convention to immediately suspend the implementation and application of Calls vs. Contracts for Ministers of Religion—Ordained until it has received further study by the Synod’s CTCR and in other forums. This study should be completed by the next Synod convention cycle.

Minnesota South District

4-26

To Reject the Temporary Call/Divine Disposal Concept

WHEREAS, Some within our Synod are once again pushing a non-scriptural concept called a “temporary call”; and

WHEREAS, All false doctrine is divisive by its very diabolical nature; and

WHEREAS, Recognized Lutheran scholar Dr. Kurt Marquart commented on the CTCR document, *The Divine Call*, stating, “(1) Specifically, the document abandons our Synod’s 150-years-long opposition in principle to ‘temporary calls’”; and

WHEREAS, the 2001 LCMS convention adopted and reaffirmed that Dr. C. F. W. Walther’s book *Church and Ministry* was and is the Synod’s official position on the Doctrine of the Church and the Ministry; and

WHEREAS, This official position of the LCMS stands in opposition to any and all “temporary calls” as contrary to Scriptures, contrary to the Lutheran Confessions, and contrary to the historic practice of the Holy Christian Church; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walther (in his *Church and Ministry*, which is the Synod’s official teaching) condemns any and all concepts of the

“temporary call”: “Kromayer: ‘The minister may not be engaged by those who call him through a contract for certain years or with the reservation to dismiss the freely called person. God nowhere has granted or permitted those who call the right to make such a contract ... ’” (p. 311); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in its 2013 convention reject and condemn any resolution or position which supports a “temporary call” as false and contrary to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, as well as contrary to the official position of our Synod as it is found in Dr. Walther’s *Church and Ministry*.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

4-27

To Establish Proper Order of Call Documents vs. Congregation Bylaws

WHEREAS, Disparities exist regarding the duties of a pastor between the constitution and bylaws (C & B) of congregations and a pastor’s call documents with the C & B often understating a pastor’s duties as compared to the call documents; and

WHEREAS, Different interpretations exist regarding the proper succession of the call documents and the congregation’s C & B; and

WHEREAS, This dispute has caused unnecessary angst and turmoil within some congregations; and

WHEREAS, The C & B are understood to be a congregation’s governing documents; and

WHEREAS, The voters assembly is given the sole right to call a pastor and is required by districts to use the established call document since the LCMS is a calling body versus a hiring body; and

WHEREAS, The call documents normally contain more duties than a congregation’s C & B, and therefore a valid call by a congregation can then be argued to be in violation of a congregation’s C & B; and

WHEREAS, If a congregation’s C & B are considered as superseding call documents, then the call could be considered to be null and void since the voters assembly could then be considered to have exceeded its authority; and

WHEREAS, Since it can also be argued that a valid call postdates a congregation’s C & B and therefore supersedes a congregation’s C & B; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod’s Constitution or Bylaws be amended to clearly establish the proper order or supremacy of the pastor’s call documents and a congregation’s C & B; and be it further

Resolved, That if a Synod constitution or bylaw change is not warranted, that clear direction be given to congregations and districts to correct or clarify the congregation’s C & B to standardize the proper order and supremacy of the call documents and the congregation’s C & B with respect to the duties of a pastor.

Shepherd of the Hills
Prescott, AZ

4-28

To Provide Sound Teaching for Small Congregations

WHEREAS, Jesus calls disciples to leave their homes and follow Him, and many more men are choosing Internet instruction over residential seminary training. Seminary training includes more than class time, with chapel, interaction, and deep theological discussion with

professors and other students. “Jesus said to him, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:62); and

WHEREAS, Scripture says, “The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel” (1 I Cor. 9:14; see also Gal. 6:6–7; 1 Tim. 5: 17–18); and

WHEREAS, Scripture says, “We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5: 12–13); also, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17); and

WHEREAS, No one can preach or administer the sacraments without a rightly ordered call (AC XIV); and

WHEREAS, Populations in many rural areas are declining and membership of some LCMS congregations is declining; and

WHEREAS, In foreign mission fields where pastors are scarce, the church/district makes a distinction between evangelists who serve local congregations and pastors who have received seminary training and are ordained; and

WHEREAS, Some congregations have released pastors from their call because of finances or unscriptural reasons; and

WHEREAS, Many congregations are being served by permanent vacancy pastors, lay leaders, deacons, or specific ministry pastors; and

WHEREAS, Jesus taught the 12 apostles for three years before they were sent out with the great commission; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention, all Synod leaders, district presidents, congregations, and pastors encourage men to prepare as much as possible for the Office of the Holy Ministry, including traditional, residential, four-year seminary training; and be it further

Resolved, That only pastors with a proper call administer the Lord’s Supper; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be held accountable by their district presidents, ecclesiastical supervisors, circuit counselors, and sister churches in their circuits when they remove their pastors for any reason other than what is commanded in Scripture; and be it finally

Resolved, That district presidents work with circuit counselors/visitors to form dual, triple, or larger parishes where a pastor holding a Master of Divinity or higher degree has a proper call to the congregations in the parish and has oversight over any specific ministry pastors, deacons, “lay ministers,” or evangelists who serve the individual congregations.

Immanuel
Terril, IA

4-29

To Ensure That Every Man Who Serves as a Pastor Is Called and Ordained into the Pastoral Office

WHEREAS, All our congregations and all our pastors unanimously confess the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession as a true and clear exposition of the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, All our congregations and all our pastors speak with one undivided voice in extolling our Lord’s gift of the Office of the Holy Ministry, publicly confessing, “Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments without a rightly ordered call [*rite vocatus*]” (AC Art. XIV); and

WHEREAS, In certain situations today, the Synod approves of preaching and administration of the Sacraments by men who have not been publicly called to and placed in the Office of the Holy Ministry (i.e., without *rite vocatus*—this position expressed, e.g., in 1989 Res. 3-05B, “when no pastor is available, and in the absence of any specific Scriptural directives to the contrary, congregations may arrange for the performance of these distinctive functions [preaching and administering the Sacraments] by qualified individuals”); and

WHEREAS, Since the Synod adopted Res. 3-05B at its 1989 convention, our Synod’s language and practice are not in agreement as to whether a licensed deacon, requested by a congregation or district to serve in the public ministry of the Gospel, with the approval of the district president, meets the requirements of Augsburg Confession Article XIV; and

WHEREAS, The Rocky Mountain District in its 2000 convention adopted Res. 4-02a PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKER SHORTAGE, which resolved “That the LCMS Rocky Mountain District in convention 2000 so move to encourage her congregations to humble themselves before the Lord in prayer and careful study of the Holy Scriptures regarding the office of the pastoral ministry...” and also “That the LCMS Rocky Mountain District 2000 convention send a memorial to the 2001 Synod convention urging the LCMS not to succumb to the pressures of the world, but to seek biblical solutions to the shortage of professional church workers”; and

WHEREAS, The Rocky Mountain District in the 2003 convention adopted Res. 4-01a CONCERNING THE PUBLIC OFFICE OF THE HOLY MINISTRY AND THE TRAINING OF LAYMEN FOR THE OFFICE, which resolved “That all our pastors and our congregations encourage laymen to prayerfully consider entering into training for the Office of the Holy Ministry through District and Synodical training programs leading toward certification for a call and ordination.” However, since the adoption of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program, there is no longer a district-level training program leading toward certification for a call and ordination; and

WHEREAS, The Rocky Mountain District in the 2006 convention adopted Res. 2-08A TO SUPPORT THE LICENSED DEACON PROGRAM, which resolved “That the District Convention support the recommendation of the Committee that when a Licensed Deacon, at the request of a congregation and with the approval of the District President, conducts Word and Sacrament ministry under the supervision of an ordained pastor, after being trained, educated, examined, and certified through an alternate route to ministry, then accordingly he should receive a divine call and be ordained” and also “That the Rocky Mountain District Convention, through an overture to be prepared by its Licensed Deacon Committee and approved by the Board of Directors, request the Synod at its 2007 Convention to amend its Bylaws to clarify the terminology, call and ordination of Licensed Deacons.” Yet, at the 2007 Convention, the Synod took no action; and

WHEREAS, The Rocky Mountain District in the 2009 convention adopted Res. 01-11 TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO MEMORIALIZE THE 2010 SYNODICAL CONVENTION TO CONTINUE DISTRICT LICENSED DEACON PROGRAMS AND TO AMEND THE BY-LAWS OF SYNOD TO SUPPORT THE CALLING AND ORDAINING OF ELIGIBLE DEACONS TO THE PASTORAL OFFICE, which resolved “That the Rocky Mountain District Convention authorize the District, through an overture prepared by its Committee on Licensed Deacons and approved by its Board of Directors, to recommend to the Synod’s 2010 Convention the continuation of District Licensed Deacon Programs and the amendment of the Synod’s Bylaws to clarify the

terminology, call and ordination of eligible Licensed Deacons into the pastoral office in accordance with Augsburg Confession Article XIV, rostering them as ordained ministers, and amending the bylaws accordingly.” Yet, at the 2010 Convention, Synod took no action; and

WHEREAS, The Synod does not recognize the district understanding of the request of a licensed deacon, the solemn appointment by the district president, and the rite of induction to be synonymous with being rightly called and ordained into the pastoral office; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Rocky Mountain District, rejoicing in our common and unanimous subscription of the Augsburg Confession, giving thanks for the unity of doctrine expressed in the church’s confessions (including the Augsburg Confession), and extolling our Lord’s gift of the Office of the Holy Ministry (Augsburg Confession, Art. XIV), work together to teach of our Lord’s gifts of His Gospel and Sacraments and the holy office and support and encourage those men who are being trained up (or are contemplating being trained up) to be called and ordained servants [*rite vocatus*] of the Lord to His beloved sheep; and be it further

Resolved, That the Rocky Mountain District, apart from renewals, discontinue the licensing of lay deacons to serve as pastors (preaching and administering the Sacraments) without being rightly called and ordained into the pastoral office and that the district president be respectfully requested to discontinue issuing any new licenses; and be it further

Resolved, That the Rocky Mountain District encourage those men who are currently serving as licensed lay deacons to enroll in a residential seminary program or in the SMP program, leading toward call and ordination into the pastoral office, and that the district work with those currently serving as licensed deacons with appropriate care given for the allowance of their continued service; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Rocky Mountain District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to direct the Synod’s entity with oversight of pastoral education as well as the Council of Presidents to develop and implement a plan to ensure that all men engaged in Word and Sacrament ministry are rightly called and ordained into the pastoral office.

Rocky Mountain District

4-30

To Ensure That Every Man Who Pastors Is a Called and Ordained Pastor

WHEREAS, In certain situations today, the Synod approves of preaching and administration of the Sacraments by men who have not been publicly called to and placed in the Office of the Holy Ministry (this position is expressed, e.g., in 1989 Resolution 3-05B, “... when no pastor is available, and in the absence of any specific Scriptural directives to the contrary, congregations may arrange for the performance of these distinctive functions [preaching and administering the Sacraments] by qualified individuals”); and

WHEREAS, This position contradicts the Augsburg Confession’s fourteenth article, which reads, “concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call” (*Book of Concord*, Kolb-Wengert edition, p. 46); and

WHEREAS, The systematic theology faculties of both seminaries, acting jointly, have published a detailed statement on “The Office of the Holy Ministry” (*Concordia Journal* 33.3 [July 2007]: 242-255) which states in part,

The Confessions never use the truth that the whole church possesses the power of the keys to make the office of the holy ministry unnecessary or merely useful. On the contrary, this truth serves as the basis for the church’s right to call, choose, and ordain ministers. ... [T]he Treatise [on the Power and Primacy of the Pope] does not imagine churches without ordained ministers of some kind, even in emergency situations or when no one else will call and ordain men for the office. As confessors of the same doctrine, neither should we. ...

“[C]all and ordination” are essential for conduct of the ministry. ... What is the sign of authority for ministers today? It is their call and ordination, which assure that they act by divine right and on the authority of Christ. This truth makes such ideas as “lay ministers” invitations for difficulties and troubles to ministers whose authority is doubtful and to laypersons whose assurance of God’s grace may be questioned. (pp. 253–254, 255)

and

WHEREAS, The congregations and pastors of the Indiana District desire to uphold the Augsburg Confession’s intent that only men publicly called to and placed in the Office of the Holy Ministry conduct Word and Sacrament ministry in each of its congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Indiana District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to phase out current Synod and district tracks, programs, licensing procedures, etc., which train men for Word and Sacrament ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That those men already enrolled in Synod and district tracks, programs, licensing procedures, etc., be fully prepared to be publicly called and ordained to the Office of the Holy Ministry by the end of 2016.

Indiana District t

4-31

To Ensure That Every Man Who Pastors Is a Pastor

WHEREAS, In certain situations today, the Synod approves of preaching and administration of the Sacraments by men who have not been publicly called to and placed in the office of the ministry. This position is expressed, e.g., in 1989 Res. 3-05B: “[W]hen no pastor is available, and in the absence of any specific Scriptural directives to the contrary, congregations may arrange for the performance of these distinctive functions [preaching and administering the Sacraments] by qualified individuals”; and

WHEREAS, The Augsburg Confession’s fourteenth article reads: “Concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call” (KW p. 46); and

WHEREAS, The systematic theology faculties of both seminaries, acting jointly, have published the detailed statement “The Office of the Holy Ministry” (*Concordia Journal* 33.3 [July 2007]: 242–255), which states in part, “The Confessions never use the truth that the whole church possesses the power of the keys to make the office of the holy ministry unnecessary or merely useful. On the contrary, this truth serves as the basis for the church’s right to call, choose, and ordain ministers. ... The point is that the Treatise [on the Power and Primacy of the Pope] does not imagine churches without ordained ministers of some kind even in emergency situations or when no one else will call and ordain men for the office. As confessors of the same doctrine, neither should we. ... Call and ordination are essential for conduct of the ministry. ... What is the sign of authority for ministers today? It is their call and ordination, which assure they act by divine

right and on the authority of Christ. This truth makes such ideas as ‘lay ministers’ invitations for difficulties and troubles to ministers whose authority is doubtful and to laypersons whose assurance of God’s grace may be questioned” (pp. 253–254, 255); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has now established a Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) status (LCMS Bylaw 2.13.1) to enable ministry of called and ordained pastors in a variety of ministry settings, and the Synod through its seminaries has established SMP programs of study to allow a more convenient path to ordination into the Office of the Holy Ministry; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has a Colloquy Committee for the Pastoral Ministry to determine qualifications and suitability of applicants for pastoral service in the Synod (LCMS Bylaw 3.10.2), and this committee has the responsibility to “establish and monitor academic, theological, and personal standards for admission to the office of the pastoral ministry by colloquy” (LCMS Bylaw 3.10.2.2); and

WHEREAS, The Southern Illinois District, a geographically and demographically diverse district stretching from the inner-city streets of East St. Louis to the sparsely populated hills and fields of the Little Egypt region, continues to see to it that only men publicly called to and placed in the Office of the Holy Ministry conduct Word and Sacrament ministry in each of its 100+ mission outposts; and

WHEREAS, The substance of this resolution was forwarded to the 2010 LCMS convention by the Northern, Central, and Southern Illinois Districts, who together represented more than 10 percent of the Synod’s membership, but the floor committee presented an alternate (and more complex) resolution and the 2010 LCMS convention was not able to reach a decision on this matter in the time allotted; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention direct the Office of Pastoral Education and the Council of Presidents to develop and implement a plan to ensure that all men who are currently engaged in Word and Sacrament ministry without being publicly called to and placed in the Office of the Holy Ministry may either be colloquized as specific ministry pastors, be enrolled in the SMP program to fulfill the standards necessary for colloquy, or cease from all forms of Word and Sacrament ministry by the end of 2016; and be it further

Resolved, That all current Synod and district tracks, programs, licensing procedures, etc. that train men for Word and Sacrament ministry without benefit of being publicly called to and placed in the Office of the Holy Ministry shall be phased out in favor of the SMP program by the end of 2016; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Southern Illinois District in convention submit this resolution as an overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Southern Illinois District; Northern Illinois District East Region
Pastors Conference

4-32

To Rescind 1989 Res. 3-05B in Light of Augsburg Confession Art. XIV

WHEREAS, Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession states, “It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer sacraments in the church without a regular call” (AC XIV, Tappert); and

WHEREAS, The Apology to the Augsburg Confession furthermore states: “[W]e say that no one should be allowed to administer the Word and the sacraments in the church unless he is duly called” (AP XIV 1, Tappert); and

WHEREAS, This is not simply the opinion of the Lutheran Reformers but is also based on Holy Scripture, for Jeremiah 23:21 states: “I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.” Also, Romans 10:14–15 states: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?”; and

WHEREAS, The 1989 LCMS convention authorized district presidents to license laymen to carry out Word and Sacrament ministry, thereby applying a new understanding of Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession; and

WHEREAS, There continues to be confusion in the Synod regarding who rightly has the call to conduct Word and Sacrament ministry as stated in Article XIV (“Information and Position Statement on The Question of ‘Lay Ministry’ in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod”: Theological Commission of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany [SELK], September 4, 1991); therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the Wyoming District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to reconsider and rescind 1989 Res. 3-05B; and be it further

Resolved, That all laymen who are currently licensed for Word and Sacrament ministry enter a Synod-approved program leading to ordination within 18 months of the 2013 LCMS convention, or they will be considered to have forfeited their licenses; and be it further

Resolved, That district presidents encourage the congregations under their care to seek qualified men to serve as pastors, utilizing the many resources of our Synod for the training of pastors, and making congregations aware of the available routes leading to ordination and a proper call and of the availability and willingness of retired pastors to serve; and be it finally

Resolved, That in cases where a congregation cannot afford proper pastoral care, that district presidents be faithful and loving as they seek to carry out their duties, and that such congregations be encouraged to commit themselves to the proper care and maintenance of their workers (Table of Duties), that they be encouraged to practice proper Christian stewardship in their giving, that they be encouraged to consider multipoint parishes when possible, and that, in all things, they be reminded that our Lord gives pastors to His Church as a great and precious gift.

Wyoming District

4-33

To Reaffirm Doctrine of Office of Holy Ministry and Rescind 1989 Res. 3-05B

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has granted to His Church the gift of the Office of the Holy Ministry (John 20:21–23; Eph. 4:11; Matt. 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, Christ has declared to those who have been placed into this office by Him, “He who hears you hears Me” (Luke 10:16); and

WHEREAS, Our Lutheran Confessions make it abundantly clear that those who have been placed into this office stand in the stead and by the command of Christ so that it is Christ Himself who, through the office, pronounces Absolution to His people, baptizes them, distributes His body and blood to them in the Holy Supper, and preaches to and teaches them through the voice of the called minister (SC V 27; AC V, XIV, XXV; Ap XIII 12, VII 28, XIV 1, XII 39–41; AC XXVIII 8–9; Ap. XXVIII 19); and

WHEREAS, The 1989 Res. 3-05B allowed for laypeople to preach and administer Sacraments publicly in LCMS congregations at worship, though this is contrary to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, as stated above; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm the doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm the Confessions' position that, according to ecclesiastical order and its functions, "no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called" (AC XIV). In upholding this position, we guard against confusion of the uniqueness of this office and its functions with the identity and responsibilities of the priesthood of all believers; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod through her district presidents, district vice-presidents, and circuit counselors assist the congregations of the Synod in upholding this doctrine of Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod promote and instruct her congregations, educational institutions, and agencies in this essential confessional doctrine concerning the Office of the Holy Ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod rescind 1989 resolution 3-05B; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm 1995 Res. 3-07A (rescinded by the 2001 Convention); and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod no longer authorize its districts to place into the ministry of the Word and Sacrament men who are not regularly called according to AC XIV.

Christ Lutheran Church
Sioux Falls, SD

4-34

To Address Licensed Lay Administration of Word and Sacrament

WHEREAS, In 1989 our Synod at Wichita adopted Res. 3-05B, regularizing under particular circumstances that the following be done by men who do not hold the Office of the Public Ministry: composing and delivering sermons, leading public worship services, and administering Holy Baptism and Holy Communion (1989 *Convention Proceedings*, pp. 111–113); and

WHEREAS, This action has caused noteworthy debate and disquiet within the Synod for the last 23 years; and

WHEREAS, Citing Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession, the Synod declared in 2007 that "[a]ll those who regularly and publicly perform the functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry should do so as those called to and placed into that office" (Res. 5-01B, 2007 *Convention Proceedings*, pp. 133, 136); and

WHEREAS, Via the same resolution the Synod established a "Specific Ministry Pastor" program in which men are examined, certified, called, and ordained before they preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments; and

WHEREAS, Among the purposes of this program was to continue the intent of the DELTO (Distance Education Leading to Ordination) program to "provide ordained pastoral service to congregations that cannot support a full-time pastor" (quoted in 2007 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 136); therefore be it

Resolved, That all laymen who are currently licensed to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments publicly be encouraged to enroll in one of the seminary programs leading to ordination; and be it further

Resolved, That the Missouri District respectfully request the Synod to discontinue the licensing of laymen to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, as per 1989 Res. 3-05B; and be it further

Resolved, That the Missouri District respectfully request the Synod to require those who are currently so licensed to discontinue publicly preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments within three years after the time when the Synod acts on this resolution; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Missouri District respectfully request the Synod to provide that any extension of the above deadline for those currently licensed can be granted one time only by the appropriate district president, and that upon consultation with and approval from the President of the Synod.

Missouri District;
Carrollton Circuit Forum, Missouri District

4-35

To Charge Joint Seminary Faculties to Evaluate 1989 Res. 3-05B and Prepare Recommendation

WHEREAS, The LCMS Constitution states, "The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation ... [a]ll the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God" (Art. II 2), which are otherwise known as the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS is also the constitution of each district of the Synod (Art. XII 2); and

WHEREAS, Each individual pastor of the LCMS has vowed to perform the duties of his office in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod requires that its member congregations accept the confessional standard of the Synod" ("Guidelines for Constitutions and Bylaws of Lutheran Congregations," May 2006, pg. 5, online at www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=1193, accessed Aug. 5, 2011); and

WHEREAS, The original German of Article V of the Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran Confessions states that God established the preaching office (*Predigtamt*) for teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments (AC V 1, Concordia Triglotta, ed. Northwestern Publishing House, 1927, pp. 44–45); and

WHEREAS, The original Latin of Article XIV of the same Augsburg Confession states that no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the Sacraments unless he be called by the public ceremony (*nisi rite vocatus*), which was historically understood as referring only to the pastoral office (AC XIV, Triglotta, pp. 48–49); and

WHEREAS, Res. 3-05B of the 1989 LCMS convention allowed laypeople to preach and administer Sacraments publicly in LCMS congregations at worship, although this is contrary to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, Later conventions of the LCMS have tried to resolve this issue with overtures/resolutions both in favor of and opposed to allowing laypeople to publicly preach and administer the Sacraments; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS says, "All matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God" (Art. VIII C); therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention charge the joint seminary faculties to prepare an evaluation of the 1989 LCMS convention Res. 3-05B and to prepare a recommendation for the 2016 LCMS convention.

Iowa District East

4-36

To Affirm 1989 Res. 3-05B and Ministry of Licensed Deacons

Background

The LCMS has properly held that the ministerium of the Synod serves the fundamental mission of the church to faithfully proclaim the Gospel (Matt. 16:17–19; Rom. 10:14). This has resulted in practices that are not always ideal, but circumstances have compelled our church to provide for the preaching of the Word and proper administration of the Sacraments, lest they be denied to the people of God for lack of an ordained clergyman. The Holy Scriptures repeatedly show that it is the privilege of all believers in Christ to share the good news of Jesus Christ to all people (Acts 1:8; Luke 10:1–2; Phil. 2:11; 2 Tim. 2:2; Matt. 28:19–20).

In the past, these circumstances were overcome through the use of “emergency helpers” (*Nothilfern*) in our earliest years, through circuit riders, through the combining of smaller congregations into dual (or more) parishes, and more recently through the use of properly trained, called, supervised, and Synod-approved licensed deacons. These methods have been used effectively, and while some smaller congregations grew to a size where they were able to call a seminary-trained ordained clergyman, many have not and anticipate remaining of such a size that cost and other factors preclude them from that preferred option for the foreseeable future. The Means of Grace would be denied or reduced in these smaller congregations if it were not for these men serving faithfully in extraordinary circumstances.

It is to be noted that while Synod resolutions and opinions may change over time, those opinions rendered as “the Synod in convention” should not be lightly overturned. In addition, the movement to rescind Res. 3-05B of the 1989 Wichita convention has not arisen from those districts or congregations which currently utilize licensed deacons to great effect.

Therefore, the following resolution seeks to affirm (1) what the Synod has said in convention and affirmed repeatedly; (2) what our confessions both permit and support; and (3) what is desperately needed in dozens of extraordinary ministry settings throughout our Synod and which is being properly provided by those deacons who are called, trained, placed, and supervised appropriately by their respective districts and the congregations they serve.

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has spoken in convention through Res. 3-05B at the 1989 Wichita convention to allow for properly called, trained, and supervised licensed deacons to perform Word-and-Sacrament ministry; and

WHEREAS, This resolution has been affirmed repeatedly in order to meet the ongoing needs to provide essential Word-and-Sacrament ministry to those congregations and preaching stations which would otherwise not have such vital ministry; and

WHEREAS, It is desirable to have in place ordained clergy as the regular and ordinary public administrators of Word-and-Sacrament ministry in every congregation; and

WHEREAS, The need for such ministry is increasing as the number of “noncalling” congregations continues to rise; and

WHEREAS, The licensed deacons of our Synod have faithfully performed their ministry in such locations according to their call and training according to the resolutions of our Synod; and

WHEREAS, The elimination of the ministry of licensed deacons to perform Word-and-Sacrament ministry would eliminate the regular

exercise of the Means of Grace for dozens of congregations in approximately half of the districts of our LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Northwest District in convention affirm again the decisions made by the 1989 Wichita convention in Res. 3-05B to continue the practice of utilizing the already accepted means of calling, training, and supervising licensed deacons to perform Word-and-Sacrament ministry in these district-determined locations of ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That the Northwest District rise in gratitude and thanksgiving for the ministry of our licensed deacons who are providing vital Word-and-Sacrament ministry to such bodies of Christians who would not otherwise be fellow partakers of the Means of Grace without them; and be it finally

Resolved, That this resolution be sent to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Northwest District

4-37

To Direct COP to Develop Plan to Phase Out Licensed Deacon Program with Corresponding Changes to SMP Program

WHEREAS, St. Paul distinguished between overseers or bishops (1 Tim. 3:1–7) and deacons (1 Tim. 3:8–13); and

WHEREAS, The overseers of the Bible have usually been called pastors in the Lutheran Church, based on Acts 20:28; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul also warned, “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22) and “an overseer must be . . . not a novice” (1 Tim. 3:6); and

WHEREAS, In certain situations today, the Synod approves of preaching and administration of the Sacraments by men who have not been publicly called to, and placed in, the Office of the Ministry (This position is expressed, e.g., in 1989 Res. 3-05B, “when no pastor is available, and in the absence of any specific Scriptural directives to the contrary, congregations may arrange for the performance of these distinctive functions [preaching and administering the sacraments] by qualified individuals.”); and

WHEREAS, The Augsburg Confession’s fourteenth article reads, “Concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call” (Kolb-Wengert, p. 46); and

WHEREAS, The systematic theology faculties of both seminaries, acting jointly, have published a detailed statement on “The Office of the Holy Ministry” (Concordia Journal 33.3 [July 2007] pp. 242–255), which states in part,

The Confessions never use the truth that the whole church possesses the power of the keys to make the office of the holy ministry unnecessary or merely useful. On the contrary, this truth serves as the basis for the church’s right to call, choose, and ordain ministers. . . . [T]he Treatise [on Power and Primacy of the Pope] does not imagine churches without ordained ministers of some kind, even in emergency situations or when no one else will call and ordain men for the office. As confessors of the same doctrine, neither should we. . . .

“[C]all and ordination” are essential for conduct of the ministry. . . . What is the sign of authority for ministers today? It is their call and ordination, which assure that they act by divine right and on the authority of Christ. This truth makes such ideas as “lay ministers” invitations for difficulties and troubles to ministers whose authority is doubtful and to laypersons whose assurance of God’s grace may be questioned” (pp. 253–254, 255; 2012 Central Illinois District Convention Manual, Section D—Resolutions Page D-2).

and

WHEREAS, The two seminaries are now implementing the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program mandated by the 2007 LCMS convention; and

WHEREAS, The 2007 “Resolution 5-02 Task Force” reported in the 2010 *Convention Workbook* concerning situations currently served by licensed lay deacons, but after much debate 2010 Res. 5-03A “To Address Lay Deacons” was referred back to committee and not brought back for action; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Central Illinois District in convention express its regret at the current situation in the Synod at large concerning men who are conducting Word and Sacrament ministry without being publicly called to, and placed in, the Office of the Holy Ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That the Central Illinois District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to direct the Council of Presidents to develop a plan and lay out procedures:

(A) So that all men who are currently engaged in Word and Sacrament ministry without being publicly called to, and placed in, the Office of the Holy Ministry may either be enrolled in the SMP program or cease from all forms of Word and Sacrament ministry by the end of 2019; and

(B) So that all current Synod and District tracks, programs, licensing procedures, etc. that train men for Word and Sacrament ministry without the benefit of being publicly called to, and placed in, the Office of the Holy Ministry can be phased out in favor of the SMP program by the end of 2019; and

(C) So that the Council of Presidents can report on this plan to the 2016 LCMS convention for approval, emendation, and adoption.

and be it finally

Resolved, That the Central Illinois District in convention memorialize the Synod to make necessary changes to the SMP program in order to ensure that the men enrolled in the SMP program be called “deacons” rather than pastors and that they not be ordained or called as pastors until they complete the full SMP program.

Central Illinois District

4-38

To Revisit Practice of Lay Ministry in LCMS

WHEREAS, The LCMS Constitution states, “The Synod, and every member of Synod, accepts without reservation... [a]ll the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God” (Art. II 2), which are otherwise known as the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The original German of Article V of the Augsburg Confession states that God established the “preaching office” (*Predigtamt*) for teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, which has historically been understood as the pastoral office (AC V 1, Concordia Triglotta [Northwestern Publishing House, 1927], pp. 44–45); and

WHEREAS, The original Latin of Article XIV of the same Augsburg Confession states that no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the Sacraments unless he be called by the public ceremony (*nisi rite vocatus*), which has historically been understood as referring only to the pastoral office (AC XIV, Triglotta, pp.48–49); and

WHEREAS, District and Synod programs currently offer lay ministry training for laypeople to preach and administer the Sacraments publicly in LCMS congregations at worship, though this is contrary to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS states, “All matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God” (Art. VIII C); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Minnesota North District in convention memorialize the Synod to rescind 1989 Res. 3-05B; and be it finally

Resolved, That currently serving lay ministers pursue a route leading to ordination, in keeping with Augsburg Confession Articles V and XIV.

Minnesota North District

4-39

To Affirm Deacon Ministry in Synod

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has spoken through Res. 3-05B at the 1989 Wichita Convention to allow for properly called, trained, and supervised licensed deacons to perform Word and Sacrament ministry; and

WHEREAS, The need for licensed lay ministry has been affirmed by past Synod conventions in order to meet the ongoing need for Word and Sacrament ministry to those congregations and preaching stations that would otherwise not have such vital ministry; and

WHEREAS, The need for such ministry is increasing as the number of “noncalling” congregations continues to rise; and

WHEREAS, Augsburg Confession XIV does not include a requirement for ordination to properly provide such ministry to such locations that cannot provide ordained clergy for ongoing ministry; and

WHEREAS, The licensed deacons of our Synod have faithfully performed their ministry in such locations according to their calling and training as permitted by convention resolutions of our Synod; and

WHEREAS, The elimination of the ministry of licensed deacons to perform Word and Sacrament ministry would eliminate the regular exercise of the Means of Grace for congregations in approximately half of the districts of our LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Mid-South District in convention affirm the decisions made by the 1989 Wichita Convention in Resolution 3-05B to continue the practice of utilizing already accepted means of calling, training, and supervising licensed deacons to perform Word and Sacrament ministry as requested by congregations and affirmed by the district for the determined locations of ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That the Mid-South District give thanks to God for the laymen who give of their time and personal resources to prepare and serve as licensed deacons in our district and for the pastors who faithfully instruct and supervise the deacons; and be it further

Resolved, That the Mid-South District in convention urge the Synod at the 2013 convention to affirm the deacon ministry and the authority of the local congregation to authorize licensed deacons to perform Word and Sacrament ministry on their behalf; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Mid-South District encourage the 2013 LCMS convention to form a task force to present recommendations to the 2016 LCMS convention that will address concerns related to the deacon ministry so that the Synod may be united in support of this ministry.

Mid-South District

4-40

To Affirm and Encourage Lay Ministry Training

WHEREAS, Walther, in one of his ten theses on ministry (approved by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1851) stated that “the ministry of preaching is conferred by God through the congregation,

as holder of all church power, or of the keys, and by its call, as prescribed by God” and that “the ordination of those called, with the laying on of hands, is not by divine institution but is an apostolic church ordinance and merely a public, solemn confirmation of the call”; and

WHEREAS, A resolution adopted by the 1995 LCMS Wichita convention also observes, “Any man performing the functions of the pastoral ministry as a licensed laymen should be called by the congregation which he is serving...”; and

WHEREAS, In many districts throughout the LCMS, lay leaders have been intentionally and professionally trained to serve in ministry and are called as licensed laymen to help carry out the great commission; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul spoke of such partnerships with thanksgiving: “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:3–6); and

WHEREAS, Throughout different districts within the LCMS, trained lay ministers have served in “partnership” with ordained clergy and have greatly been used by the Holy Spirit to strengthen the impact of ministry within their congregations, communities, and in the world; and

WHEREAS, There are isolated areas within districts where Word and Sacrament are not offered for lack of ordained clergy, and where lay ministers have been able to serve by bringing the Means of Grace to the people there; therefore be it

Resolved, That the districts offering intentional and professional lay training be affirmed; and be it further

Resolved, That other districts be encouraged to offer such lay training so that the work of the church might be further enhanced.

Pacific Southwest District

4-41

To Address Public Preaching and Administering of the Sacraments by Laypeople

WHEREAS, The LCMS Constitution states, “The Synod, and every member of Synod, accepts without reservation: ... [a]ll the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God” (Art. II 2), which are otherwise known as the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS is also the constitution of each district of the Synod (Art. XII 2); and

WHEREAS, Each individual pastor of the LCMS has vowed to perform the duties of his office in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, “The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod requires that its member congregations accept the confessional standard of the Synod” (Guidelines for Constitutions and Bylaws of Lutheran Congregations, May 2006, pg. 5, online at: www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lc&id=1193, accessed Aug. 5, 2011); and

WHEREAS, The original German of Article V of the Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran Confessions says that “God established the preaching office (*Predigtamt*) for teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments,” which was historically understood as the pastoral office (AC V 1, Concordia Triglotta ed., Northwestern Publishing House, 1927, pp. 44–45); and

WHEREAS, The original Latin of Article XIV of the same Augsburg Confession says that “no one should publicly teach in the Church or

administer the sacraments unless he be called by the public ceremony” (*nisi rite vocatus*), which was historically understood as referring only to the pastoral office (AC XIV, Triglotta, pp. 48–49); and

WHEREAS, The 1989 LCMS convention allowed for lay people to preach and administer Sacraments publicly in LCMS congregations at worship—though this is contrary to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and

WHEREAS, Later conventions of the LCMS have tried to resolve this issue with overtures/resolutions both in favor of and opposed to allowing lay people to publicly preach and administer the Sacraments; and

WHEREAS, District and Synod programs currently offer lay ministry training for laypeople to publicly preach and administer the Sacraments; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS says, “Members who act contrary to the confession laid down in Article II and to the conditions of membership laid down in Article VI or persist in an offensive conduct shall, after previous futile admonition, be expelled from the Synod” (Art. XIII 1), which can even result in a congregation that supports and defends such a member forfeiting its rights of membership in the LCMS “if all negotiations and admonitions fail of their purpose” (Art. XIII 3); and

WHEREAS, There is a great division in the LCMS over laypeople publicly preaching, baptizing in a church service, or consecrating Communion elements; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS says, “All matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God” (Art. VIII C); therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention insist that district, Synod, or other programs that result in laypeople publicly preaching or administering Sacraments should be suspended from further activity until this division is resolved according to God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions; and be it further

Resolved, That measures be investigated by the Synod President, district presidents, and circuit counselors to allow more time for pastors who feel overwhelmed with their duties so they may not be overstressed or burn out, but without resorting to laypeople publicly preaching or administering Sacraments in their place; and be it further

Resolved, That these measures be prepared by the 2016 LCMS convention; and be it finally

Resolved, That the district presidents, according to their Constitutional duties (Art. XII 7–8), admonish those congregations in their districts in which laypeople are publicly preaching and administering Sacraments, as well as those individuals or entities that are enabling or training such lay ministers, and report on their findings to the Synod President, to be reported to the 2016 LCMS convention.

Zion, Chippewa Falls, WI; Wadena Circuit Forum, MN North District; Holy Cross, Albany, OR

4-42

To Request Guidance re Use of Deacons in Congregational Setting

WHEREAS, The use of deacons in the Church has biblical precedent (Acts 6:3; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8–13); and

WHEREAS, These men are to be “proved faithful” or “blameless” or “tested” in the doctrine and life (1 Tim. 3:10); and

WHEREAS, Formal deacon training and oversight has occurred in some, but not all, of our districts; and

WHEREAS, The office of deacon has expanded in our congregations; and

WHEREAS, This expansion has proceeded without a common understanding and guidance from the Synod regarding the role and function of this office; and

WHEREAS, There is a need for a deeper understanding of the role and scope of this office, for the sake of good order and of a blessed unity in the Church to maintain the walk in love in the bond of peace (1 Cor. 14:40; Ps. 133:1; Eph. 4:2–3); therefore be it

Resolved, That we, the Pacific Southwest District in convention, memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to request that the Council of Presidents give seminary faculties further guidance regarding the use of deacons in the congregational setting.

Pacific Southwest District

4-43

To Commission Complete Study of Biblical, Confessional, and Historic Role of Deacons

WHEREAS, The LCMS has, since 1989, allowed and encouraged deacons to serve in Word and Sacrament Ministry; and

WHEREAS, There is much confusion over the nomenclature (commissioned/ordained), responsibilities, episcopal oversight, education, and preparation of these servants, resulting in confusion and lack of confidence in this vital ministry; and

WHEREAS, There has been no adequate study of the diaconal office within the office of the ministry, and there are numerous citations regarding the existence and use of these servants, including within the rich heritage of the LCMS, as, for examples:

Finally, since one minister does not suffice for a large congregation or an entire city, it is the duty of the church administrators to ordain and appoint others as deacons, pastors, or fellow ministers. Among these there should be a certain order or rank in order that, for the furtherance of the salvation of the believers and the strengthening of the kingdom of Christ, all things shall be done decently and in order . . . (Walther, C. F. W., *Church and Ministry*: “Witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry” [1999 electronic ed., 60] St. Louis: CPH);

If one therefore wants to understand ordination as a sacrament, one would also have to call the laying on of hands a sacrament. For the church has God’s command to appoint ministers and deacons. Since then it is so very comforting to know that God desires to preach and work through men and those chosen by men, it is proper highly to praise and honor this election [*Wahl*], especially against the devilish Anabaptists, who despise and blaspheme this election together with the ministry and the outward Word [the written Word of Scripture] (Art. XIII [VII], par. 11–13; German text, Triglot, p. 310; Walther, 191–192).

The Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 resolved: “No one should be absolutely ordained as a presbyter or a deacon or in general as an incumbent of any ecclesiastical office if the person to be ordained has not specially been designated for a congregation in a city or village or for the chapel of a martyr or for a monastery.” (Walther, 267).

But for the sake of order, they elect certain persons to whom they entrust the administration of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. So there are among us deacons, pastors, doctors, bishops, or superintendents so that all things, according to Paul’s direction, are done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40) (Walther, 283);

and

WHEREAS, Many remote and/or impoverished areas and ethnic churches would be left paralyzed without Word and Sacrament ministry by such deacons under supervision; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Christian Church has long had a venerable office of deacon; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention, prior to any decision about district diaconal programs, commission a study of the office of deacon, that study to include equal members of the theological faculties of our universities and/or seminaries, present overseers of district level trainers and overseers of deacons serving in Word and Sacrament roles, as well as representatives from the Council of Presidents (COP) and Praesidium; and be it further

Resolved, That the study be presented to the CTCR, the COP, and then to the 2016 LCMS convention so the people of the LCMS may make an informed decision as to the future of diaconal programs in our Synod, and that recommendations be made for consistency in preparation, oversight, and scope of ministry across the Synod.

Circuits 8 and 9

Pacific Southwest District

4-44

To Include Office of Deacon in List of Commissioned Ministers

WHEREAS, The office of deacon is one of the theological offices of the church mentioned in the New Testament (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3); and

WHEREAS, Deacons have fulfilled a necessary and useful function in the ministry of the church since the time of the apostles, when Stephen and six others were appointed to the office of deacon by the church in Jerusalem (Acts 6); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS approved the office of deacon at the 1989 convention in Wichita, Kansas; and

WHEREAS, The theological training received by deacons is of a standard commensurate with other commissioned ministers in the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Deacons serve under the supervision and direction of an ordained pastor, as do other commissioned ministers; and

WHEREAS, Deacons have provided valuable service to the church at large and to many congregations throughout the LCMS since 1989 in the performance of the public ministry of the church and of their individual congregations; and

WHEREAS, Deacons are currently not included in the roster of commissioned ministers of the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, The office of deacon is licensed with each individual district of the LCMS rather than under the auspices of the seminaries and universities of the LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention commend the men who are currently serving as deacons throughout the LCMS and encourage them to continue to perform this necessary function of the public ministry of the church under the auspices of an ordained pastor; and be it further

Resolved, That before the next convention, the Council of Presidents determine appropriate requirements so that the office of deacon may be included in the roster of commissioned ministers, including such considerations as certification, standardized educational requirements, and ability to receive a call; and be it finally

Resolved, That the requirements determined by the Council of Presidents be shared at the 2016 convention, at which time all men who have met these requirements are to be added to the roster of the Synod as commissioned ministers—deacons.

Good Shepherd, Lowell, MI; Heart of the Shepherd, Howell, MI; Living Word, Rochester, MI; St. Thomas, Eastpointe, MI

4-45

To Bring God-Pleasing End to District Lay Deacon Programs

WHEREAS, Our Lutheran Confessions state that “no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called” (AC Art. XIV); and

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture sets high standards for the theological aptitude of pastors, saying that they are to be “able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2) and “able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9) and that “not many of you should become teachers, my brothers” (James 3:1); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has two fine residential seminaries, as well as a non-residential Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program; therefore be it

Resolved, That the various district “lay deacon” programs, where they are used to prepare people to serve in place of a regularly called pastor, be brought to a God-pleasing end by July 25, 2014.

Farmington Circuit Forum, Missouri District;
St. Matthew, Bonne Terre, MO

4-46

To Remand Issue re SMP Program to CTCR for Review and Clarification

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been blessed by the Lord of the Church with seminary programs and faculties that are able to effectively instruct students both on campus and utilize distance education methods; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program enables men to receive theological training from our seminaries at the same time as they are receiving practical training under the guidance of a mentor pastor while serving in the parish; and

WHEREAS, There is some confusion as to whether or not the specific ministry pastors are restricted to a particular place and are not available to be called by the Church at large; and

WHEREAS, Such restrictions would introduce the possibility of doubt in that man’s legitimate exercise of the Office of the Holy Ministry; and

WHEREAS, The CTCR has stated that an ordained pastor is ordained as a member of the Holy Ministry of the whole confessional fellowship (1981 “The Ministry: Office, Procedures, and Nomenclature”); and

WHEREAS, There appears to be a conflict of understandings regarding SMP pastors’ availability to the confessional fellowship at large and the nature of ordination put forth previously by the CTCR; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention have this issue remanded to the CTCR for review and clarification, specifically, but not limited, to the purpose of answering the concerns raised above, with the results to be reported to the Synod at large as well as the Synod in convention.

Michigan District

4-47

To Clarify Synod Position re Joint Prayer with Those Who Deny Christ

WHEREAS, The 2004 LCMS convention did resolve “to commend the CTCR document *Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events* for study to help pastors, teachers, and church workers make decisions about participation in civic events” (Res. 3-06A); and

WHEREAS, For the sake of our own consciences and for a testimony to future generations, we want to give clear testimony to our faith in Jesus Christ as the only way to the true God, as clearly revealed in 1 John 2:23 and confessed in the Large Catechism (LC II 66); therefore, be it

Resolved, That no resolution, guideline, or program, whether it be resolved, accepted, or promoted by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or one of its districts, is understood by the 2013 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to command, allow, or encourage a Christian to join in prayer with those who deny Jesus Christ is the only way to the true God.

Zion Lutheran Church
Chippewa Falls, WI

4-48

To Provide Guidance on Participation in Interfaith and Joint Worship Services

WHEREAS, The Lord God commanded His people “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3) and judged them severely when they mixed the one true faith with the worship of the golden calf (Ex. 32); and

WHEREAS, The prophet Elijah did not participate in any “interfaith prayer service” on Mount Carmel, but rather mocked and condemned the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18); and

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ declared, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6); and

WHEREAS, The apostle Peter boldly testified to the exclusive nature of salvation in Jesus alone, saying, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4: 12); and

WHEREAS, The apostle Paul did not participate in any “interfaith prayer service” alongside pagan priests when he spoke at the Areopagus (Acts 17); and

WHEREAS, The apostle Paul wrote, “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them” (Rom. 16:17); and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod requires, as a condition of membership, “renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as ... taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession” (Constitution, Art. VI 2b); and

WHEREAS, Interfaith prayer services and joint worship services with clergy of religious bodies with which we are not in fellowship—whether those services are called “vigils” or “events” or some other term and whether they may also include some civic elements—those are services in which multiple clergy members of various religious bodies take turns in leading parts of the service (invocations, prayers, readings, messages, blessings); and

WHEREAS, Participation by our ministers in such services may understandably cause offense to the people of our Synod; and

WHEREAS, In its 2004 report “Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events,” the Commission on Theology and Church Relations could not come to agreement on “the issue of so-called ‘serial’ or ‘seriatim’ prayers involving representatives of different religious (Christian and/or non-Christian) groups or churches” (p. 19), thus rendering their guidelines less than optimal and helpful; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 convention resolved “To Study Article VI of Synod’s Constitution” (2010 Res. 8-30B), which would include study of the meaning and application of “renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description”; and

WHEREAS, The Koinonia Project is likely to discuss this whole matter and work toward a greater consensus among us; therefore be it

Resolved, That, unless and until the Synod decides otherwise, the rostered ministers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are not to participate in interfaith services or joint services with clergy of religious bodies with which we are not in fellowship.

Farmington Circuit Forum, Missouri District;
St. Mathew, Bonne Terre, MO

4-49

To Recognize It Contrary to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions to Join in Public Prayer with Those Who Deny Jesus Christ as the Only Way to the True God

WHEREAS, The 2004 LCMS convention did resolve to “commend the CTCR document *Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events* for study to help pastors, teachers, and church workers make decisions about participation in civic events” (2004 Res. 3-06A), and

WHEREAS, For the sake of our own consciences and for a testimony to future generations, we want to give clear testimony to our faith in Jesus Christ as the only Way to the true God, as clearly revealed in 1 John 2:23 and confessed in the Large Catechism (LC II 66); therefore be it

Resolved, That no resolution, guideline, or program, whether it be resolved, accepted, or promoted by the LCMS or any of its districts, is understood by the 2013 LCMS convention to command, allow, or encourage a member of the LCMS or delegate thereof to be a representative in a worship service, prayer service, or vigil with those with whom the LCMS is not in altar and pulpit fellowship; and be it further

Resolved, That no resolution, guideline, or program, whether it be resolved, accepted, or promoted by the LCMS or any of its districts, is understood by the 2013 LCMS convention to command, allow, or encourage a member of the LCMS or delegate thereof to be a representative in any public prayer situation with those who deny Jesus Christ as the only Way to the true God.

Trinity, Clinton, MA; Holy Cross, Albany, OR;
Rocky Mountain District

4-50

To Proclaim Boldly Jesus to the World

WHEREAS, The December 14, 2012, shooting deaths of 20 children and 6 adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, was an internationally broadcast news story; and

WHEREAS, The people of the world who greatly needed to hear the comfort of God’s love proclaimed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ

were able to view and hear the community prayer vigil via television and the Internet and to see and hear the Christian witness of Pastor Rob Morris when he gave “a final blessing of the hope which is ours through faith in Jesus Christ, using the words of St. John and St. Paul,” read from Revelation 21, and gave the trinitarian benediction from Paul’s letter to the Corinthians (Morris Apology, Jan. 31, 2013); and

WHEREAS, The evidence is present that God prepared Pastor Morris to serve in this crisis by educating him for ordination as an LCMS pastor, and by Pastor Morris’ testimony that he “had already spent hours with [his] own congregation, catechizing them as to the differences between our Lutheran understanding of Scriptural teaching, the various other denominations’ teachings, and the teachings of false religions such as Islam or B’Hai, [and by spending] time with [his] fellow clergy in Newtown clarifying the ways [he] can and cannot engage in events like joint clergy dialogues [which are good to engage in], joint caring efforts [only within limits], and joint worship [not possible]” (Morris Apology, Jan. 31, 2013); and

WHEREAS, The prayer vigil began with a statement requested by Pastor Morris that “participation did not mean endorsement of the other religions represented” in the gathering (Morris Apology, Jan. 31, 2013); and

WHEREAS, In the midst of ministering to this community in crisis, including the funerals of two of the children, the needs of those families, his congregation, his family, and himself, preparing and leading all the regular and special worship services of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, and all the other business of the congregation, Pastor Morris had to deal with criticism, possible discipline matters, and distraction from his ministry to complete the necessary personal reflection that resulted in his apology letter dated January 31, 2013, only seven weeks after the shooting deaths; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Morris’ apology letter, President Harrison’s letter in response to Pastor Morris’ letter, President Harrison’s subsequent apology letter and video, and other letters related to this matter were placed for public viewing by the Synod leadership on the LCMS Web site, and the content of these letters has been broadcast by public news media in print, on television, and the Internet; therefore be it

Resolved, That the voters of Trinity Lutheran Church of Keene, NH, commend Pastor Rob Morris of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Newtown, CT, for his Christian witness in his community and the world following this violent act; and be it further

Resolved, That we encourage all congregations to follow Pastor Morris’ example of equipping his congregation in many ways including discussing the differences between religions, how to be a Christian in our world, and how to not compromise our Christian witness in a world that is increasingly hostile to the Christian faith with the understanding that all people are created in the image of God (Gen. 1: 26–27) and also to follow his example of dialoging and building relationships with local community leaders so that in the face of a crisis the community leaders will know what to expect of one another, knowing that all communities are in desperate need of the Gospel, and that this facilitates the proclamation of that very Gospel to a world that so desperately needs to hear it, for as our Lord says “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10); and be it further

Resolved, That when we face incredibly unique circumstances that the Word of God does not directly address as was the case with Pastor Morris, we encourage each other to approach such situations with prayer, the study of God’s Word and the Book of Concord, the counsel of our sisters and brothers in Christ, and the desire to act boldly and faithfully on behalf of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further

Resolved, We recognize local pastors, congregations, and officials are ordinarily in a better position in the midst of a crisis to make responsible decisions than those who are far away, as articulated by Dr. Timothy Dost's article, "Surfing Shifting Sands of Contextuality: Appropriate Flexibility in Handling Conclusions as an Approach to Communicating the Gospel," published in the *MISSIO APOSTOLICA*, Journal of the Lutheran Society for Missiology, Inc., Volume XX, No.2 (Issue 40), November 2012, (http://lsfmissiology.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/MA%2011-12%20online_with%20hyperlinks.pdt); and be it further

Resolved, That we respect and trust each other's decisions and avoid judgments and charges against each other in such circumstances, for as the apostle John states, "There is no fear in love" (1 John 4:18); and be it further

Resolved, That when we disagree with the decisions of a pastor, congregation, or official, we encourage one another to respectfully address those differences in the spirit of Christian love personally and privately, face-to-face (Gen. 33:10), not through e-mail or Internet interactions, using the Matthew 18 model over a period of time before making the disagreement public, including Web sites such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc., understanding that such platforms can be incredibly dehumanizing, further dividing and hurting our Christian witness to the world as evidenced in Tim Townsend's article on this very matter ("Newtown 'debacle' reopens old wounds for Missouri Synod," *The Post-Dispatch*, Feb. 13, 2013); and be it finally

Resolved, That we seek the Holy Spirit's peace, wisdom, and discernment as we follow the commands of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to love one another as He loved us, to serve one another as He served us, and to make disciples of all nations.

Trinity
Keene, NH

4-51

To Give Thanks to God for Christian Care Given following School Shootings

WHEREAS, The senseless violence toward students, faculty, and staff at Sandy Hook Elementary School has caused sorrow and terror to that community and the nation; and

WHEREAS, Christians were "baptized for this moment" to know, live, and share the love of Christ each day and in particular for those in great need; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Robert Morris and the baptized at Christ the King Lutheran Church provided care to grieving and terrorized individuals and families both in the congregation and as a witness in the public square; and

WHEREAS, This incarnational care is a positive witness to our Lord and representative of the desire of many in the LCMS to engage the world with the Gospel of hope; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for the Christian care Pastor Robert Morris and Christ the King Lutheran Church provided to the Newtown Community following the school shootings on December 14, 2012.

Village
Bronxville, NY

4-52

To Support Faithful Christian Witness of LCMS Pastors in the Public Sector

WHEREAS, The LCMS desires to maintain a faithful public witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the truth of God's Word: "The Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall ... Strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world" (Constitution, Art. III 2); and

WHEREAS, The Synod's mission statement is "In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, *communities* and the world" [emphasis added]; and

WHEREAS, The Church, and every individual member of the Church, is called upon to proclaim boldly the name of Jesus Christ as the true and only Lord and Savior of all people, at every opportunity (Matt. 28:19); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures ask, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?" (Rom. 10:14, 15); and

WHEREAS, The apostle Paul reminds us, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20); and

WHEREAS, All Christians are urged to "preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2); and

WHEREAS, The Bible further teaches that without the Gospel, false teachers offer no hope and a path to God that is no path, as the Scriptures instruct, "Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9); and

WHEREAS, A faithful word spoken at the proper time in contrast to false hope releases God's Spirit of truth which is "alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Heb. 4:12); and

WHEREAS, Without compromising time-honored Scripture, the LCMS has from time to time reviewed and altered its public and practical application of God's truth on social issues (e.g., suffrage, birth control, the purchase of insurance); and

WHEREAS, The historic example of the LCMS is demonstrated in the counsel of C. F. W. Walther to a young student who asked, "Then I should have preached the distinctive doctrines separating us from the Congregationalist?" Dr. Walther answered, "No; you should have preached the simple doctrine of salvation, for example, the doctrine of the means of grace"; and

WHEREAS, Times of great tragedy appear to be impacting our communities with ever-increasing regularity, placing our clergy and our congregations in situations which demand both great expressions of compassion and comfort as well as clear statements of in whom such comfort alone can be found; and

WHEREAS, Community events and citizens that seek to comfort the victims of great and seemingly senseless loss both expect, and should demand, the presence of those Christians and shepherds who can most clearly proclaim the ultimate and only truth and love which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord; and

WHEREAS, The Synod, in its 2001/2001 convention, commended the jointly produced document by the President of the Synod, Dr. Alvin Barry, and the CTCR titled “The Lutheran Understanding of Church Fellowship,” stating “that we commend this study and response for continued use and guidance to build that unity where it is still lacking” (2001 Res. 3-07A), which document stated, in part:

“Pastors, teachers, and other officially recognized church workers are often asked to participate in activities outside of their own and other LCMS congregations. Some of these are civic events. Offering prayers, speaking, and reading Scripture at events sponsored by governments, public schools, and volunteer organizations would be a problem if the organization in charge restricted a Christian witness. ... Without such a restriction, a Lutheran pastor may for good and valid reason participate in civic affairs such as an inauguration, graduation, or right-to-life activity. These occasions may provide opportunity to witness to the Gospel. Pastors may have honest differences of opinion about whether or to what extent it is appropriate or helpful to participate in these or similar civic events. In these cases charity must prevail. ... There are also “once in a lifetime” situations. It is virtually impossible to anticipate all such situations or to establish rules in advance. Specific answers cannot be given to cover every type of situation pastors and congregations face. These situations can be evaluated only by a case-by-case basis and may evoke different responses from different pastors who may be equally committed to LCMS fellowship principles. The LCMS has always recognized this. However, the response to one situation should not establish a precedent for future ones. Where pastors regularly consult each other and are convinced of one another’s integrity, they are freer to use their discretion where such prior consultation is impossible. We do not want to fall into the trap of case law rigidity by setting down rules for every conceivable situation. At the same time, the exception should not become the rule, lest the truth of the Gospel be compromised.”

and

WHEREAS, The Synod at its 2007 convention adopted Res. 3-05, “To Provide Further Discussion and Guidance on the Matter of Serial Prayer,” which resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, In 2004 Res. 3-06A, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commended for study [and guidance] *Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events*, a report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) “to help pastors, teachers, and church workers make decisions about participation in civic events” (2004 *Proceedings*, p. 131); and

WHEREAS, Congregations of the Synod have requested further clarification regarding serial prayer; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention assign to the CTCR the task of providing further guidance for participation in civic events that includes the offering of serial prayer.

and

WHEREAS, At its Dec. 11–13, 2008, meeting, the CTCR adopted the following response to this request by the Synod:

The Commission has carefully re-examined the discussion of “‘serial’ or ‘seriatim’ prayers” on pages 19–20 of its report *Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events* (April 2004).^{*} Although some “further clarification” (cf. 2007 Res. 3-05) may be possible in terms of applying the “conditions” discussed in this section of the report to various events and situations that have arisen in the past, it is impossible to provide specific guidance for any and all events that may arise in the future. We simply cannot anticipate the precise nature, purpose, or context of every occasion that may arise in the future or set forth specific parameters surrounding participation in these types of events beyond what is already

stated in the 2004 report. Ultimately, this is a matter that requires the exercise of pastoral judgment at a particular time and place. When presented with such a situation, a pastor is, of course, urged to consult with other pastors and advisors for counsel with regard to how to respond to such requests within his particular context.

Adopted Unanimously by the CTCR

Dec. 13, 2008

(*The text of the CTCR’s discussion of serial prayer in its 2004 report reads as follows: “It should be noted in this connection that all members of the Commission agree that, understood from a Christian perspective, prayer is always in some sense ‘an expression of worship.’ The question is whether it is possible under any circumstances for an LCMS pastor to offer a prayer in a public setting involving a variety of religious leaders without engaging in ‘joint prayer and worship.’ Some believe that this is not possible. The majority believes that it may be possible depending on such factors as how the event is arranged and understood and how the situation is handled by the pastor in question, in order to make it clear that ‘joint prayer and worship’ is not being conducted or condoned.”)

and

WHEREAS, It is a misconception to assume without proof and false witness to accuse without fact that the presence and faithful witness of an LCMS minister of the Gospel, ordained or commissioned, in a public gathering or public service with ministers or individuals outside of the LCMS gives validity to the message of false teachers and false gospels or compromises the truth of the Gospel when having faithfully given witness; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS clearly states in Art. VII, “In its relation to its members the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation’s right of self-government it is but an advisory body. Accordingly, no resolution of the Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears to be inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned”; and

WHEREAS, There has arisen within our denomination a variety of non-elected, non-synodically designated individuals who seek to exert undue and inappropriate ecclesiastical discipline and supervision; and

WHEREAS, They thus undermine the divine call of those members of our Synod who have chosen to participate in public events after careful theological discernment and prayer, with the support of their constituency, and with the approval of their properly elected and called ecclesiastical supervisors; and

WHEREAS, These individuals have caused tremendous public embarrassment for our Synod, have damaged the trust between pastoral peers, have violated the law of Christ to “think not more highly of yourself than of others,” and have hindered, as well, our primary mission to reach all nations with the saving love of Christ; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS affirm the Scripture that states, “Christ has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor. 3:6); and be it further

Resolved, That the pastors of the LCMS, in consultation with their ecclesiastical supervisors, in the form of their district presidents or their circuit counselors, as may be assigned, be encouraged to decide how best to respond to requests and opportunities to represent the true Gospel and God’s truth in joint civic and religious settings; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod commission the CTCR immediately to begin a process of review and revision of guidelines for proper participation in civic events that is reflective of our current reality, to be

completed by Jan. 1, 2014, with special attention given to tragic community events, taking all such factors into account that allow for a bold proclamation of the truth of God in Christ alone, as well as allowing for care and compassion to be delivered to those in great need by all possible means; and be it further

Resolved, That such a study determine methodologies which earnestly seek to determine how we may be encouraged to participate in such events and therefore bring to such events a clear and potent statement of both truth and compassion found only in Jesus Christ, rather than merely listing the reasons why some believe we cannot; and be it further

Resolved, That those individuals who are not tasked, elected, nor called to be in ecclesiastical supervision of others and yet choose to use various outlets to create public discourse and dissension within our Synod through public means (blogs, Web sites, and other forms of media) are in violation of our bond of love and their call to administer Word and Sacrament ministry in their mission and ministry setting responsibly; and be it finally

Resolved, That such discussions of dissent and disagreement not be disallowed among our ministerium, which would also be in violation of our task as undershepherds of the great Good Shepherd, but be encouraged to take place, first of all, by expressing concerns face-to-face with the one engaged in a perceived violation in keeping with the command of Christ in Matt. 18, but then also be held in confidence with biblical and confessional discussions within the gathering of pastors in the circuit in which they hold their call.

Board of Directors
Northwest District

4-53

To Express Support of Pastoral Witness to Newtown Survivors

WHEREAS, When confronted by the needs of his community due to the massacre in Newtown, Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, As expressed by Pastor Morris,

It is indeed an unspeakably difficult situation—emotions are raw, energy reserves are spent, fear and mistrust are far too easy, and all of us are faced with circumstances for which no amount of training or preparation could be sufficient. And yet, the only thing that makes ministering under these circumstances possible is Christ's grace and truth. All else is a false hope, a hollow comfort. Thus, it was a gift of God, even within these dark and tear-filled times, to announce the certainty of Christ's birth, our God-With-Us, not only 2000 years ago, but within each of us through our baptism. The certainty of Christ's resurrection and our adoption into Him through His Word and Sacrament is the only possible message of hope and peace within these dark times, both in Newtown and around the world. Ministering is hard, but ministering Christ's grace is a gift, no matter the circumstances;

and

WHEREAS, Pastor Morris took great pains to follow the recommendations of the CTCR as expressed in its opinions "Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events" and "The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship"; and

WHEREAS, As Pastor Morris further expressed,

We do have a God-given responsibility to be on our guard against all kinds of false teaching. Prior to the events of 12/14, I had already spent hours with my own congregation, catechizing them as to the differences between our Lutheran understanding of Scriptural teaching, the various other denominations' teachings, and the teachings of false religions such as Islam or B' Hai. I had likewise spent time with my fellow clergy in Newtown clarifying the ways I can and cannot engage in events like

joint clergy dialogues (which are good to engage in), joint caring efforts (only within limits), and joint worship (not possible). To my fellow brothers who are serving in the office of public ministry, I encourage you to do these same tasks in your churches and communities. It is not comfortable, but it is necessary. To my brothers and sisters who are lay people in the church, I ask you to encourage and pray for your pastors as they do these difficult, but God-given tasks. Thus, to those who believe that I have endorsed false teaching, I assure you that was not my intent, and I give you my unreserved apologies. If any of you know church members or friends or family who are now confused because of my participation, believing that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod fully endorses the doctrine of anyone else who was on that stage, please correct this confusion lovingly, and I will be personally happy to help in any way that I can. Feel free to pass on my apologies for having given that impression;

and

WHEREAS, As Pastor Morris further expressed,

I believed my participation to be, not an act of joint worship, but an act of community chaplaincy. Chaplains are expected to give faithful witness under circumstances which are less than ecclesiastically perfect, even as their fellow chaplains may proclaim a different witness. Thus, with a disclaimer at the outset (which I requested) having stated that participation did not mean endorsement of the other religions represented, I said I was sharing "'a final blessing of the hope which is ours through faith in Jesus Christ, using the words of St. John and St. Paul,'" I then read from Revelation 21 and I prayed the Trinitarian benediction from Paul's letter to the Corinthians which we say as part of our Lutheran daily offices. I did not believe my participation to be an act of joint worship, but one of mercy and care to a community shocked and grieving an unspeakably horrific event;

and

WHEREAS, Pastor Morris was compelled to apologize to those misguided members of the Synod and those weak in the faith who claimed his actions were inappropriate, while in fact he should have been commended and thanked for his faithful, bold witness in the best traditions of the LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS urge all members of the Synod to study the referenced CTCR opinions carefully; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS express its collective and public thanks to Pastor Morris for his actions in the aftermath of the Newtown, Connecticut, tragedy.

Trinity
Roselle, Illinois

4-54

To Affirm Commitment to Witness in Public Square

WHEREAS, President Harrison has acknowledged in his apology of Feb. 7 the "debacle" created by his handling of the tragedy of Newtown, Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, The consequences of the mishandling of the matter require the Synod to speak as one in providing a clear and unequivocal witness in the public square; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has expressed clearly the right and responsibility of all Christians to witness to those who have yet to hear or receive the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has expressed proper considerations through CTCR opinions such as "The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship" and "Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events"; and

Whereas, Some claim offense for bold witness when none should be taken; and

WHEREAS, The term “offensive conduct” is to be understood as conduct that causes another to lose faith, be weakened in faith, or keeps someone from coming to faith (2 Cor. 6:3; 1 Cor. 10:32), bearing in mind that “giving offense” according to the Scriptures includes any serious matter that causes a fellow Christian to stumble in his or her faith (2 Cor. 6:3; 1 Cor. 10:32); and

WHEREAS, As Mueller (*Christian Dogmatics*) points out:

But if a person who claims to be weak in Christian knowledge demands that his error should be acknowledged as truth and insists upon promulgating it as such, he is no longer a “weak brother” whose “weakness” can be tolerated, but a false prophet, who judges and condemns true believers for using their right knowledge, Col 2:16; Gal 5:1–3.

If a person takes offense because a confessing Christian is compelled to use his Christian liberty on account of the confession involved, no guilt attaches to such Christian for using his liberty for the Gospel’s sake.

The guilt rather attaches to those who compel the true Christian to insist upon his liberty, Gal 2:4–5 (pp. 226–227);

and

WHEREAS, The consequences of not speaking truth to the world can be the damnation of people; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS reaffirm its commitment to bold public witness of the Gospel; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS encourage all members who wrongfully claim offense at such public witness to study the CTCR’s opinions and to repent of their actions that could lead to the damnation of people.

Trinity

Roselle, Illinois

4-55

To Affirm Urgent Need to Study Art. VI

WHEREAS, 2010 Res. 8-30B was adopted in convention as follows:

WHEREAS, The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Structure and Governance has proposed an amendment to Constitution Art. VI (Requirements of Membership) for the purpose of clarification and affirmation; and

WHEREAS, Concerns have been expressed throughout the history of the Synod, including recently, about the proper understanding and application of Art. VI with respect to the conditions or requirements for acquiring and holding or retaining membership in the Synod; and

WHEREAS, These concerns as well as misunderstandings and misapplications of Art. VI have included such matters as “subscription ... to [Synod’s] Constitution;” “Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description;” “Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school;” and “examination and approval of [congregation’s] constitution and bylaws by the district”; and

WHEREAS, The requirements for membership reflect the identity and values of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The ministers of religion—ordained and the ministers of religion—commissioned of the Synod have an important role and responsibility in the life of the church; and

WHEREAS, Membership in the Synod carries clear expectation; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS is made up of congregations from a great diversity of cultural contexts, calling for an appropriate measure of flexibility in communicating the saving message of the Gospel; therefore be it

Resolved, That the President of the Synod in consultation with the Council of Presidents, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, and the Commission on Constitutional Matters make provisions

for the preparation of materials (a study) that explain the biblical, confessional, and historical basis for Art. VI of the Synod’s Constitution and the current and historic bylaws that elucidate the article; and be it further

Resolved, That the study involve the Council of Presidents, the districts, circuits, and seminaries; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations of the Synod be encouraged to engage in the study to promote unity, harmony, and understanding; and be it further

Resolved, That following the study, the Commission on Handbook, in consultation and concurrence with the Synod President, the Commission on Constitutional Matters and the Council of Presidents, submit a proposal to clarify and affirm or amend Art. VI to the next convention of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That we give thanks to the almighty God for the privilege and opportunity He gives us to work and walk together in this Synod as His ambassadors in and to the worlds in which we live.

and

WHEREAS, The President of the Synod has failed to make provisions for the preparation of materials (a study) that explain the biblical, confessional, and historical basis for Art. VI of the Synod’s Constitution and the current and historic bylaws that elucidate the article; and

WHEREAS, A study has been prepared by Professor Dr. Gerhardt Bode at the request of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM), which resource is currently available to the Synod at <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcsm&id=1710>; and

WHEREAS, The 1981 CTCR opinion “The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship” (p. 46) states:

At the same time, it must also be recognized that unusual and difficult situations can and do arise in this world. Responsible commitment to our mutually agreed upon fellowship policies does not mean legalistic slavery to rules. Rather, this very commitment itself demands freedom for responsible pastoral ministry. When, in certain unusual circumstances, our regular ways of proceeding would get in the way of a ministry of Word and sacrament to a person in spiritual need, then an alternate way of proceeding must be sought. In such cases the advice and counsel of brothers in the ministry can be of inestimable value. It should also be recognized that individuals equally committed to the Scriptural principles of fellowship may not always come to identical conclusions regarding specific ways of proceeding in administering pastoral care in such exceptional cases. It is imperative that pastors show a mutual respect for one another’s ministry. Uninformed and judgmental criticism of actions which appear to be violations of mutually agreed-upon ways of proceeding are destructive of the trust and confidence which fellow members of the Synod should have in one another. It should go without saying, however, that Christian love includes the exercise of loving admonition and doctrinal oversight, especially by those to whom this responsibility has been entrusted.

and

WHEREAS, The April 2004 CTCR opinion “Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events” (pp. 15–19) states:

Civic events present a different set of circumstances. In these situations adherents of non-Christian religions may have also been invited to participate. It is understood that LCMS pastors who participate in civic events of any kind will take care to ensure that their prayers clearly and faithfully reflect Scripture’s teaching regarding the nature of the true God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the exclusivity of access to God through faith in Christ alone. [p. 15]

The majority of the commission believes that in some instances it may be possible and permissible for LCMS pastors to participate in such an event as long as certain conditions are met (e.g., when the purpose of the event in question is clearly and predominately civic in nature, and when it is conducted in such a way that does not correspond to the LCMS understanding of a “service,” when no restrictions are placed on

the content of the Christian witness that may be given by the LCMS pastor; when a sincere effort is made by those involved to make it clear that those participating do not all share the same religious views concerning such issues as the nature of God, the way of salvation, and the nature of religious truth itself). [p.19]

It should be noted in this connection that all members of the Commission agree that, understood from a Christian perspective, prayer is always in some sense “an expression of worship.” The question is whether it is possible under any circumstances for an LCMS pastor to offer a prayer in a public setting involving a variety of religious leaders without engaging in “joint prayer and worship.” Some believe that this is not possible. The majority believes that it may be possible depending on such factors as how the event is arranged and understood and how the situation is handled by the pastor in question, in order to make it clear that “joint prayer and worship” is not being conducted or condoned. [p. 19]

and

WHEREAS, In its December 11–13, 2008, meeting, the CTCR adopted the following response to 2007 Res. 3-05 regarding “Serial Prayer”:

The Synod at its 2007 convention adopted Res. 3-05, “To Provide Further Discussion and Guidance on the Matter of Serial Prayer.” This resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, In 2004 Res. 3-06A, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commended for study “Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events,” a report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) “to help pastors, teachers, and church workers make decisions about participation in civic events” (2004 *Proceedings*, p. 131); and

WHEREAS, Congregations of the Synod have requested further clarification regarding serial prayer; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention assign to the CTCR the task of providing further guidance for participation in civic events that includes the offering of a serial prayer.

At its Dec. 11–13, 2008, meeting, the CTCR adopted the following response to this request by the Synod:

The Commission has carefully re-examined the discussion of “serial” or “seriatim” prayers on pages 19–20 of its report “Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events” (April 2004). Although some further clarification (cf. 2007 Res. 3-05) may be possible in terms of applying the “conditions” discussed in this section of the report to various events and situations that have arisen in the past, it is impossible to provide specific guidance for any and all events that may arise in the future. We simply cannot anticipate the precise nature, purpose, or context of every occasion that may arise in the future or set forth specific parameters surround participation in these types of events beyond what is already stated in the 2004 report. Ultimately, this is a matter that requires the exercise of pastoral judgment at a particular time and place. When presented with such a situation, a pastor is, of course, urged to consult with other pastors and advisors for counsel with regard to how to respond to such requests within his particular context. [Unanimously adopted by the CTCR, December 13, 2008]

and

WHEREAS, Former LCMS President J. A. O. Preus, in his 1981 report to the Synod convention, acknowledged this difficult issue when he stated:

We also have a whole series of overtures dealing in one way or another with the subject of interchurch relations and unionism and separatism. I have been in the ministry for over 35 years and have been involved in discussions of unionism and related matters for all of these years. I have hoped that during my years in office some greater clarity could be developed among us as to what really is unionism and what must be dealt with in a disciplinary way, as over against things that might appear to some to be a compromise of the Word of God but to others are not such at all and no intent at compromise is intended. I hope that the

Synod will try to develop rubrics and guidelines for a church of three million members in the 1980s and 1990s, rather than always relying on definitions which are a century old, which deal basically with a European situation and are not particularly helpful for our modern time. I believe our fathers were eminently sincere and totally correct in what they did, but I think we have to rethink our own position on these matters so as to make their position our own or so as to make their position something that is workable and feasible and acceptable in our own midst. We can all agree that we want to avoid a total separatism on the one hand and a wild irresponsible ecumenism on the other. The difficulty is to find a middle path which will avoid both of these extremes and which can work in all situations in our church.

and

WHEREAS, There is an urgent need to complete the study required by 2010 Res. 8-30B; and

WHEREAS, The Council of Presidents is best suited to immediately act on this matter across each district of the Synod; therefore be it *Resolved*, That the LCMS relieve the President of responsibilities under 2010 Res. 8-30B; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS direct the Council of Presidents to immediately carry out the study called for by 2010 Res. 8-30B in each district of the Synod, including the study based on the research and paper of Professor Bode.

Trinity, Roselle, IL; Circuit 38, Texas District;

4-56

To Encourage the Teaching and Practice of Closed Communion

WHEREAS, Members of the LCMS are bound by the Lutheran Confessions to regard Holy Scripture as teaching of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ: (1) that His body and blood are truly and substantially present, distributed, and received in, with, and under the elements of bread and wine (AC X); and (2) that these are received by both believing and unbelieving participants, *i.e.*, by those who eat in repentance and faith, to “forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation,” and by those who eat in unrepentance or unbelief, to judgment (AP XXIV, FC VII, EP, and SD); and (3) that “to obtain such faith” the preaching office is instituted by our Lord to administer the Gospel and Sacraments (AC V), with those filling the office having responsibility before God for the souls in their care (SA IX); and

WHEREAS, The true unity of the church is found in the pure teaching of the Gospel and right administration of the sacraments (AC VII); and

WHEREAS, There exists significant disunity of practice across the congregations of Synod in who is or is not admitted to the Lord’s Supper, causing confusion and strife; and

WHEREAS, St. Paul himself admonishes the Corinthians against assembling to eat the Supper of our Lord with divisions among them, thus coming together not for the better but for the worse (1 Cor. 11:17–18); and

WHEREAS, True doctrine necessarily regulates practice, as the confessors write: “The custom has been retained among us of not administering the Sacrament to those who have not previously been examined and absolved” (AC XXV) and “in our churches mass is celebrated every Sunday and other festivals, when the Sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved” (AP XXIV); and, as our Lord says, “my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it” (Luke 8:21); and

WHEREAS, The responsibility of pastors as stewards of the mysteries of God is not as hirelings or pleasers of any man or group of men, but as servants of Christ, it being required of stewards that they be faithful (2 Tim. 4:3–4; 1 Cor. 4:1–2) as they keep watch over souls as those who will have to give an account (Heb. 13:17); and

WHEREAS, The primary objective of the Synod is, “under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions,” to “conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10),” etc. (Constitution, Art. III 1); and

WHEREAS, District presidents shall “especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their district and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the congregations of their district” (Constitution, Art. XII 7); and

WHEREAS, The President of the Synod “has the supervision regarding the doctrine and the administration of” all officers, districts, and district presidents (Constitution, Art. XI B 1); therefore be it

Resolved, That the pastors of our Synod be exhorted, as duty bound by office before the almighty God, to whom they will have to give an account for the souls entrusted to them, to teach, exhort, practice, and defend closed Communion, communing only those who have been “examined and absolved” (AC XXV, AP XXIV); who are neither living in open, unrepentant sin, nor under the ban; who have been taught and confess not only the true doctrine of the Lord’s Supper but all doctrines as taught in the Small Catechism; who eat and drink at the Lord’s table as those who gladly hear and believe whatsoever their Lord teaches, professing no doctrine contrary to that taught where they commune; and whose church membership reflects said confession, except in rare, temporary, and extraordinary cases of pastoral discretion; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations and congregants of our Synod be exhorted, in the fear of God and love of the pastors He sends so that they may serve “joyfully, and not sadly” (Heb. 13:17), both to support and uphold the practice of closed Communion in our congregations, and to refrain from communing at altars of differing confessions, as a matter of conscience and Christian truthfulness and also out of concern for the true unity of the church in oneness of teaching; and be it further

Resolved, That the district presidents of our Synod be exhorted, as true ecclesiastical supervisors and as men who will also have to give account for the ministry committed to their care, to teach, exhort, defend, and further the practice of closed Communion among the members (congregations and pastors) committed to their care; and be it further

Resolved, That the President of the Synod be exhorted, as the ecclesiastical supervisor of the entire Synod, to see that the district presidents apply themselves faithfully to this task; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR and the seminaries of our Synod be exhorted to continue to produce edifying materials for the teaching and practice of closed Communion in our fellowship; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Montana District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to adopt this resolution as its own.

Montana District; MN North District

4-57

To Remind That Closed Communion Flows from Christian Love

WHEREAS, The practice of closed Communion flows from love for unbelievers, not wishing for them to receive harm from partaking of

the body and blood of Christ (see 1 Cor. 11:27, 29: “Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord. . . . For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly” [NASB]); and

WHEREAS, The practice of closed Communion flows from love for believers who do not believe the body and blood of Jesus are physically present in the bread and wine (again see 1 Cor. 11:27, 29); and

WHEREAS, The practice of closed Communion flows from the character of the Lord’s Supper as the Sacrament of unity, as taught by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 10:16–17, and from love for all Christians, not wishing for any Christian to be deceived into thinking that true unity in Christ can be achieved outside the truth of God’s Word and the teachings of our Savior (see John 8:31–32; Matt. 28:18–20a; Rom. 16:17); and

WHEREAS, The practice of closed Communion, especially the exercise of the Office of the Keys to exclude the impenitent sinner, flows from love for the man trapped in his sin (see 1 John 3:7–9; Gal. 6:1); therefore be it

Resolved, That the pastors, congregations, and officials of our Synod continually be reminded that the faithful practice of closed Communion flows from Christian love and not dislike or feeling of superiority; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southern Illinois District in convention submit this overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Southern Illinois District

4-58

To Use “Closed Communion” to Describe LCMS Communion Practice

WHEREAS, The term “close Communion” has only recently been used in the LCMS and is derived from Baptist sources who deny the real presence of Christ’s body and blood, for whom the term implies degrees, fractions, or levels of closeness in Communion¹; and

WHEREAS, The term “closed Communion” is the term the church has historically used to describe the confessional integrity of its Communion practice; and

WHEREAS, The term “closed Communion” reflects the language of the Holy Scriptures (“the door was shut” (Matt. 25:10); “I will give you the keys of the kingdom” (Matt. 16:19); “Strive to enter through the narrow door” (Luke 13:25–30); and is confessed in the Large Catechism V 2: “We have no intention to admit to it and give it out to those who do not know what they seek there or why they come” (see also Preface II 2)²; and

WHEREAS, The practice of “closed Communion” flows out of the fact that the Supper “is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Small Catechism) and out of our love for those who may unwittingly receive the Holy Sacrament to their judgment (1 Cor. 11:29); and

WHEREAS, Closed Communion was literally practiced in the liturgies and perhaps reflected even in the architecture of the early Church³; and

WHEREAS, Our congregations, by virtue of their membership in the LCMS, are in fact confessionally bound to the practice of closed Communion; and

WHEREAS, Our pastors have a biblical and confessional duty as stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:2) who will give an account for their stewardship (Heb. 13:17); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Minnesota North District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention henceforth to use the term “closed Communion” in all Synod publications.

¹Norman Nagel, “Closed Communion: In the Way of the Gospel; In the Way of the Law,” *Concordia Journal*, 17:1 (January, 1991): pp 27–28.

²Nagel, pp. 22, 24.

³The deacons call “the doors, the doors” in the Liturgy of St. Basil and the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, (F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* [London: Oxford, 1896] p. 321,3). In the *Didascalia* (ii 56 6, early third century) a deacon is responsible at the door for those who come in (Apostolic Constitutions II 57 21; VIII 11 11), cited by Nagel, p. 26.

Minnesota North District

4-59

To Reaffirm Standard for Admission to Lord’s Supper and “Closed Communion” as LCMS Practice

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has repeatedly reaffirmed that to administer the Lord’s Supper in accord with Christ’s institution is to do so admitting only properly instructed Lutherans to Lutheran altars (1967 Res. 2-19; 1983 Res. 3-12; 1986 Res. 3-08; 1995 Res. 3-08; 1998 Res. 3-05); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has affirmed that the standard for admission to the Lord’s Supper is full doctrinal agreement; and

WHEREAS, Admission to the Lord’s Table should not be limited to agreement of a few selected doctrines or expanded by opening the communion table to all baptized Christians; and

WHEREAS, Every congregation should have a Communion statement that clearly states the LCMS position and doctrine; and

WHEREAS, Pastors should practice oversight that reflects the Synod’s concern for the spiritual well-being of those communing; and

WHEREAS, Our congregations should not be proclaiming a unity in doctrine and practice where it does not exist; and

WHEREAS, “Closed Communion” flows out of our love for the Word of God, a respect for our Lutheran Confessions as a correct exposition of that Word, and our desire to prevent anyone from receiving the Holy Sacrament to their judgment (1 Cor. 11:29); and

WHEREAS, Our pastors have a biblical and confessional duty as stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:2) who will give an account for their stewardship (Heb. 13:17); therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the Wyoming District in convention memorialize the LCMS to reaffirm that the standard for pastoral admission to the Lord’s Supper is full agreement in all articles of Christian doctrine; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS officially acknowledge the term “closed Communion” as its Communion practice; and be it finally

Resolved, That this official teaching of “closed Communion” be reflected in all Synod publications.

Wyoming District

4-60

To Officially Acknowledge “Closed Communion” as the Practice of the LCMS

WHEREAS, The term “closed Communion” is the term the church has historically used to describe the confessional integrity of its communion practice; and

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture clearly warns against the unworthy reception of the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:27); and

WHEREAS, Our LCMS pastors have promised, by way of their ordination vows, to carry out their pastoral duties in accordance with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, particularly “that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the Sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word” (AC VII 2, Tappert); and

WHEREAS, Our congregations, by virtue of their membership in the LCMS, are confessionally bound to the same practice; and

WHEREAS, “Closed Communion” flows out of our love for the Word of God and our Lutheran Confessions as a correct exposition of that Word, as well as for those who may unwittingly receive the Holy Sacrament to their judgment (1 Cor. 11:29); and

WHEREAS, Our pastors have biblical and confessional duty as stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:2), who will give an account for their stewardship (Heb. 13:17); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS officially acknowledge the term “closed Communion” as its communion practice; and be it finally

Resolved, That this official acknowledgement henceforth be reflected in all Synod publications.

Grace, Paris, Texas; Holy Cross, Albany, OR;
Wadena Circuit Forum, MN North District

4-61

To Clarify Synod’s Reaffirmation of Closed Communion

WHEREAS, The LCMS in convention from 1967 through 1995 has repeatedly reaffirmed its historic position of close(d) Communion; and

WHEREAS, These resolutions state that in some “special cases” and in “extraordinary circumstances,” a pastor may commune someone who is a member of a denomination not in fellowship with the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, The current practice of many congregations publicly inviting all baptized Christians who believe in the Real Presence and who agree with our doctrine to commune regardless of their church affiliation makes what we agree should be “special” and “extraordinary” to be “common” and “ordinary”; therefore be it

Resolved, That publicly inviting all baptized Christians who believe in the Real Presence and agree with our doctrine even though they are not members of a Missouri Synod congregation is contrary to our official position of closed Communion and is to be discontinued.

Holy Cross
Albany, OR

4-62

To Reaffirm Standard for Pastoral Admission to Lord's Supper

WHEREAS, St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26 ESV), denoting that our Communion confesses and proclaims all that Christ's death means and brings to us; and

WHEREAS, The substance of that confession and proclamation is inclusive of "all the articles of the faith as well as in the proper use of the holy sacraments" (FC SD X 31); and

WHEREAS, St. Paul also instructs us that to participate (have *koinonia*) in an altar is to participate in what that altar stands for and brings when he writes, "Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (1 Cor. 10:18–22 ESV); and

WHEREAS, Great spiritual harm comes to those who do not recognize that they receive the very body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and therefore a pastor must exercise proper spiritual care (1 Cor. 4:1) in the admission of those coming to Christ's altar, as St. Paul writes, "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor. 11:27–29 ESV); and

WHEREAS, St. Paul writes that the Corinthian congregation is to agree fully with one another when he writes, "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10 ESV); and

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ also says, "I do not ask for these only [the apostles], but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. The glory that You have given Me I have given them, that they may be one even as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me" (John 17:20–23 ESV); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Confessions recognize that from the days of the early church fathers, proper pastoral care included admitting or denying admission to the Lord's Supper, as when the Augsburg Confession says, "The Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass [Communion]. Chrysostom says 'that the priest stands daily before the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others'" (AC XXIV 35–37 Dau/Bente); and

WHEREAS, C. F. W. Walther (first President of the LCMS) comments on 1 Corinthians 10:17, "Accordingly, in that Christians eat of the one bread of the Sacrament, all become mystically, that is in a spiritual, moral, or figurative way, one body, and by the act of eating together a person is declared to be one in Christ with all Christians. For as the bread consists of innumerable many particles of baked flour, so that it is impossible to separate these particles again from one another, even so are all Christians one in Christ through Communion and many thousand times more intimately bound together than even body and soul into one organism. They are actually one. One God

dwells in them. One Spirit rules in them. They all have one Savior in them, and one Lord Jesus speaks from them. And now consider what a grievous sin those commit who administer Communion to those who are, after all, of another faith and confession, and confess themselves to be one and brothers with them. ... Therefore one who goes to Holy Communion in a Lutheran church declares openly before the world: I hold with this church, with the doctrine that is confessed here, and with all the confessors who belong here. The pastor who administers the Sacrament to him declares the very same thing" (C. F. W. Walther, "Communion Fellowship," *Essays For the Church*, vol. 1, p. 215); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has repeatedly reaffirmed that to administer the Lord's Supper in accord with Christ's institution is to do so admitting only properly instructed Lutherans to our Lutheran altars, thus requiring full agreement in all articles of doctrine prior to establishing fellowship at the altar (1967 Res. 2-19; 1983 Res. 3-12; 1986 Res. 3-08; 1995 Res. 3-08; 1998 Res. 3-05); and

WHEREAS, Many LCMS congregations today have sadly abandoned the standard of full doctrinal agreement for admission to the Lord's Table by limiting that agreement only to a selected few doctrines, or by eliminating any limiting Communion statement at all, or by opening the Communion table to all baptized Christians, and the like, thus abdicating their pastoral oversight responsibility toward the spiritual well-being of those communing or proclaiming a unity in doctrine which does not exist; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS reaffirm that the standard for pastoral admission to the Lord's Supper is full agreement in all articles of Christian doctrine.

Zion, Chippewa Falls, WI; Holy Cross, Albany, OR

4-63

To Reject and Condemn Errant Communion Practices

WHEREAS, "Open Communion" is not consistent with, nor faithful to, our Synod's official practice of "closed Communion," by which only members in good standing of LCMS congregations or members of those churches with whom the LCMS is in altar and pulpit fellowship are to commune; and

WHEREAS, The practice of open Communion offends against Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, our historic practice, and the members of our Synod congregations; and

WHEREAS, It is the duty of the Synod's pastors and congregations above all to promote sound doctrine, including calling the erring to repentance and disciplining those who will not turn from their errors, all for the sake of the salvation of sinners; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Iowa District East (IDE) in convention publicly reject and condemn all such errant Communion practices as mentioned above; and be it further

Resolved, That the district presidents of IDE visit or contact every congregation during their elected time in office (Bylaw 4.4.4: "The district president shall, in accordance with the Constitution of the Synod, in his ministry of ecclesiastical supervision visit the congregations of the district.") to make sure the Communion practice of each congregation is in accord with the official teaching of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That the President of the Synod be urged to counsel the district presidents toward faithfulness in our official Communion practice and to exercise discipline against errant practice when appropriate and necessary.

Iowa District East; Zion, Chippewa Falls, WI;
Trinity, Clinton, MA; Holy Cross, Kansas City, MO;
Grace, Paris, TX; Holy Cross, Albany, OR

4-64

To Carry Out Former Synod Resolutions re Use of Bread and Grape Wine in the Lord's Supper

WHEREAS, The Southeastern District officials supervised the celebration of the Lord's Supper at the Southeastern District's convention in 2012; and

WHEREAS, According to Bylaw 4.1.1, "The Synod is not merely an advisory body in relation to a district, but establishes districts in order more effectively to achieve its objectives and carry on its activities," and Bylaw 4.1.1.1, "A district is the Synod itself performing the functions of the Synod. Resolutions of the Synod are binding upon the districts"; and

WHEREAS, According to Constitution Art. XII 9, "Furthermore, the district presidents shall a. See to it that all resolutions of the Synod which concern the districts are made known to the districts and are carried out by them"; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has spoken on the use of grape juice in the Lord's Supper in 1998 Res. 3-16:

WHEREAS, A number of congregations in the Synod have introduced grape juice for use in the Sacrament of the Altar; and

WHEREAS, The clear statement of our Confessions instruct us that "As the Words of Institution of Christ expressly state: while at the table during the Supper, He distributed natural bread and wine to His disciples" (FC SD VII 64); and

WHEREAS, The use of an element other than wine is an alien practice in the Churches of the Augsburg Confession and brings about doubt whether the Sacrament is offered or not; and

WHEREAS, "Since Christ used and sanctified no other element for this Sacrament, since no place in Scripture which treats of the Lord's Supper mentions even ordinance and institution, John 8:31; since the promise of Christ concerning the sacramental reception of His body and blood is expressly dependent upon the bread and wine; and finally, since bread and wine are the essential elements of the holy Lord's Supper, it follows that under no circumstances can or should one substitute elements, which might be comparable, in place of bread and wine" (Johann Gerhard, *A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper* [trans. Elmer M. Hohle: Repristination Press, 2000], 228-29); and

WHEREAS, Both theological faculties of the LCMS have offered opinions (Gutachten) (cf. *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 45:1/2 [Jan./April 1981], 77-80 alcohol wine), offering the clear teaching of the Evangelical Lutheran Church with regard to this matter from the Scriptures, the Confessions, and the teaching of the church; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has spoken in 1998, Res. 3-16B: "To Affirm Use of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament of the Altar"; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations be encouraged to use only wine for the sacrament; and be it further

Resolved, That the theological faculties of our seminaries be commissioned to offer guidelines to pastors and congregations in meeting the needs of those who feel they cannot drink wine; and be it finally

Resolved, That all action in this resolution be used to help carry out "The Great Commission" and shall not in any way detract or distract from the primary mission of God's kingdom here on earth. We will remember 1-02!

Action: Adopted as amended (11)

And

WHEREAS, The Synod at the same 1998 convention also adopted Res. 3-16B "To Affirm Use of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament of the Altar":

WHEREAS, In the institution of the Sacrament of the Altar the Lord Jesus Christ gave His body and blood for us to eat and drink under the

form of bread and wine (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; cf. AC X); and

WHEREAS, In accordance with Christ's institution the Lutheran Confessions define the Sacrament of the Altar to be "the true body and blood of the Lord Christ in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by Christ's Word to eat and drink" (LC V 8; cf. AC X; Apology X); and

WHEREAS, The blessings and benefits proffered in the Sacrament of the Altar are not given and received apart from the elements used by Christ in the institution of this most venerable sacrament, as Christ said of the bread, "Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you" and of the cup, "This is My blood of the new covenant which shed for you for the remission of sins" (Matt.26:38; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; also in the Lutheran Confessions AC X; LC V 21-22; FC SD VII 43-53); therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the LCMS continue to use bread and wine in the administration of the Sacrament of the altar; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors, who are stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1) and are entrusted with the pastoral care of souls, remain faithful in their practice of Christ's institution of the Sacrament of the Altar through the use of bread and wine "in order not to introduce an element of uncertainty into the sacrament" (*Christian Dogmatics*, Pieper, Vol. III, p. 354); and be it finally

Resolved, That in cases where pastoral concern arises concerning the reception of bread and wine by certain persons, the institution of Christ not be overthrown, but that the pastor stress the Gospel's power and total effectiveness in the individual's life and patiently seek a practical solution which is faithful to the Word of Christ and sensitive to the desire to partake in the Supper of the Lord.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod President instruct all the district presidents to enforce this resolution and remind them of their primary responsibility to ensure that these scripturally faithful resolutions be observed in all of their districts' congregations and at all of their district-sponsored events where the Lord's Supper is observed.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

4-65

To Enforce 1989 Res. 3-10 re Use of Women to Serve Holy Communion

WHEREAS, The Southeastern District at its 2012 convention had women distributing the Lord's Supper; and

WHEREAS, According to Bylaw 4.1.1, "The Synod is not merely an advisory body in relation to a district, but establishes districts in order more effectively to achieve its objectives and carry on its activities," and Bylaw 4.1.1.1, "A district is the Synod itself performing the functions of the Synod. Resolutions of the Synod are binding upon the districts"; and

WHEREAS, According to Constitution, Art. XII 9, "Furthermore, the district presidents shall a. See to it that all resolutions of the Synod which concern the districts are made known to the districts and are carried out by them"; and

WHEREAS, The use of women serving the Lord's Supper, especially at a district convention, has caused a great offense; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has spoken on the practice of having women serve Holy Communion (1989 Res. 3-10 "To Address Practice of Women Serving Holy Communion":

WHEREAS, There is divergence of opinion in the Synod concerning women serving as assistants in the distribution of Holy Communion; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has stated in its 1983 report *Theology and Practice in the Lord's Supper* (p. 330) and reaffirmed in the 1985 report *Women in the Church* that 'the commission strongly recommends that to avoid confusion regarding the office of the public ministry and to avoid giving offense to the church, such assistance be limited to men' (p. 47); therefore be it

Resolved, That the CTCR report *Theology and Practice in the Lord's Supper* be commended to the congregations of the Synod for study and guidance in this matter; And be it further

Resolved, That the pastors and congregations of the Synod be urged to conform to this counsel;

therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod President instruct all district presidents to enforce this resolution and remind them of their primary responsibility to insure that this scripturally faithful resolution be observed in all the congregations within their districts, as well as all district events where Holy Communion is served.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

4-66

To Reaffirm the Practice of Close Communion

WHEREAS, The Scriptures require both a knowledge of the Lord's Supper sufficient for its proper reception and a contrite heart that trusts Jesus' Word (1 Cor. 11:27-29); and

WHEREAS, Fellowship at the Lord's Table is an act of confession of faith (1 Cor. 10:17); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS in 1995 Res. 3-08 addressed the document "A Declaration of Eucharistic Understanding and Practice" by reaffirming 1967 Res. 2-19, "To Take a Position with Reference to Communing Lutherans of Other Synods," thereby placing the entire Synod officially in opposition to "A Declaration of Eucharistic Understanding and Practice"; and

WHEREAS, The admission to Holy Communion without a regard for confession of faith is neither faithful to God's Word nor an act of love (Rom. 16:17); and

WHEREAS, The practice of close Communion was officially and publicly taught and observed by the Early Church; and

WHEREAS, The practice of close Communion is affirmed by our Lutheran Confession: "For we do not intend to admit to the sacrament and administer it to those who do not know what they seek or why they come" (Tappert, pp. 447:2, 575:32f., etc.); and

WHEREAS, The LCMS from its beginning in 1847 practiced close Communion (see Explanation to the 1943 Small Catechism, question 326); and

WHEREAS, The practice of close Communion seeks to prevent both harmful reception of the Sacrament as well as a profession of unity in confession of faith where this unity does not exist (1 Cor. 11:27-29; 1:10); and

WHEREAS, Disparity in the practice of the Lord's Supper has created confusion and controversy in the Synod; and

WHEREAS, It is desirable that uniform practice that is in harmony with the theology of the Lord's Supper be followed in the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That all LCMS congregations practice close Communion.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

4-67

To Restore LCMS Historic Teaching of Fourth Commandment

WHEREAS, The Fourth Commandment recorded in Ex. 20:12 and Deut. 5:16 includes a promise; and

WHEREAS, Paul refers to this commandment as the "first commandment with a promise" (Eph. 6:2); and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther's Small and Large Catechisms of 1529 both record the Fourth Commandment with its promise; and

WHEREAS, Up until 1986, all copyrighted Luther's Small Catechisms published by Concordia Publishing House contained the promise; and

WHEREAS, In 1986, the promise associated with the Fourth Commandment was removed from Luther's Small Catechism by Concordia Publishing House; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Oklahoma District in convention request that the national convention of Synod ensure that all official publications of the Fourth Commandment published or used within the LCMS contain the biblical promise associated with this commandment.

Oklahoma District

4-68

To Assign CTCR Functions to Seminary Faculties

WHEREAS, The circumstances that necessitated the creation of the CTCR have been addressed; and

WHEREAS, The theological studies and opinions issued by the CTCR are widely perceived by the Church-at-large as official doctrine rather than opinion; and

WHEREAS, Maintaining the CTCR as an ongoing commission represents a substantial expense; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CTCR go out of existence by the end of 2014; and be it further

Resolved, That the functions of the CTCR and their remaining assignments be assigned to those called to teach theology in the Synod, our seminary faculties.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

4-69

To Condemn the Heresy of Darwinism

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach that God is the Creator of all that exists and is therefore the author (Acts 3:15) and giver of life (Nicene Creed, 3rd Article); and

WHEREAS, The hypotheses of macro, organic, and Darwinian evolution, including theistic evolution or any other model denying special, immediate, and miraculous creation, undercut this support for the honoring of life as the gift of God; and

WHEREAS, The Darwinian heresy also requires the idea that death enter the world before and apart from man's fall into sin and thus undercuts and denies what the Scriptures teach regarding Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection for our justification (Rom. 5:12ff.); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod strongly confesses a literal six twenty-four-hour-days exegesis of Genesis 1-2 (*A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, 1932, paragraph 5) and has held to this as its official position for at least eighty years; and

WHEREAS, While *This We Believe* affirms that “the LCMS is exceptionally united in what we believe, teach and confess: that there is only one true and Triune God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who created the world in six days,” the resolutions referred to in that document have not specifically defined the word “day” as twenty-four hours in length; and

WHEREAS, In Res. 2-08A, the 2004 LCMS convention required that “no educational agency or institution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod tolerate any teaching that contradicts the special, immediate, and miraculous creation by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as an explanation for the origin of the universe” (2004 *Convention Proceedings*, pp. 125–126); and

WHEREAS, The All Workers Conference of the Montana District heard reports that the teaching of evolution is taking place within the Concordia University System schools; and

WHEREAS, Students at universities of the Concordia University System still report that Darwinism is being taught as fact; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention unequivocally condemn the heresies of macro, organic, and Darwinian evolution, including theistic evolution and all other models denying special, immediate, and miraculous creation; And be it further

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention unequivocally confess the biblical teaching of a literal six-day (twenty-four-hours per day) creation of the universe by the power of His Word; And be it further

Resolved, That no educational agency or institution of the LCMS tolerate any teaching that contradicts the special, immediate, and miraculous creation by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as an explanation for the origin of the universe; and be it finally

Resolved, The Montana District All Workers Conference meeting in Billings, Montana, October 17–19, 2012, memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to make this resolution its own.

Montana District All Workers Conference

4-71

To Produce a 21st-Century Formula of Concord

WHEREAS, Christendom today is in far greater need of a Reformation than it was 500 years ago when Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517,

1. Five hundred years ago, hardly any within Christendom rejected such doctrines as the Trinity, virgin birth, deity, vicarious satisfaction and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, the inerrancy and historicity of the Bible, or the absolute nature of the truths proclaimed in the Bible. All these doctrines are being denied in the major denominations of our time.

2. Today evolution is accepted as fact in most major denominations.

3. Today all the major denominations promote universalism, the notion that Jesus Christ is not the only way to heaven and non-Christians may be saved without saving faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Five hundred years ago, such antiscriptural doctrines as the immaculate conception of Mary, assumption of Mary, and infallibility of the Pope had not yet been adopted by any within Christendom.

5. The great apostasy in Christendom is documented in such books and publications as: *Bad Religion—How We Became a Nation of Heretics* by Ross Douthat, a Roman Catholic; *The Truth About What Really Happened to the Catholic Church Af-*

ter Vatican II by Roman Catholic scholars Michael and Peter Dimond; *Repairing the Breach—Explaining the Systematic Deception Behind the War of Worldviews* and *How Christendom Can Turn the Tide* by John M. Wynne and Stephen A. Wynne, Protestant scholars; the issues of *Christian News* during the last 50 years and its publications: the five volume *Christian News Encyclopedia*, *Luther Today—What Would He Do or Say? Crisis in Christendom—Seminex Ablaze*, *Walter A. Maier Still Speaks—Missouri and the World Should Listen*;

and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran confessors of 1580 saw the need for possible future confessions:

If the current controversies about our Christian religion should continue or new ones arise, we shall see to it that they are settled and composed in timely fashion before they become dangerously widespread in order that all kinds of scandal might be obviated. (Preface to the Book of Concord, Tappert, p. 14);

and

WHEREAS, From time to time the Christian Church has resolved controversies and restored unity by speaking on the issues of the time in new creeds and confessional documents; and

WHEREAS, Various humanists, historical critics, unorthodox theologians, universalists, existentialists, evolutionists, charismatics, cultists, and others are introducing errors which are not always answered in confessional documents written more than 400 years ago; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive document of confessional rank is now needed to apply the truth of the Scriptures to the errors in our day, in order to bring an end to the scandalous divisions among us and provide an international basis and rallying point for fellowship among true Christians everywhere; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS show its commitment to end the controversy that threatens to tear it apart by taking appropriate steps to join with confessional Lutherans at home and abroad to produce a “21st-Century Formula of Concord” that will deal precisely, in thesis and anti-thesis, with the errors of our time and will establish the truth in accordance with the Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions; and be it further

Resolved, That this “21st-Century Formula of Concord” be submitted to theologians, churches, and individuals all over the world for their signatures and adoption (see *Convention Workbook*, LCMS, 1975, pp. 103–104 for further details on such a formula of concord; see also “The Formula of Concord—Blueprint for Renewal” by Dr. Neelak S. Tjernagel [*Christian News*, May 27, 1974, pp. 8–9] and “Why a Twentieth-Century Reformation,” [*Christian News*, July 30, 1990]); and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention ask President Matthew Harrison and Vice-Presidents John Wohlrabe, Daniel Preus, Scott Murray, Herbert Mueller, former Vice-President Wallace Schulz, Lawrence Burgdorf (Schwan Foundation), all the confessional Lutheran seminaries in the U.S., Martin Noland (former director of the Concordia Historical Institute), Alvin Schmidt, the board of directors at CPH, David Menton (CLC), David Finck, Timothy Otten, David Kaufmann, Scott Meyer (Concordia Historical Institute), Paul McCain (CPH), Jack Cascione, Rolf Preus, James Lamb (Lutherans For Life), John Warwick Montgomery (England), Scott Blazek, Todd Wilken (*Issues, Etc.*), Tom Baker (Concordia Mission Society, Affirm), Richard Bolland, Bruce Ley (ACELC), Larry Beane, Brandt Klawitter (Germany), Timothy Wangert (ELCA), Francis Monseth (AFLC), David Becker, Dan Delzell (*Christian Post*), Joel Lehenbauer (CTCR), Michael Bowers (Lutheran Church of the Reformation),

and Timothy Rossow (Steadfast Lutherans), with other confessional Lutherans they invite, to

- consider, improve, and revise with necessary additions the attached “21st-Century Formula of Concord”;
- send the revised document to the 120 theologians (“representing 20 million Lutherans,” according to LCMS press releases) who gathered in 2012 in Peachtree, Georgia, for the Conference on Confessional Lutheranism and all of the Lutheran church bodies listed on pages 761–767 of the 2013 *Lutheran Annual*;
- invite confessional Lutherans all over the world for their comments and suggestions;
- incorporate valid suggestions;
- and then present to the 2016 LCMS convention a “21st-Century Formula of Concord” for adoption just prior to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. If adopted, send this “21st-Century Formula of Concord” to other Christian churches all over the world to consider and adopt for the beginning of a 21st-century reformation on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation on October 31, 2017.

A 21st-Century Formula of Concord

Introduction:

God has given us unlimited evangelistic power through His Living Word. A clear understanding of the biblical doctrine of the Word is absolutely essential to an effective approach to evangelism and missions. The Word is absolutely an effective approach to evangelism and missions. The Word is efficacious. Martin Luther’s approach to the Word, is solidly biblical, is indeed exciting: in fact, it is so inspiring, it is so energizing, that if this understanding of the Word were recaptured today, there would be a new Reformation and a phenomenal mission and evangelism threat, even among Lutherans (see footnote 82, “The Key to It All: The Living Word”).

WE AFFIRM AND CONFESS:

A. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The plenary divine inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and, as the Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life. The Bible (not modern science, philosophy, tradition, reason, visions, etc.) is the only source and authority of a Christian’s faith and life.

1. We teach that the Holy Scriptures differ from all other books in the world in that they are the Word of God. They are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures wrote only that which the Holy Ghost communicated to them by inspiration, 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21. We teach also that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is not a so-called “theological deduction,” but that it is taught by direct statements of Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16; John 10:35; Rom. 3:2; 1 Cor. 2:13. Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters, John 10:35.
2. We furthermore teach regarding the Holy Scriptures that they are given by God to the Christian Church for the foundation of faith, Eph. 2:20. Hence the Holy Scriptures are the sole source from which all doctrines proclaimed in the Christian Church must be taken and therefore, too, the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged.
3. We reject the doctrine which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the Church of our day that Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God, but in part the Word of God and in part the word of man and hence does, or at least, might, contain error. We reject this erroneous doctrine as horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ and His holy apostles, sets up men

as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith.¹

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the Holy Scriptures are inspired only in the sense that all Christians are “inspired” to confess the lordship of Jesus Christ.
2. That the Holy Spirit did not inspire the actual words of the biblical authors but merely provided these men with special guidance.
3. That only those matters in Holy Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit which directly pertain to Jesus Christ and man’s salvation.
4. That we should regard non-canonical writings (Christian tradition) as “inspired” in the same sense as Holy Scripture.
5. That portions of the New Testament witness to Jesus Christ contain imaginative additions which had their origin in the early Christian community and do not present actual facts.²

Historic Christianity has always maintained that whatever the New Testament asserts about the Old Testament, or any part thereof, is in principle the dogmatically binding position, to the exclusion of all other interpretations. The Holy Scriptures demand the affirmation, on dogmatic grounds, of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), the unity of Isaiah (that the eighth-century-BC prophet Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah), and the historicity of Genesis and Jonah. The Old Testament directly and consciously predicts a personal Messiah.

While the testimony of Scriptures settles the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible for the Christian, there is no scholarly reason why we must reject the Mosaic authorship of these books.

The view that these books came from certain sources designated by scholars as J, E, D, and P:

- a. Contradicts the plain statements of the Old Testament and of the New Testament that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch.
- b. Contradicts the internal linguistic evidence of the Pentateuch.
- c. Is a theory that has been built up by arbitrary and high-handed procedures.
- d. Is a theory that leads to absurdities.
- e. Is a theory built upon a vicious and impossible principle, namely, the evolution of religion, whereby the religion of the Israelites has been a gradual and natural growth from the lower to the higher, and it leaves no room or purpose for the supernatural, the divine, the revealed. Such premises are repudiated by every conception of bibliology and of God which the Scriptures contain.³

The New Testament quotes Isaiah more than all the other prophets put together. Further, the New Testament leaves no doubt that Isaiah was the author of the entire Book of Isaiah.⁴

The authorship of the Book of Daniel is settled for the Christian by the words of Christ. The sixth-century prophet Daniel wrote the Book of Daniel.⁵

The Book of Genesis presents an accurate historical record of what took place in real history and not in some realm “above and beyond history.” The Lord Jesus, who is God, the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, accepted the Genesis creation account as historical fact. God created the world by His almighty power in six ordinary days and not through a gradual process of evolution that required millions of years. While the Bible is not a scientific textbook and is written in popular language, it does not present an outmoded, naive view of the universe.⁶

Christ accepted the Book of Jonah as a factual account of something which actually happened. The question of the historicity of Jonah should be settled forever by the words of Christ.⁷

The Old Testament predicts a definite personal Messiah, Jesus Christ.⁸

Law and Gospel

Law and Gospel are the two great doctrines of the Bible.

The Gospel is that doctrine of the Bible in which God tells us the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

The Law shows us our sin and the wrath of God; the Gospel shows us our Savior and the grace of God.

The Law must be preached to all men, but especially to impenitent sinners; the Gospel must be preached to sinners who are troubled in their minds because of their sins.

There is Law and Gospel in both the Old and the New Testaments.⁹

THE BIBLE IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR FAITH AND LIFE

HONOR AND RESPECT FOR GOD

God demands that we do not use his name in vain. Christians should not use coarse talk, or “four letter” words.¹⁰

MURDER AND ABORTION

God forbids us to take the life of a fellow man or our own life. He forbids us to hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, that is, to do or say anything which may destroy, shorten, or embitter his life. He forbids us to bear anger and hatred in our hearts against our neighbor.¹¹

The Bible condemns abortion, except in those extremely rare cases where the life of the mother is in danger, as sinful killing. Unborn children are real persons and entitled to the care and preservation which God’s command provides for all mankind.¹² Churches which allow for the killing of unborn children are false churches with which faithful Christians should not be in fellowship.¹³

The Bible allows for capital punishment, the right of the government to put murderers to death. Governments may engage in a just war.¹⁴

ADULTERY

The Bible condemns adultery and allows for divorce only in the case of adultery and desertion. It is a sin to “live together” before marriage.¹⁵ A pastor who divorces his wife for no scriptural reason should be removed from the ministry.¹⁶

God requires married people to love and honor each other, the husband his wife as his God-given helpmate and the wife her husband as her God-given head.¹⁷

Marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman unto one flesh. Marriage was instituted by God and is entered into by rightful betrothal, or engagement.¹⁸

God requires us to lead a chaste and decent life in thoughts, desires, words, and deeds. We should avoid every opportunity for impurity and unchasteness, such as pornography, and fight to overcome all impure thoughts and desires with God’s Word and prayer, work and temperance.¹⁹

The Bible condemns both homosexual orientation and practice as sin. There is no room in heaven for unrepentant adulterers, homosexuals, etc. Churches which allow homosexuals and

lesbians to serve as pastors are false churches with which faithful Christians should not fellowship.²⁰

SLANDER, LIBEL, AND FALSE DEALING

God forbids us to belie our neighbor; that is to lie about him, lie to him, or withhold the truth from him to harm him. Christians tell the truth and recognize that it is a sin to lie about any person, people, or nation. It is a sin to reveal a person’s private sin without first speaking to the person. If a matter is public, such as when a theologian writes some antiscritptural views in a book or teaches them in public, it is not a sin to expose the error. Personal contact may first be made in the case of public sin, but is not mandatory according to Scripture.²¹

RESPECT FOR PROPERTY OF OTHERS

The Church has both the right and duty to condemn Communism as a moral evil, which violates both natural and revealed law. The efforts of the Communists are in conflict with many of God’s Ten Commandments.²²

WOMEN AND THE HOLY MINISTRY

According to God’s Word, the Christian congregation chooses and calls men as ministers, who in the name of Christ and in the name of the congregation publicly perform the function of the pastoral office, a divine office.²³

The Bible teaches that a woman should not serve as the pastor of a Christian congregation, or lead a public worship service (Isaiah 3:4–12). Faithful Christians should not be members of denominations that ordain women to the Holy Ministry.²⁴ When the Apostle Paul declared that women were not to lead public worship services, he was not making some statement merely relevant for his day. He based his argument upon the unchanging order of creation.²¹

There is no difference between male or female with regard to the order of redemption. Christians are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁵

FAITH

We reject the idea that salvation by grace through faith alone is an “easy religion.” To the contrary, “faith without the works is dead.”²⁶ A faith that has any contempt for God’s Word, Sacraments, Church, and Ministry, or a faith with impenitent, unchallenged pride, greed, hatred, lust, and general indifference to the will of Christ and the welfare of others, is not faith at all, but hypocrisy and delusion. “Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.”²⁷

Christian faith, being itself a gift of God, is a living, active, powerful thing. Faith produces love, humility, self-sacrifice, purity and all other good works.²⁸ “Take a sane view of yourselves, everyone according to the measure of faith God gave you,” Romans 12:3b.

B. THE HOLY TRINITY

The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

We confess with the ancient Christian Church the Athanasian Creed without reservation: “Whosoever will be saved, before all things, it is necessary that he hold the catholic (i.e., universal, Christian) faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.”

The Bible makes it clear that the one true God consists of three distinct persons. While the Trinity is not as clearly revealed in the Old Testament as in the New Testament, there are definite

indications in the Old Testament of three distinct persons in the Godhead. The Trinity is not a doctrine which was fabricated by the Early Church, but it is a divinely revealed truth.²⁹

C. JESUS CHRIST

The essential, absolute, eternal Deity, and the real proper, but sinless, humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary. The Scriptures ascribe to Christ divine names;³⁰ divine attributes;³¹ divine works;³² and divine honor and glory.³³

The divine and the human natures are united in Christ, both natures together forming one undivided and indivisible person.³⁴

It was necessary for our Savior to be true God³⁵ that His fulfilling of the Law might be sufficient for all men;³⁶ that His life and redemption might be sufficient ransom for our redemption;³⁷ and that He might be able to overcome death and the devil for us.³⁸

The facts that Jesus prayed to the Father, that he said only the Father knew when Judgment Day would come, or that He died do not prove that He was not God in the fullest sense of the term. Christ's state of humiliation consisted in this, that according to His human nature, Christ did not always and fully use the divine attributes communicated to His human nature.³⁹

Jesus was not made a god at His Baptism or at His resurrection, nor was He subsequently deified by His followers who believed Him to be God while He Himself never made such a claim. Jesus Christ existed with the Father from the very beginning, as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, equal with the Father in every sense. Even after he took on Himself human flesh, He was, still is, and ever will be, the true God.⁴⁰

Any doctrine of "justification" or "salvation" that is not based on the doctrine that Jesus Christ is true God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, is not Christian and of no value.⁴¹

D. THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST

His birth of the Virgin Mary.

The Bible teaches the doctrine of Christ's virgin birth.⁴² The prophet Isaiah 700 years before Christ was born of the Virgin Mary predicted: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Look, the virgin will conceive and have a Son, and His name will be Immanuel!"²³ *Almah*, the Hebrew word Isaiah used for the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit used for "virgin," can only be translated "virgin." Nowhere in the Bible or in any Hebrew or Semitic literature does *Almah* mean anything different from virgin.⁴³

There has been only one virgin birth in all history. When Isaiah wrote that an *Almah* (virgin) would conceive and have a Son, Isaiah was not first referring to some woman living during his time but only to the Virgin Mary.⁴⁴

Quoting Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23 says: "The virgin will conceive and have a Son, and He will be called Immanuel," which means "God with us."

E. THE VICARIOUS SATISFACTION OF CHRIST

Christ's death is substitutionary and propitiatory in that He gave His life "a ransom for many."

The Bible teaches that Christ is not only the victor over sin but that He fully appeased God's wrath for sin and satisfied the demands of divine justice. Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all."⁴⁵ John wrote that Christ "has paid for our sin, and not for

ours only but for the whole world."⁴⁶ Isaiah wrote that "He was wounded for our transgressions."⁴⁷

F. RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT

Christ rose from among the dead in the same body in which He was crucified, and at the second coming will be this same Jesus in power and great glory. Christ rose physically from the dead. The resurrection was a "resuscitation" of the same body which was placed in the tomb. The tomb was empty on that first Easter morning. His disciples did not steal his body. They proclaimed the truth of Christ's resurrection, even though they understood it might cost their own lives, because they knew that they were telling the truth. They saw the empty tomb. Jesus appeared to them on various occasions. There are no contradiction in the various accounts in the New Testament of Christ's resurrection. It is an event which took place in real history, not something which the disciples and Early Church fabricated.⁴⁸

Jesus knew that He was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament and that He would rise again from the dead to save all men from their sins.⁴⁹

Christ will return visibly and in glory.⁵⁰ He will then judge the world in righteousness.⁵¹ He will come on the Last Day, which is appointed by God, but unknown to man.⁵²

G. ORIGINAL SIN

Original sin is the total depravity of man through the fall.

Evil or sin originated from the free choice of free moral agents, and since the fall—a real, historical event described in Genesis 3—all men are by nature spiritually blind, dead, and therefore helpless (Eph. 2:1–2).⁵³

We reject the idea that the human soul, after the fall and before conversion, has any spiritual life or powers whatever.

Sin was brought into the world by the devil, who was once a holy angel but fell away from God, and by man, who of his own free will yielded to the temptation of the devil.⁵⁴ Sin is breaking the Law.⁵⁵ Sin pays off with death.⁵⁶

On account of original sin, man is by nature lost and condemned, ruined in body and soul. All men have sinned, including every Christian and the greatest of "saints."⁵⁷

H. SALVATION

Salvation, the effect of regeneration by the Spirit and the Word, not by works but by grace through faith.

We firmly maintain the doctrine of justification by grace for Christ's sake because it is the chief doctrine of the Christian religion;⁵⁸ it distinguishes the Christian religion from false religions, all of which teach salvation by works;⁵⁹ this doctrine gives enduring comfort to penitent sinners;⁶⁰ and this doctrine gives all glory to God.⁶¹

Both the Old and New Testament teach that a man is justified by faith alone. True believers in the Old Testament were not saved because of their words, but only because they trusted in the promised Messiah. Moses wrote that Abraham "believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness."⁶² Paul elaborates upon this statement in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 and explains that even the Old Testament men were saved through faith alone. Today, only true Christians, and not Muslims, Jews and other non-Christians, worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the only God who exists and grants eternal salvation to those who believe in Him. Many of the Psalms emphasize that salvation is completely in God's hands. David wrote that "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity."

uity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”⁶³ Habakkuk wrote that “the just shall live by faith.”⁶⁴

The Apostle Paul wrote: “For we conclude that a person is justified (declared righteous) by faith—apart from the works of the Law.”⁶⁵

Paul wrote to the Ephesians: “Yes, by His grace you are saved through faith. It was not your doing; it is God’s gift. It is not a result of anything you have done; and so no one may boast.”⁶⁶

Jesus made it clear: “For God loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life.”⁶⁷

Man does not come to saving faith in Jesus Christ by himself. By nature he is spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God; and therefore by his own reason and strength cannot believe in Jesus Christ, or come to Him.⁶⁸

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is true God, the Third Person in the Holy Trinity,⁶⁹ to bring man to saving faith in Christ by imparting to him the blessings of redemption.⁷⁰ The Holy Spirit converts man. Man does not convert himself.⁷¹ Without the grace, help and activity of the Holy Spirit, man is not capable of making himself acceptable to God, of fearing God and believing in God with his whole heart, or of expelling inborn lusts from his heart.⁷²

I. ETERNAL SALVATION AND ETERNAL DAMNATION

Salvation is the everlasting bliss of the saved, and damnation is the everlasting suffering of the lost.

All those, but only those, who trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin and not in their own life or works, will go to heaven when they die. Jesus said: “I am the resurrection and the Life. Anyone who believes in Me will live even if he dies. Yes, anyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.”⁷³ “Because I live you too will live.”⁷⁴

The doctrine of the resurrection from the dead is taught in both the Old and New Testaments. It is not some teaching which was developed by men during the intertestamental period so that they might have some comfort in the hour of death.⁷⁵

Jesus said that He was the only way to heaven and that all those who do not believe in Him are lost.⁷⁶ The Athanasian Creed teaches that all those who do not believe in the Holy Trinity, the only true God, “without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.”

The unbelievers will rise to eternal death, that is, to everlasting shame, contempt, and torment in hell.⁷⁷ Man goes to either heaven or hell at death. There is no purgatory or limbo, according to the Bible.⁷⁸

The Bible teaches that at the time of death, the soul of the believer is at once received into the presence of Christ.⁷⁹ At the Last Day, the believer will live with Christ, according to body and soul, in eternal joy and glory.⁸⁰

Since Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and those who die without him are lost in eternal hell, it is the Christian’s responsibility to support Christian missions and to the best of one’s ability to tell others about Jesus Christ.⁸¹

A clear understanding of the Biblical doctrine of the Word is absolutely essential to an effective approach to evangelism and missions. We agree with Luther that the Word does not merely trip man’s trigger of potential, for man has no spiritual potential (Eph. 2:1). Instead, the Word effects even that which it commands. It not only calls for conversion and sanctification, *the Word itself converts and sanctifies*.⁸²

J. SPIRITUAL UNITY IN CHRIST

The real spiritual unity in Christ of all redeemed by His precious blood.

The one, holy Christian, and apostolic Church is not an external organization, but a spiritual organism, the Mystical Body of Christ, consisting of all true Christians, i.e. those in whom God’s Spirit has, through the means of grace, worked true spiritual life, that is faith.

We reject the Ecumenical Movement (the National and World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, etc.) because it refuses in principle to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and acts as if the Church were essentially a visible organization united, not by allegiance to divine truth, but by compromise, outward forms, prestige, weight of numbers, and other false standards. While gratefully admitting that there are true Christians, dear children of God, wherever the Gospel is in use, also outside the orthodox (right-teaching) Church,⁸³ we reject in obedience to God’s commands⁸⁴ church fellowship with teachers and church bodies which reject the pure Word and Sacraments of God. It is because we are firmly committed to true, God-pleasing unity that we reject outward church union without real inner doctrinal unity.

We reject all forms of racism. God has no special or chosen race, only a chosen people. The “chosen people” are all Christians, regardless of race, nationality, color, sex, wealth, social stature, etc. Peter told the Christians that “you are a chosen people.”⁸⁵ We reject the racism of the evolutionists who teach that all races do not come from one man. “From one man He made every nation to have the people live all over the world.”⁸⁶

K. PURE DOCTRINE AND LIFE

Given the necessity of maintaining, according to the Word of God, the purity of the Church in doctrine and life; and, still believing the Apostles’ Creed, Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed, and the Book of Concord of 1580 to be a statement of Scriptural truth, we therefore incorporate them in these articles of faith.

The Bible teaches that Christians should practice doctrinal discipline. They should not permit theologians and pastors within their fellowship to deny the doctrines of historic Christianity. Orthodoxy must not only be on paper by officially affirming orthodox resolutions, but it must also be practiced. While clergymen should be free to believe and teach their own religious views, they should join an organization which officially tolerates these views.⁸⁷

Christians should leave churches which refuse to discipline clergymen who deny such basic doctrines as the Trinity; justification by faith alone; and the deity, virgin birth and resurrection of Christ.⁸⁸

L. BAPTISM

We confess with the Nicene Creed “one Baptism for the remission of sins.”

We teach that Baptism is not absolutely necessary for salvation, that the grace of God is offered through Baptism, and that children should be baptized, for being offered to God through Baptism, they are received into His grace.

Our churches condemn the Anabaptists who reject the Baptism of children and declare that children are saved without Baptism (Augsburg Confession IX).

It is unbelief only that damns; and though saving faith cannot exist in the heart of one who refuses to be baptized, it can exist when for some reason Baptism *cannot* be obtained.

M. LORD'S SUPPER

Our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord. They disapprove of those who teach otherwise (Augsburg Confession X).

N. RETURN OF CHRIST TO JUDGMENT—MILLENNIALISM

Our churches also teach that at the consummation of the world, Christ will appear for judgment and will raise up all the dead. To the godly and elect He will give eternal life and endless joy, but ungodly men and devils he will condemn to be tormented without end.

Our churches condemn those who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils. They also condemn others who are now spreading ideas associated with Judaism to the effect that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly will make an appearance, and which teach that, before the resurrection of the dead, saints and godly men will possess a worldly kingdom and annihilate all the godless. (Augsburg Confession XI).

O. BIRTH CONTROL

Martin Luther strongly condemned birth control (Luther's Works, Genesis 38:9, 10 [American Edition, p. 21]).

Most major Protestant denominations along with the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Church until the 1930s opposed birth control.

The Bible prohibits birth control (Genesis 1:28).

John H. C. Fritz in his *Pastoral Theology*, long used as a textbook in LCMS seminaries, shows that birth control "is sinful." It is a willful setting aside of God's will and command, Gen. 1:28; 1 Tim. 5:15, 2:15; Gen. 8, 9, 10. (177).

Lutheran Hour speaker Walter Maier in a chapter titled "The Blight of Birth Control" in his marriage manual, "For Better Not For Worse," shows that birth control is sinful and contrary to the Bible (377–421).

A major factor in the decline of church growth is the ever decreasing size of the families of pastors and church members.

We accept the scriptural position of Martin Luther on birth control and the position long promoted in the LCMS by such orthodox LCMS theologians as John H. C. Fritz, Walter Maier, Martin Nauman, Theodore Laetch, and many others.

NOTES

1. *The Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, The Christian News Encyclopedia* (hereafter *CNE*) Appendix. *CN* has published hundreds of articles by LCMS professors and pastors on the inerrancy of the Bible and related matters.

The LCMS is one of the major church bodies which still officially affirms the inerrancy of the Bible in all matters.

Some articles in the *CNE* defending the inerrancy of the Bible and showing the antisciptural and unscientific nature of the historical-critical method are:

"A Book Review Article of 'The Battle For the Bible,'" Raymond Surburg, 157–170.

"Unicorns," Kenneth Miller, 170.

"The Inspiration of the Bible," LCMS's Commission on Theology and Church-Relations, 174–175.

"Whither Biblical Inerrancy," John W. Montgomery, 171.

"The Inerrancy of Scripture," Vernon Barley, 178–179.

"How the Word of God Speaks to the Church of the Reformation Today," Elmer Moeller, 180–181.

"Contradictions, Errors in the Scriptures," L. W. Faulstich, 181.

"What Does 'Inerrancy' Mean?" Karl Barth.

"Luther's Attitude Toward Scripture and Basic Hermeneutical Principles," Raymond Surburg, 192–193.

"Monotheism in the Old Testament," Seth Erlandson, 194.

"The Scriptures Are the Word of God," Clarence Schuknecht, 195–196.

"Bible as the Inspired Word of God," John W. Behnken, 196, 199.

"A Response to Father Hughes' Attack on Missouri's Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy," Raymond Surburg, 197–198.

"Jesus and the Canon," Raymond Surburg, 199.

"The Ten Commandments of Bible Interpretation," Roger Kovachny, 203.

"The Untenability of Ecumenism's Attempt to Promote the Apocrypha as Word of God," Raymond Surburg, 204–206.

"Is God the Only Author of the Bible," 211.

"Conflicting Views in Modern Biblical Scholarship," John E. Steinmueller, 213.

"'Operation Outreach' and the Inerrancy of Scripture," 214–216.

"How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret and Use the Old and New Testament," Robert Preus, 217–221.

"Implications of Form Criticism for the Historical Understanding of the Old Testament," 222–224.

"The Bearing of the Variant Readings on the Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures," Siegbert W. Becker, 225–6.

"The Implications of the Historical-Critical Method—From Professor to Pulpit to Practice," Phillip Giessler, 229.

"How Modern Is 'Modern' Bible Interpretation," Kurt Marquart, 230.

"Missouri's Critical Issue," Elmer J. Moeller, 231.

"The Historical-Critical Method and Lutheran Presuppositions," Kurt Marquart, 232–236.

"Where Do They Get Their 'History'?" Paul Burgdorf, 236.

"Historical Critical Method of Biblical Interpretation and Its History," Joe E. Schrul, 237–239.

"The End of the Historical Critical Method," review of Concordia book by Gerhard Maier, 239.

"Form Criticism Examined," review of book by Walter A. Maier, 239.

"Old Testament Introduction," William Beck, 240.

"HCM—The Magic Formula," Paul Burgdorf, 241.

"The Historical-Critical Method: A Response," by Ralph Klein.

"The Historical Critical Method," by Harold Buls, 243–244.

"A Response to Dr. Tepker's 'The Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Holy Scripture,'" James Childs Jr., 245.

"The Inerrancy of the Bible," Robert Preus, 246.

"Does History Repeat Itself," L. W. Faulstich.

"Theologian Disputes Bible Scholars, Says New Testament Was Completed By AD 70," John A. T. Robinson, 250.

"The Interpretation of the Bible—The Relationship of Luther, the Lutheran Confessions and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to the Historical-Grammatical Method," Raymond Surburg, 251–252.

"Some Reasons Why Biblical Research Is Having Problems," Ingemar Furberg, 253.

"Gospel and Scripture," Vernon Harley, 257.

“Bishop John A. T. Robinson, Underminer of the Foundation of the Christian Faith,” Raymond Surburg, 264–265.

“Did Luther Use the Historical Critical Method,” Mark Bartling, 267.

“Central Lutheran Thrusts for Today,” Kurt Marquart, 263–269.

“Opinion of the Department of Systematic Theology of Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne on the Canon, Antilegomena and Homologoumena,” 269.

“Fortress Publishes Studies in Lutheran Hermeneutics: Wide Split Between Lutherans Is Exposed,” 270–272.

“Do the Coptic Gnostic Texts Preserve Authentic Traditions About Jesus and First Century Apostolic Christianity?” Raymond Surburg, 275–276

“*Newsweek* Casts Doubt on Deity, Resurrection, Historicity of Christ,” 276.

2. From “A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles” adopted by the LCMS in 1973, *CNE*, 1230–1231.

3. Walter A. Maier, “The Documentary Hypothesis,” from “Notes on Genesis,” *Lutheran News*, October 7, 1963, *CNE*, 273. A similar position was taken by Ludwig Fuerbringer in the official theological journal of the LCMS, *Lehre und Wehre*, February 1903, quoted in Herman J. Otten, *Baal or God*, second edition, 55. See also: “Computer Study Indicates One Person Wrote Genesis,” *CNE*, 272; “Sources of the Pentateuch,” Robert Brueckner and Raymond Surburg, *CNE*, 260–262; “Why Should a Christian Study the Old Testament,” Raymond Surburg, 133–191.

4. “How Many Men Wrote the Book of Isaiah,” *CNE*, 273; John 12:38–41; Otten, op. cit., 55.

5. Matthew 24:15; Otten op. cit., 55; “Defending the Book of Daniel, An Answer to Historical-Critical Objections to the Sixth-Century Date of Daniel and to the Charge of the Book of Daniel’s Historical Blunders,” by Raymond Surburg, *CNE*, 258–259. “Where the LCMS Stands on Authorship of Isaiah, Daniel, Pentateuch, Jonah,” *CNE*, 212.

6. Matthew 19:4; 1 Corinthians 15:39; Romans 5:12–17; Isaiah 40:22; Job 26:7; Otten, op. cit., 61–64.

Many eminent scientists are in total disagreement with evolution. All members of the Creation Research Society, which includes several hundred scientists who have achieved a high degree of success in various fields, subscribe to the following statement of belief:

1. The Bible is the written Word of God, and because it is inspired throughout, all its assertions are historically and scientifically true in all the original autographs. To the student of nature this means that the account of origins in Genesis is a factual presentation of simple historical truths.

2. All basic types of living things, including man, were made by direct creative acts of God during the Creation Week described in Genesis. Whatever biological changes have occurred since the Creation Week have accomplished only changes within the original created kinds.

3. The great Flood described in Genesis, commonly referred to as the Noachian Flood, was an historic event worldwide in its extent and effect.

4. We are an organization of Christian men of science who accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. The account of the special creation of Adam and Eve as one man and woman and their subsequent fall into sin is the basis for our belief in the necessity of a Savior for all mankind. Therefore, salvation can come only through accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior.

7. Matthew 12:40–42; Luke 11:29–32; Otten, op. cit., 56; “God’s Man of the Hour and the Great Fish,” August W. Brustat, *CNE*, 228.

8. John 12:41; Acts 2:29–31; Otten, op. cit.; “Like Moses,” William Beck, *CNE*, 176; “Prophet and Prophecy,” Seth Erlandson, *CNE*, 183; “Is Psalm Twenty-Two a Direct Rectilinear or an Indirect (Typical) Prophecy of the Messiah?” Jeffrey Kinery, *CNE*, 254–256; “The Interpretation of Psalm Twenty-Two,” Walter Maier Sr., *CNE*, 256; Old Testament Prophecy from the LCMS’s statement on Scriptural and Confessional Principles,

CNE, 1230–1231:

Since the New Testament is the culminating written revelation of God, we affirm that it is decisive in determining the relation between the two Testaments and the meaning of Old Testament prophecies in particular, for the meaning of a prophecy becomes known in full only from its fulfillment. With the Lutheran Confessions, we recognize the presence of Messianic prophecies about Jesus Christ throughout the Old Testament. Accordingly, we acknowledge that the Old Testament “promises that the Messiah will come and promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life for His sake” (Apology, IV, 5) and that the patriarchs and their descendants comforted themselves with such Messianic promises (cf. FC, SD, V, 23).

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the New Testament statement about Old Testament texts and events do not establish their meaning (for example, the claim that Jesus’ reference to Psalm 110 in Matthew 22:43–44 does not establish either that Psalm’s Davidic authorship or its predictive Messianic character).

2. That Old Testament prophecies are to be regarded as Messianic prophecies, not in the sense of being genuinely predictive, but only in the sense that the New Testament later applies them to New Testament events.

3. That the Old Testament prophets never recognized that their prophecies reached beyond their own time to the time of Christ.

9. C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (Concordia Publishing House), reproduced from the German edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau. This is one of the finest and greatest books ever produced by any American theologian.

10. Ex. 20:7; Lev. 24:15; Eph. 5:3–4.

11. Gen. 9:6; Romans 12:19; Matt. 5:22; 1 John 3:15; Matt. 15:19; Eph 4:26; Rom. 12:20.

12. Luke 1:41; Ps. 51:5; Ps. 139:13; Jer. 1:5; *CNE*, 5–38, 1774–1792.

13. Romans 16:17.

14. Genesis 9:6; Matt. 26:52; Romans 13:4; *CNE*, 1916–1912, 314–322; Disarmament, 741–754; Just War, 1506.

15. Matt. 19:6; Matt. 19:9; Heb. 13:4; Matt. 15:9; Matt. 5:28; Eph. 5:3–4; *CNE*, 1284–1296, 2654–2657.

16. 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9; *CNE*, 1284–1296.

17. Ephesians 5:24–25.

18. Matt. 19:6; Gen. 2:13–24. The angel called Mary, who was engaged to Joseph, Joseph’s wife and calls Joseph her husband. Matt. 1:19–24 (*A Christian Handbook on Matrimony*, Herman Otten).

19. 1 Peter 2:11; Phil 4:3; Eph. 4:29; Gen. 39:9; Ps. 51:10; Prov. 23:31–33; 1 Cor. 6:13; 2 Rom. 2:22; 1 Cor. 6:19; Prov. 1:10.

20. Romans 1:26–27; 1 Cor. 6:9; Romans 16:17; *CNE*, 2366–2403, 1002–1636.

21. Rev. 19:5; Eph. 4:25; Matt. 26:14–16; Ps. 50:19–22; Matt. 18:15; 1 Cor. 5:1.

22. Otten op. cit., 91–92; C. F. W. Walther, the first President of the LCMS, already in a series of lectures published in 1879 summarized the biblical attitude toward Communism. The following is taken from the outline of his lectures on “Communism and Socialism: Why Should and Can No Reasonable Man, Much Less a Christian, Take Part in the Efforts of Communists and Socialists?”

I. Because these efforts are contrary to reason, nature, and experience, for

1. it is a fact that men are not equal;

2. it is a fact that men are naturally selfish;

3. it is a fact that happiness does not consist in external advantages;

4. it is a fact well established by experience, that the communists have never attained their professed end, and only introduced sorrow and suffering.

II. Because these efforts are contrary to Christianity, for

1. What is adduced from the Scriptures in their favor, either proves nothing, or proves the contrary. ...

2. The efforts of the socialists and communists are in conflict with definite doctrines of Christianity, to wit:

- (a) the doctrines of personal property, as involved in the Seventh Commandment, "Thou shall not steal," and taught elsewhere in Scripture;
- (b) the doctrine taught in the Fifth Commandment and in other passages, that the government alone has the power of the sword;
- (c) the doctrine of the sanctity of marriage, as set forth in the Sixth Commandment and elsewhere;
- (d) the difference recognized in the Bible not only (a) between parents and children, man and wife, master and servant, employer and employed, but also (b) between rich and poor;
- (e) the scriptural doctrine that man shall eat his bread in the sweat of his face;
- (f) the scriptural doctrine that God would use men's adversities for their spiritual welfare;
- (g) the scriptural doctrine that human happiness is not to be sought in this world, but in God, and in the hope of a recompense and equalization in the world to come, and in the hope of eternal life, and finally
- (h) the scriptural doctrine that the source of all misery in this world is sin.

23. Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:10–12; 1 Cor. 4:1; Matt. 16:19; John 20:22–23; 1 Peter 2:9; Matt. 18:17–18.

24. 1 Tim 2:11–12; 1 Cor. 14:34–35; Romans 16:17.

25. Gal. 3:23.

26. James: 2:66.

27. Gal. 5:19–21; 1 John 4:20; Luke 14:27.

28. John 15:5. Gal. 5:22.

29. Matthew 28:19; Otten, ep. cit., 11–13;

The sixteenth-century Reformers did not modify the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in any manner. Article I of the Augsburg Confession declares:

Our churches, with common consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God; eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the term "person" they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.

They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this article, as the Manichaeans, who assumed two principles, one Good and the other Evil; also the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such. They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new, who, contending that there is but one Person, sophistically and impiously argue that the Word and the Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but that "Word" signifies a spoken word, and "Spirit" signifies motion created in things.

30. 1 John 5:20, Matt. 17:5; Romans 9:5.

31. John 1:1–2, Heb. 13:8, Matt. 28:20, John 21:17, Matt. 28:20.

32. John 1:3, Heb. 1:3; Matt. 9:6; John 5:27.

33. John 5:23; Heb 1:6.

34. John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 2:9; Is. 9:6; Matt. 28:20; Acts 3:15;

John 1:7.

35. Gal. 4:4–5; Heb. 2:14.

36. Ps. 49:7–8; Rom. 5:19.

37. 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:57.

38. 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:57.

39. Phil. 2:5–8.

40. Otten, op. cit., 16–17.

41. David Scaer writes in *Christology*, a volume in the new

Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics series (International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, Inc.):

"If the doctrine of justification by grace through faith is the center of Christian theology, then Christology is the foundation upon which rests justification and all the other articles of faith. Only that doctrine of justification is Christian which is based on the Christology revealed in the New Testament and later confessed by the ancient church in its Creeds and councils" (1).

Some modern theologians profess to believe in justification by faith, but they do not believe that Jesus Christ is God or that he was born of a virgin and rose physically from the dead.

Many church members maintain that it makes very little difference what one believes about Christ as long as one leads a good life and tries his best.

Scaer takes issue with various twentieth-century theologians who are not mentioned in Pieper's dogmatics. Scaer says that "Though (Karl) Barth is seen by certain Evangelical scholars as reviving the ancient church's Christology, his emphasis on 'the transcendent' may, in fact, make a real Incarnation impossible for him" (4). "Jurgen Moltmann, like Barth, speaks of two natures in Christ, but by attributing the death of Christ to the divine nature casts doubt on his understanding of the Incarnation" (4). "According to Bultmann, Jesus did not come from God as the Only-begotten Son of God; instead, the church elevated Jesus to a position of divine honor through a process of theological evolution. This position has been stated before by the Unitarians who called Jesus 'God' only in an honorific sense" (4). Scaer observes that Wolfhart Pannenberg, a Lutheran theologian, "speaks of Jesus becoming God in the Resurrection, but dilutes this belief by extending the integration of the divine and human in Jesus in such a way as to include all of humanity in this union. Moltmann says men are absorbed into God, while Pannenberg reverses this scheme with the view God is absorbed into humanity. In both theories the Incarnation is so universalized that its uniqueness in the person of Jesus is lost."

Roman Catholic Theologians

"The abandonment of Chalcedonian Christology was caused by a restrictive historical approach to the Christology of the New Testament. This practice is not limited to Protestant theologians. Piet J. A. M. Schoonenbert, in his book *The Christ*, claims that the man Jesus gives a personality to the Word of God. The humanity of Jesus does not allow for the Incarnation of the divine Logos" (4, 5).

Scaer says that "The contemporary Christology 'from below' simply does not take the preexistent divine nature into account. To preserve the human nature, Schoonenbert eliminates the divine nature altogether, a position which was not an option even for the heretics condemned by the ecumenical councils. This approach characterizes most modern approaches to Christology" (5).

Scaer shows that various prominent Roman Catholic theologians, who have not been excommunicated, deny the real deity of Christ. He writes: "Edward Schillebeeckx attempts to harmonize Roman Catholicism's commitment to the doctrine of the Trinity with his conviction that Christology must be approached 'from below.' This allows him to speak of the Trinity from the perspective of the Christology. It is true that the question of how the Trinity is revealed to humanity must be answered from the perspective of Christology. The revelatory question cannot be confused, however, with the ontological one which lies at the heart of the Christology of Nicaea and Chalcedon. Jesus is the preexistent Son of God, the divine Logos, even though this knowledge comes to us only by means of His incarnation. Schillebeeckx is unable to move beyond speaking of Christ's divinity in functional terms as the one in whom God gives us salvation.

"Another well-known Roman Catholic theologian, Hans Kung, who has been disqualified by the pope as a teacher of doctrine at the University of Tübingen because of his theological position, attributes to Christ only a functional deity. He is willing to use the Christological language of the Nicene Creed, but interprets this only in the functional sense of

God revealing Himself in Jesus. As radical as these Roman Catholic theologians are, they are bound to tradition in a way that Protestants are not and as a result they make some attempt to incorporate the terminology of the ancient councils in their functional Christology. Such a view may be called a 'Christology of revelation' because Christ reveals God without being God Himself. But like their Protestant counterparts, these Roman Catholic theologians are never able to move successfully from a Christology 'from below' to one 'from above.' Their approach may be more deceptive. Their use of traditional Christological language of the Creeds hides their true intentions. Any Christology which goes no further than a discussion of the historical Jesus places itself in opposition to the Christology of the Scriptures as well as that of the early church.

"Christology 'from below' was popularized by the late Anglican bishop and Cambridge don, John A. T. Robinson, in his books *Honest to God* and *The Human Face of God*. He describes the divine and human qualities of Jesus with traditional language. But when he speaks of Jesus as 'the personal representative of God: He stands in God's place. He is God to us and for us,' he is setting up a different Christology from that of Chalcedon. In the last years of his life Robinson gave up his attempts at dogmatics and devoted himself to New Testament studies, where his views were surprisingly conservative. As a theologian, Robinson was not a particularly original thinker and only synthesized the views of others. A lack of clarity and an inability to grapple with the materials may have been his real problem. To him, nevertheless, belongs the credit of bringing views into the open which the majority of scholars have held for nearly two centuries, so that the laity could understand.

"The issue of Christology 'from below' came to inflammatory expression in *The Myth of God Incarnate*. As occurs in any collection of essays from a group of authors, it lacks unity of thought, except in its consistent denial of orthodox Christology and its substitution of a Christology 'from below.' A debate began on British soil and soon raged throughout the English-speaking world. Frances Young, one of the contributors, 'discovered' that even the apostle Paul did not have an incarnational theology. John Hick, the editor, finds the Incarnation pernicious because it implies that there is no salvation outside of Christianity.

He calls for recognition of God's work through other religions" (7, 8).

42. Matthew 1:18–23; Luke 1:26–38; Isaiah 7:14.

43. The Revised Standard Version of the National Council of Churches translates Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. "Here the translators of the Revised Standard Version permitted their modern liberal theology to dictate how a particular passage ought to read.

The word *almah* is the Hebrew word which the RSV here designates as "a young woman."

While the etymological meaning of *almah* is a sexually mature girl, sound exegesis does not base the meaning of a word on its etymology. *Almah* is the feminine of *elem* which occurs twice in the Old Testament. In 1 Samuel 17:56, Saul called David, when he came back from fighting Goliath, an *elem*. He was then about twenty years old and unmarried; later Michal became his first wife. After that, David is never called an *elem*. Nowhere is *elem* used of a married man.

***Almah* Nothing but Virgin**

Almah occurs nine times in the Old Testament. In two places (Ps. 46:1; 1 Chronicles 15:20) we have the plural *alamoth*. There is no passage where *Almah* is not a virgin. Nowhere in the Bible or in any Hebrew or Semitic literature does *almah* mean anything different from *virgin*. Jastrow's dictionary shows that *almah* has no implication of marriage even in later Hebrew. The International Critical Commentary (ICC) cites Proverbs 30:19 as evidence that the word does not mean "virgin"; and then the ICC on Proverbs 30:19 cites Isaiah 7:14 as the only proof that the word means a married woman. Some have argued that if Isaiah had meant a "virgin" he would have used *bethulah*. However, in Joel 1:8, *bethulah* is used of a woman who has had a husband. *Almah* alone seems to insure the thought that this is an unmarried woman. **Luther**

Luther said:

If they make the claim that the Hebrew text does not state a virgin whereas *almah* means a young maiden, ... in the case of Christians, the answer is easy from St. Matthew (1:22–23) and Luke (1:27), both of whom apply the passage in Isaiah to Mary and translate the word *almah* "virgin," whom we believe rather than the whole world. For God the Holy Spirit speaks through St. Matthew and St. Luke, of whom we firmly believe that He understands the Hebrew language and words.

Luther also wrote: "If a Jew or a Hebraist could prove to me that *almah* could possibly mean a married woman in the Scripture, he shall get a hundred gold coins (Gulden) from me (God knows where I'll find them)." George Stoeckhardt, one of Lutheranism's most scholarly exegetes, who quotes this statement of Luther, adds: "Since then Hebrew philology has made great strides; but, if Luther lived today, he could still make that challenge without losing any money."

Almah was translated "virgin" by the Septuagint (200 B.C.), the Vulgate (400 A.D.), Luther (1534–1546), the King James Version (1611), the British Revision (1881–1885), and the American Standard Version (1901). Such great Christian scholars as Luther, Stoeckhardt, Ludwig Fuerbringer, Robert Dick Wilson, Walter A. Maier all insisted on "virgin." Now the RSV (1952) translates "a young woman" and even a Lutheran Advisory Committee on English Bible Versions says that "young woman" is a justifiable translation.

The Dead Sea Scroll

In the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah a little strip has been worn away at Isaiah 7:14. But there on the brittle margin stands *haalmah* untouched. May that be a sign to us. And may this amazing discovery of the Isaiah manuscript, as it wipes off the blackboard of modern comment a whole host of speculations, be a proof to us that "the grass dries up and die flower withers, but the Word of our God will stand forever;" Isaiah 40:8. In His Word God has defined *haalmah* as "the virgin." We may wither, but that will stand! (Otten, op. cit., 23–29; the author relied on "What Does *Almah* Mean?" William F. Beck, *Christian Handbook on Vital Issues* (Christian News), 537–548. See also the section on Messianic Prophecy in the *CNE*, 2665–2677; *CNE*, 263.

44. Otten, op. cit., 56–58.

45. 1 Tim. 2:6.

46. John 2:2.

47. Isaiah 53:4–6.

Modern liberals only teach that Christ somehow conquered the power of sin, death, and the power of the devil, but they reject the real doctrine of the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. The Bible, however, clearly teaches that Christ is not only the victor over sin but that he also fully appeased God's wrath for sin and satisfied the demands of divine justice. God is both a holy and a loving God. Since He is holy, He cannot tolerate sin in His sight. All men have sinned and no man can wipe away the guilt of His own sin (Psalm 14:3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8). God had decreed that because man had sinned, he would perish in everlasting damnation (Romans 6:23). But then God in His great love sent His Son to suffer and die in the place of all men. Christ satisfied the demands of divine justice by His perfect obedience to the Law (active obedience) and by His death on the cross (passive obedience).

Christ, who is expressly called "Priest" both in the Old Testament (Psalm 110:4: "Thou art a Priest forever"; Zechariah 6:13, "a Priest upon His throne") and in the New ("a Priest forever," Hebrews 5:6) has in the state of humiliation reconciled the whole world to God. 2 Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

Christ reconciled the world to God by offering Himself as propitiation to God for the sins of mankind. Paul declared that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6). John wrote that Christ "has paid for our sins, and not for ours only but for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). William Beck correctly comments in a footnote on this verse in his translation of the New Testament: "His sacrifice wipes out our sins and changes God's anger to love." Isaiah prophesied concerning the coming Messiah: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was

- wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:4–6)” (Otten, op. cit., 20).
48. Matthew 27:62–66; Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 25; John 20 and 21; Acts 10:39–42; 1 Corinthians 15; Otten, op. cit., 34–36.
 49. Luke 4:16–20; Matthew 12:40; Matthew 16:21.
 50. Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 25:31.
 51. Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:3; John 12:48.
 52. Acts 17:31; Mark 13:32; 2 Peter 3:10; Matt. 24:27; 1 Peter 4:7.
 53. Ephesians 2:1–2.
 54. 1 John 3:8; Rom. 5:12; Gen. 3:1–7; “The Removal of the Devil from the Old Testament by Modern Lutheran Theologians,” Raymond Surburg, *CNE*, 263; “The Biblical Doctrine of the Angels,” Raymond Surburg, *CNE*, 3010–3012. *CN*, April 17, 1989.
 55. 1 John 3:4.
 56. Romans 6:23.
 57. 1 John 1:8; Eph. 2:3; Romans 5:12; Romans 6:23; “The Seven Deadly Sins,” “Sloth,” “Pride,” “Gluttony,” “Lust,” “Anger,” “Greed,” “Envy,” Kurt Marquart, *CNE*, 1568–1570.
 58. Acts 10:43, Acts 4:12.
 59. Gal. 5:4–5.
 60. Acts 16:30–31, 34; Matt. 9:2.
 61. Rev. 1:5–6.
 62. Genesis 15:6.
 63. Psalm 32:2.
 64. Hab. 2:4.
 65. Romans 3:28; Romans 5:1.
 66. Ephesians 2:8–9.
 67. John 3:16. See “History, Christianity, and Justification.” Otten, op. cit., 24–26; *CNE*, 2525–2530; “The Doctrine of Justification, Kurt Marquart, *CNE*, 1105–1111; “After Four Centuries on Justification,” Paul Bartz, *CNE*, 1111; “Pope Paul and Justification by Faith,” *CNE*, 1112; “Who Insists upon Justification by Faith Alone?” *CNE*, 1113; “Justification—The Meaning of Justification: A Word Study,” Herman Otten, *CNE*, 1115–1117; “The 450th Anniversary of the Apology,” Raymond Surburg, *CNE*, 1118–1121.
 68. 1 Cor. 2:14; Romans 8:7; Eph. 2:1–19; 1 Cor. 12:1.
 69. Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 3:16; Acts 5:3–4; Ps. 139:7–10; Heb. 9:14; Ps. 33:6; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 4:14.
 70. 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rev. 22:17.
 71. Jer. 31:18; John 3:5–6; 1 Peter 2:9.
 72. “The Freedom of the Will,” Augsburg Confession, Article XVIII.
 73. John 11:25–26.
 74. John 14:19.
 75. Job 19:25–27; Otten, op. cit., 34–36, 3a–m.
 76. John 14:6; Acts 4:12.
 77. Luke 16:23–24; Matt. 10:28; Is. 66:24; Matt 7:13
 78. Luke 16:19–31; Hebrew 9:27; “Heaven and Hell,” Siegbert Becker, *CNE*, 2293–2295; “There Is a Hell,” *CNE*, 2296; “Eternal Damnation,” J. T. Mueller, *CNE*, 2297.
 79. Phil. 1:23; Luke 23:43; Rev. 14:13.
 80. 1 John 3:2; Ps. 16:1. John 17:24; Rom. 8:18; the LCMS confessed in its 1973 “Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles,” *CNE*, 1230–1231:

1. Christ as Savior and Lord

We believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord, and that through faith in Him we receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. We confess that our works cannot reconcile God or merit forgiveness of sins and grace but that we obtain forgiveness and grace only by faith when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ’s sake, who alone has been ordained the mediator and propitiation through whom the Father is reconciled” (AC, XX, 9). We believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and that all who die without faith in Him are eternally damned. We believe that those who believe

in Christ will enjoy a blissful relationship with Him during the interim between their death and His second coming and that on the last day their bodies will be raised.

We therefore reject the following:

1. That we may operate on the assumption that there may be other ways of salvation than through faith in Jesus Christ;
 2. That some persons who lack faith in Christ may be considered “anonymous Christians”;
 3. That there is no eternal hell for unbelievers and ungodly men.
81. “Some Remarks on the Question of the Salvation of the Heathen,” Theodore Engelder, *CNE*, 1330; “Mission Versus Missions,” William R. LeRoy, *CNE*, 1331–1333; “Christ the Only Way,” *CNE*, 1336; Otten, op. cit., 74–76.
 82. Rev. Wallace Schulz, Associate Speaker. International Lutheran Hour, “The Electronic Media,” Wallace Schulz, *CNE*, 2636–2637. Schulz writes:

The Key to It All: The Living Word

God has given us unlimited evangelistic power through His Living Word. Speaking through Isaiah the prophet of God says that His “Word,” when it is proclaimed, shall not return until it has “accomplished” that which He desires. The efficacy at God’s Word is explained by the revered biblical scholar Delitzsch: “(The Word) is not a mere sound or letter. As it goes forth out of the mouth of God it acquires shape, and in this shape is hidden a divine life, because of its divine origin; and so it runs, with life from God, endowed with divine power, supplied with divine commissions, like a swift messenger through nature and the world of man, there to melt ice as it were, and to heal and to save.”

A clear understanding of the biblical doctrine of the Word is absolutely essential to an effective approach to evangelism and missions. Embracing the now popular Protestant understanding of the Word of God automatically leads one to constantly see new methodologies in order to evangelize or carry out a mission program. Interestingly, when Paul in his loving admonition to Timothy gave the simple and yet all-embracing command and approach to missions, “Preach the Word,” this apostle was imparting an inspired message which the bulk of today’s media-religionists apparently do not comprehend.

Thus, we agree with Luther that the Word does not merely trip man’s trigger of potential ... for natural man has no spiritual potential (Eph. 2:1). Instead, the word effects even that which it commands—it not only calls for conversion and sanctification. *The Word itself converts and sanctifies.*

The Word is efficacious. A serious study of Luther’s introductory sermons on the Gospel of John would be a surprise to many involved in today’s “electronic church.” His approach to the Word, totally different from what is held by the majority of evangelicals today, yet solidly biblical, is indeed exciting: in fact, it is so inspiring, it is so emerging, that if this understanding of the Word were recaptured today by Protestants, there would be a new Reformation and a phenomenal mission and evangelism threat, even among Lutherans!

103. Keil/Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 7, 359. Luther also speaks of the Word as an active agent in his sermon on John 1:1–7; St. Paul also speaks about the Word being “at work” within believers (2 Thess. 2:13).

104. Luther’s exhaustive (and not easy to read) work “The Bondage of the Will” is a thorough treatment of man’s helpless spiritual condition as stated in the Scriptures. For those interested in a shorter and quite provocative treatment, they might turn to the April 1966 issue of the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 287. This article, “Luther Against Erasmus,” was originally delivered by James I. Packer, the well-known Anglican author and clergyman, to the pastoral conference of the English Lutheran Church, October 30, 1964.

105. Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 1:21; Colossians 2:13; Romans 9:16; John 1:13.

106. John 6:63.
 107. Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 22, p. 12.
 108. Jeremiah 1:9–10; Romans 10:17.
 109. John 15:3.
 110. John 6:27.
83. 2 Samuel: 2:11
 84. Matt. 7:15; Romans 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14–18; Gal. 5:9; 2 John 10:11.
 85. 1 Peter 2:9.
 86. Acts 17:26.
 87. 2 John 9–10; Titus 3:10–11; Romans 16:17; Otten. op. cit., 69.
 88. The LCMS says in its *Brief Statement (CNE, appendix vols. 1 and 2)*:

28. On Church-fellowship—since God ordained that His Word only without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church, 1 Pet. 4:11; John 8:31–32; 1 Tim. 6:3–4. All Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church bodies. Matt. 7:15, to have church-fellowship only with orthodox church bodies, and, in case they have strayed into heterodox church bodies, to leave them, Rom. 16:17. We repudiate unionism, that is, church fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command, as causing divisions in the Church, Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9:10, and as involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely, 2 Tim. 2:17–21.

29. The orthodox character of a church is established not by its mere name nor by its outward acceptance of, and subscription to, an orthodox creed, but by the doctrine which is actually taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications. On the other hand, a church does not forfeit its orthodox character through the casual intrusion of errors, provided these are combated and eventually removed by means of doctrinal discipline. Acts 20:30; 1 Tim. 1:3.

Dr. C. F. W. Walther, first President of the LCMS, said at the first convention of the Synod's Iowa District in 1873:

As soon as we look more to our Synod than to the invisible kingdom of God, the kingdom of grace and salvation, we begin to be a sect. For this is reality the essence of sectarianism that one has his eye on his little fellowship above all, even though the kingdom of God may suffer harm thereby. That preacher is no true preacher who merely seeks to fanaticize his congregation for the Lutheran Church, or for the Missouri Synod, or, worse still, only for the Iowa District. Such men are bad preachers. They must rather direct people to Christ and say: See, we preach the pure Word of God, in which the everlasting Gospel of Christ is continued; that is why you should adhere to us, and therefore we say, leave us as soon as we no longer do this! For salvation by no means depends on us, nor also on the Missouri Synod. So if it no longer preaches the pure Word of God, then it is worthy of nothing but that one forsake it.

Trinity
 New Haven, MO

5. SEMINARY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

5-01

To Convene a Task Force to Enhance the Lutheran Identity of CUS Colleges and Universities

WHEREAS, One of the objectives of the Synod is to “aid congregations to . . . support synodical colleges, universities, and seminaries” (Constitution, Art. III 5), and part of the purpose of those colleges and universities is to “recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers” (Art. III 3); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran identity of the colleges and universities in the Concordia University System (CUS) should be more than the fact that some of them “train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers” but that they are also distinctly Lutheran schools of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Many Christian scholars have become concerned about the loss of denominational and even Christian identity by colleges and universities that were founded and funded by Christian churches in America; and

WHEREAS, The decline in Christian identity of these American schools was brilliantly researched and reported by James Tunstead Burtchaell in his celebrated book *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), which included a report on Concordia University—River Forest; and

WHEREAS, Similar reports and literature have been produced by both Evangelical and Catholic scholars, including George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Arthur F. Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian Academy* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975); Arthur F. Holmes, *Building the Christian Academy* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001); James Tunstead Burtchaell, “The Decline and Fall of the Christian College” *First Things* 12 (April 1991):16–29 and 13 (May 1991):30–38; and the special issue of *First Things* titled “Degrees of Faith: God and America’s Colleges,” 207 (November 2010); and

WHEREAS, The January 2013 *Reporter* (p. 2) noted that the CUS presented to the LCMS Board of Directors a plan to strengthen the fiscal and administrative structure of the CUS called “CUS 2.0,” and this is an important step forward for the CUS and its schools; and

WHEREAS, It is proper that the matter of Lutheran identity be taken up by the LCMS President in his official role as doctrinal supervisor of the Synod’s agencies and schools (Constitution, Art. XI B 1; Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1 [c]; Bylaw 3.3.1.3 [d]; Bylaw 3.3.1.3 [f]; etc.); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS President is hereby directed to convene a task force for the primary purpose of investigating, reporting on, and enhancing issues of Lutheran identity in all the CUS schools, as well as the secondary purposes of strengthening the CUS schools’ connection to the Synod and increasing financial and organizational efficiencies; and be it further

Resolved, That this task force consider the possibility of recommending to the Synod a chancellor of CUS schools, whose primary purpose would be supervising issues of Lutheran identity and doctrinal concerns; and be it further

Resolved, That the President appoint members of the LCMS to this task force, which may include, solely at his discretion, one or more CUS faculty members, administrators, regents, or presidents, as well as other LCMS persons not working for or with any of the CUS

schools; and that he or his personal representative be appointed as an *ex officio* member of this task force; and be it finally

Resolved, That this task force make its first reports and recommendations to the LCMS President in 2015 and their final report and recommendation to the 2016 LCMS convention.

Trinity Lutheran Church
Evansville, Indiana

5-02

To Encourage Faithful Spiritual Oversight in Concordia University System

WHEREAS, The Circuit 12 Forum of the CNH District has expressed concern with oversight of instruction regarding morality and doctrine in the Concordia University System; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the colleges and universities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is to be Christ-centered in their character, as listed in Bylaw 3.6.6.6; and

WHEREAS, The schools in the Concordia University System were established to impact their students with the Gospel of Jesus Christ taught and witnessed by the instructors and administrators in the teaching and practice of the schools; and

WHEREAS, The schools in the Concordia University System were created in order to prepare young people to be witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world; and

WHEREAS, There is concern that the mission of the Concordia Universities to be Christ-centered may not have been carried out in some classrooms and subjects in favor of a world-centered teaching; and

WHEREAS, The board of directors of the Concordia University System has authority with respect to the Synod’s colleges and universities to provide for the education of preseminary students, ministers of religion—commissioned, other professional church workers of the Synod, and others desiring a Christian liberal arts education; and

WHEREAS, The district presidents have ecclesiastical supervision over the called ministers in their districts; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CNH District meeting in convention direct the CNH district president to communicate these and other concerns as they may arise to the presidents of the districts in which the universities reside; and be it further

Resolved, That the board of directors of the Concordia University System be encouraged to be faithful overseers of the universities of the Concordia University System; and be it further

Resolved, That the administrations and faculties of all educational institutions of the Synod be attentive to their purpose to be witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in everything they teach and oversee; and be it finally

Resolved, That this overture be proposed to the 2013 LCMS convention.

California-Nevada-Hawaii District

5-03

To Maintain Accountability of Synod Universities

WHEREAS, One of the most important ways in which the Synod’s universities are held accountable to the membership of the Synod is through the election of four members of university boards of regents at Synod conventions on a regular basis and the election of four others at the respective district conventions; and

WHEREAS, In the restructuring of the Synod in 2010, the task force added a bylaw that mandated that “no less than four and no more than eight laypersons” are to be appointed as voting members by the board of regents; and

WHEREAS, The appointed members of the boards of regents are allowed to appoint their successors, and this practice of self-perpetuating appointments is not allowed on the LCMS Board of Directors (Bylaw 3.3.4.1.5) or on LCMS seminary boards of regents (Bylaw 3.10.4.2.4); and

WHEREAS, In the absence of one elected member or other situations, the eight appointed members could control the board against the will of the members elected by the Synod and district; and

WHEREAS, This situation undermines the accountability of all nine Synod colleges and universities to their chief constituency, the membership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS consider changing present Bylaw 3.10.5.2.3 by adding to its end this sentence: “Appointed members may not vote on the appointment of other members of the board.”

Indiana District
Wyoming District

5-04

To Address Need for Board Members with Specialized Qualifications

Rationale:

Boards of Regents: Because of the increasing complexity of oversight and governance of higher education programs and facilities, individuals who serve as board members should be required to possess appropriate specialized qualifications (in addition to Bylaw 3.8.8.6.2 requiring board members to be members of member congregations of the Synod). These qualifications grow out of the many technical matters that must be understood and considered as a regent.

1. Each board of regents has the fiduciary responsibility to set strategic directions for the institution and to govern the areas of academics, finance, student life, enrollment, and fund development. The rapidly changing and highly competitive arena of American higher education requires governance by regents who can provide visionary leadership that addresses today’s challenges.
2. The Synod’s colleges and universities have hundreds of employees and thousands of students. Personnel, legal, and administrative issues are inherent in a complex organization.
3. The colleges and universities of the LCMS have facilities with a replacement value exceeding \$1.5 billion, some of which is financed through tax exempt bonds. Seven of the colleges and universities manage operational budgets exceeding \$20 million, with two institutional budgets exceeding \$55 million. Governing these institutions requires that the regents provide significant professional competencies.

Concordia University System Board: The national board charged with providing oversight and guidance to the boards of regents should be required to have members with special qualifications corresponding to those of regents; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.6.6ff., Bylaws 3.10.5ff., and Bylaws 3.12.3ff. be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Concordia University System

3.6.6 Concordia University System, as a corporation under the laws of the State of Missouri, is operated by its members and board of di-

rectors in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation and corporate bylaws to further the objectives of higher education within the Synod. Any amendments to these Articles of Incorporation shall be subject to approval by the members.

3.6.6.1 The Board of Directors of the Concordia University System has authority with respect to the Synod’s colleges and universities. It shall have the overall responsibility to provide for the education of pre-seminary students, ministers of religion—commissioned, other professional church workers of the Synod, and others desiring a Christian liberal arts education by coordinating the activities of the Synod’s colleges and universities as a unified system of the Synod through their respective boards of regents.

3.6.6.2 The members of Concordia University System shall consist of the Synod and the colleges and universities of the Synod. The Board of Directors of the Synod and the Council of Presidents of the Synod each shall elect delegates representing the Synod. The boards of regents of the colleges and universities of the Synod shall elect delegates representing the colleges and universities. The numbers of delegates elected by the Board of Directors of the Synod, the Council of Presidents, and the boards of regents shall be established by the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Concordia University System.

3.6.6.3 The Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall be composed of nine voting members and four nonvoting members (no more than one member elected by the Synod shall be from the same district, and no executive, faculty member, or staff member from a Lutheran institution of higher education may serve on the Board of Directors of Concordia University System as a voting member):

Voting Members:

1. Two ministers of religion—ordained elected by the Synod
2. One minister of religion—commissioned elected by the Synod
3. Two laypersons elected by the Synod
4. Three laypersons appointed by the delegates of the members of Concordia University System
5. The President of the Synod or his representative

Nonvoting Advisory Members:

1. A district president appointed by the Council of Presidents
2. The Chief Financial Officer of the Synod
3. The Chief Mission Officer or his representative
4. One university president

Persons elected or appointed to the Concordia University System Board of Directors should have demonstrated familiarity and support of the institutions and shall possess two or more of the following qualifications: theological acumen, an advanced degree, experience in higher education administration, administration of complex organizations, finance, law, investments, technology, human resources, facilities management, or fund development. The Chief Administrative Officer of the Synod (or a designee) and the Secretary of the Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that nominees are qualified to serve as stated above.

3.6.6.4 The presidents and interim presidents of the Synod’s educational institutions shall comprise an advisory council which shall meet at the call of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System and report the results of its studies to the board for consideration in making its decisions.

3.6.6.5 In keeping with the objectives and the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall

- (a) develop detailed coordinating policies and procedures for cooperative roles and responsibilities of the colleges and universities;

- (b) together with boards of regents and the Board of Directors of the Synod, coordinate institutional planning and approve capital projects in relation to campus property-management agreements and institutional master plans;
- (c) review and approve new programs and manage peer review of programs in the interest of the institution(s) and the Synod;
- (d) establish policy guidelines involving distribution of grants from the Synod (restricted and unrestricted) and efforts for securing additional financial support from other sources;
- (e) obtain data on liberal arts education and current trends and government regulations in higher education that impact upon collaborative efforts and relationships within the Concordia University System;
- (f) together with the Board of Directors of the Synod, establish and monitor criteria for determining institutional viability, fiscal and otherwise;
- (g) together with districts, congregations, local boards of regents, and national efforts, assist congregations and districts in student recruitment for both professional church work and lay higher education;
- (h) serve as a resource for the development of lists of potential teaching and administrative personnel;
- (i) provide prior approval for all initial full-time theology appointments to college/university faculties, based on selection criteria and procedures recommended by the Council of Presidents;
- (ij) upon request of the President of the Synod, assist in monitoring the ongoing faithfulness of all Concordia University System institutions to the Synod's doctrine and practices;
- (jk) together with schools, districts, congregations, and national efforts, foster continuing education for ministers of religion—commissioned; and
- (kl) have authority, after receiving the consent of the Board of Directors of the Synod by its two-thirds vote and also the consent of either the Council of Presidents by its two-thirds vote or the appropriate board of regents by its two-thirds vote, to consolidate, relocate, separate, or divest a college or university.

3.6.6.6 The Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall receive evidence on a regular basis from boards of regents and campus administrators that they are that it is complying with an emphasis on mission-focused leadership and, with the following key principles to guide the future of the Concordia University System,

- (1) actively working to preserve their work to maintain and enhance the Christ-centered Lutheran identity by supporting the objectives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and complying with an emphasis on mission-focused leadership in service to Church and community; character of its institutions;
- (2) delivering academic and student programs designed to give students Christ-centered values and tools that equip them for vocations within the Church and world;
- (3) preparing graduates for service as ministers of religion—commissioned and for continued study for ministers of religion—ordained for the Synod; provide ministers of religion—commissioned for the Synod;
- (34) implementing accepted higher education standards, including policies that ensure fiscal and institutional viability:
 - Achieving positive annual financial results
 - Acquiring quality administrators, faculty, and staff
 - Meeting fiscal and academic benchmarks
 - Building endowments and managing investment assets for the long-term benefit of the institutions

- Acquiring and managing long-term debt carefully and responsibly work to ensure a strong fiscal future for its institutions

- (45) sustaining a Concordia experience that reflects strong institutional quality, provides opportunities to be of greater service to the Church and society, and mobilizes individuals in a way that aids the campuses in achieving their collective vision with respect to their identity, quality, and viability; and establish expectations for the quality of its institutions;
- (56) maintaining accountability of its institutions implement the preceding four principles through governance structures that require more clearly focused accountability of its institutions to the system-wide board, while expecting stronger governance of the institutions by their boards of regents.

College and University Boards of Regents

3.10.5 Each college and university of the Synod, with its president and faculty, shall be governed by a board of regents, subject to general policies set by the Synod.

3.10.5.1 In exercising its relationship to the Synod and to the Concordia University System as set forth elsewhere under Bylaw 3.6.6ff., the board of regents of each institution shall consider as one of its primary duties the defining and fulfilling of the mission of the institution within the broad assignment of the Synod.

3.10.5.2 The board of regents of each college and university shall consist of no more than 17 voting members:

1. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the conventions of the Synod.
2. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the geographical district in which the institution is located.
3. No less than four and no more than eight laypersons shall be appointed as voting members by the board of regents.
4. The president of the district in which the college or university is located or a district vice-president as his standing representative shall serve as an ex officio member.
5. College and university boards of regents members may be elected or appointed to serve a maximum of three consecutive three-year terms and must hold membership in a member congregation of the Synod.
6. Not more than two of the elected members shall be members of the same congregation.
7. Persons elected or appointed to a board of regents should ~~possess several of the following qualifications:~~ be knowledgeable regarding the region in which the institution is located, should have demonstrated familiarity and support of the institution, and shall possess two or more of the following qualifications: theological acumen, possess an advanced academic degree, and have experience in higher education administration, administration of complex organizations, finance, law, investments, technology, human resources, facilities management, or fund development. Demonstrated familiarity and support of the institution is a desired quality in the candidate. When regents are elected at the national convention of the Synod, qualifications shall be reviewed and verified as outlined in Bylaw 3.12.3.7. When regents are elected a district conventions or appointed by the board of regents, qualifications of all nominees, including floor nominees, shall be reviewed and verified by the chair and secretary of the district board of directors or their designees.

3.10.5.3 Vacancies that occur on a board of regents shall be filled in the following manner:

- (a) If the vacancy occurs in a position that was previously filled by the board of regents, the board of regents shall be the appointing body.
- (b) If the vacancy occurs in a position that was previously filled at a district convention, the district board of directors shall be the appointing body.
- (c) If the vacancy occurs in a position that had been filled by a national convention of the Synod, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall be the appointing body and shall follow the nomination procedure provided for filling vacancies on elected boards and commissions of the Synod as outlined in Bylaw 3.2.5.

3.10.5.4 The board of regents of each institution shall become familiar with and develop an understanding of pertinent policies, standards, and guidelines of the Synod and the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.

- (a) It shall develop ~~details of detailed~~ policies and procedures for governance of the institution, including but not limited to
 - (1) attention to specific ways that the institution is confessing Jesus Christ and fulfilling His mission in our world;
 - (2) annual certification of the institution's financial viability;
 - (3) creation, modification, and abolition of administrative positions;
 - (4) processes for filling and vacating administrative positions;
 - (5) a clear plan for succession of administration to ensure that the institution continues to function effectively in the case of incapacity or lengthy absence of the president.
- (b) It shall coordinate institutional planning with other Concordia University System schools and approve master plans for its college or university.
- (c) It shall review and approve academic programs recommended by the administration and faculty after assessment of system policies in accordance with Concordia University System standards and guidelines and institutional interests and capacities.
- (d) It shall review and approve the institutional budget.
- (e) It shall approve institutional fiscal arrangements, develop the financial resources necessary to operate the institution, and participate in its support program.
 - (1) Only the board of regents is authorized to establish a line of credit or to borrow for operating needs, subject to the policies of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System and the Board of Directors of the Synod.
 - (2) All surplus institutional funds above an adequate working balance shall be deposited with the Concordia University System for investment. Earnings from such investments shall be credited to the depositing institution.
- (f) It shall establish appropriate policies for institutional student aid.
- (g) It shall participate fully in the procedures for the selection and regular review of the president of the institution and of the major administrators; approve of the appointment of faculty members who meet the qualifications of their positions; approve sabbatical and study leaves; and encourage faculty development and research.
- (h) It shall take the leadership in assuring the preservation and improvement of the assets of the institution and see to the acquisition, management, use, and disposal of the properties and equipment of the institution within the guidelines set by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
 - (i) It shall operate and manage the institution as the agent of the Synod, in which ownership is primarily vested and which exercises its ownership through the Board of Directors as custodian of the Synod's property, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System, and the respective board of regents as the local governing body. Included in the operation and management are such responsibilities as these:
 - (1) Carrying out efficient business management through a business manager appointed on recommendation of the president of the institution and responsible to him.
 - (2) Receiving of all gifts by deed, will, or otherwise made to the institution and managing the same, in accordance with the terms of the instrument creating such gift and in accordance with the policies of the board of regents.
 - (3) Demonstrating concern for the general welfare of the institutional staff members and other employees, adoption of regulations governing off-campus activities, development of policies regarding salary and wage scales, tenure, promotion, vacations, health examinations, dismissal, retirement, pension, and other employee welfare benefit provisions.
 - (4) Determining that the charter, articles of incorporation, constitution, and bylaws of the institution conform to and are consistent with those of the Synod.
 - (5) Serving as the governing body corporate of the institution, vested with all powers which its members may exercise in law either as directors, trustees, or members of the body corporate, unless in conflict with the laws of the domicile of the institution or its articles of incorporation. In such event, the board of regents shall have power to perform such acts as may be required by law to effect the corporate existence of the institution.
 - (6) Establishing and placing a priority on the capital needs of the institution and determining the plans for the maintenance and renovation of the buildings and property and purchase of needed equipment, but having no power by itself to close the institution or to sell all or any part of the property which constitutes the main campus.
 - (7) Recognizing that the authority of the board of regents resides in the board as a whole and delegating the application of its policies and execution of its resolutions to the president of the institution as its executive officer.
 - (8) Establishing a comprehensive policy statement regarding student life that commits the institution to the principles of Christian discipline, evangelical dealing, and good order. Reviewing and approving the major policies of the institution regarding student life and activities as developed by the faculty and recommended by the administration.
 - (9) Promoting the public relations of the institution and developing the understanding and cooperation of its constituency.
 - (10) Requiring regular reports from the president of the institution as the executive officer of the board and through him from other officers and staff members in order to make certain that the work of the institution is carried out effectively.

Committee for Convention Nominations

3.12.3 The Committee for Convention Nominations is to be regarded as an ad hoc convention committee to which limitations on holding multiple offices do not apply.

3.12.3.1 In preparation for a convention of the Synod, one-half of the districts shall elect, through their regular election procedures at the district convention, one member to the Committee for Convention Nominations and an alternate:

Atlantic	Nebraska
California-Nevada-Hawaii	North Wisconsin
Central Illinois	Northern Illinois
Florida-Georgia	Northwest
Indiana	Oklahoma
Iowa West	SELC
Minnesota South	South Dakota
Missouri	Southern
	Wyoming

3.12.3.2 In preparation for the following convention, the remaining districts shall elect in the same manner:

Eastern	New Jersey
English	North Dakota
Iowa East	Ohio
Kansas	Rocky Mountain
Michigan	South Wisconsin
Mid-South	Southeastern
Minnesota North	Pacific Southwest
Montana	Southern Illinois
New England	Texas

3.12.3.3 One-half of the electing districts shall be designated by the Secretary of the Synod to elect a professional church worker and the other half a layperson, with roles reversed every six years.

3.12.3.4 The Secretary of the Synod shall handle the preliminary work for the Committee for Convention Nominations.

- (a) He shall begin to solicit names of potential nominees from officers, boards, commissions, and agencies of the Synod and its districts at least 24 months prior to the convention.
- (b) Approximately 24 months before a regular meeting of the Synod in convention, he shall solicit from the mission boards and the synodwide corporate entity boards descriptions of criteria for qualified candidates to serve on those boards.
- (c) With such criteria in view, the Secretary shall issue the first call for nominations through a publication of the Synod and on the Synod Web site 18 months before the convention, soliciting names from mission boards and synodwide corporate entity boards, as well as congregations, district presidents, district boards of directors, circuit counselors, and other likely sources.
- (d) All incumbents eligible for reelection shall be considered for nominations.
- (e) Qualifications of each nominee shall be submitted together with the names on forms made available on the Synod's Web site.
- (f) All suggested names and information for consideration by the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod no later than nine months prior to the convention of the Synod.
- (g) The Secretary shall present the names and information gathered to the Committee for Convention Nominations at its first meeting.

3.12.3.5 The first meeting of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be at the call of the Secretary of the Synod at least six months prior to the convention of the Synod.

- (a) The Secretary shall not serve as a member of the committee, but he shall convene the initial meeting of the committee and be available, upon call, for consultation.
- (b) The committee shall elect its own chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary and shall organize its work in whatever way it deems necessary.

- (c) The committee shall inform itself as to the duties and requirements of each position to be filled and thereby be guided in its selection of nominees.
- (d) In the case of the boards of regents of educational institutions of the Synod, the committee shall consult with the President of the Synod or the Board of Directors of Concordia University System and to receive their input for the committee's consideration. The president of the Concordia University System (or a designee) and the Secretary of the Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that nominees are qualified as stated in Bylaw 3.10.5.2.7.

3.12.3.6 The Committee for Convention Nominations shall nominate candidates for all elective offices, boards, and commissions except President and vice-presidents and elective positions requiring regional nominations (Bylaws 3.12.2.5; 3.3.4.1; 3.8.2.2; 3.8.3.2).

- (a) At least two candidates shall be nominated for each position.
- (b) The committee shall determine its complete list of candidates and alternates, obtain the consent of the persons it proposes to nominate, and transmit its final report at least five months prior to the convention to the Secretary of the Synod, who shall post the list on the Synod's Web site and provide for its publication in a pre-convention issue of an official periodical of the Synod and in the Convention Workbook.
- (c) The committee's report shall list the qualifications of various positions used in the solicitation of candidates and contain pertinent information concerning each candidate, such as occupation or profession; district affiliation; residence; specific experience; number of years as a member of an LCMS congregation; present position; offices previously held in a congregation, district or the Synod; qualifications for the office in question; and, if the candidate so desires, also a brief personal statement.

3.12.3.7 The chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall submit the committee's report in person to the convention at one of its earliest sessions.

- (a) The convention may amend the slate by nominations from the floor.
- (b) Floor nominations shall be brought individually before the convention for approval before being added to the ballot. No floor nominations shall be accepted which would preclude, by virtue of election limitations of such office, election of any pending nominee already on the slate of candidates received from the Committee for Convention Nominations without disclosing such potential effect immediately to the convention.
- (c) Such floor nominations may only be made from the list of names which have previously been offered to the Committee for Convention Nominations prior to the final deadline for the submission of nominations, unless the convention shall otherwise order by a simple majority vote. The president of the Concordia University System (or a designee) and the Secretary of the Synod (or a designee) shall verify all floor nominees to serve as a member of a Concordia University System board of regents possess the qualifications as stated in Bylaw 3.10.5.2.5. The Chief Administrative Officer of the Synod (or a designee) and the Secretary of the Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that all floor nominees to serve as a member of the Concordia University System Board of Directors possess the qualifications as stated in Bylaw 3.6.6.3.

- (d) If the convention approves the receipt of such additional nominations, any delegate making such a nomination shall have secured prior written consent of the candidate being nominated and shall immediately submit it to the chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations, along with required pertinent information concerning the nominee as detailed in Bylaw 3.12.3.6 (c).
- (e) Whenever possible, chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall have on hand at the convention a reserve list of nominees, approved by the committee, for use if required.
- (f) Whenever possible, the Committee for Convention Nominations should be informed in advance if any new board or commission is likely to be established at a convention of the Synod, so that it may have a slate of candidates in readiness.

3.12.3.8 The Committee for Convention Nominations, in consultation with officials of the Synod, shall maintain a description of the desirable expertise required for each elected position and shall transmit this information together with suggestions for improvement of procedures to the next committee through the Secretary of the Synod.

CUS Board of Directors; LCMS Board of Directors; Board of Regents, Concordia St. Paul; Concordia University Texas; Concordia University Nebraska; Concordia University St. Paul

5-05

To Address Need for Board Members with Specialized Qualifications

Rationale

Boards of Regents: Because of the increasing complexity of oversight and governance of higher education programs and facilities, individuals who serve as board members should be required to possess appropriate specialized qualifications (in addition to Bylaw 3.10.5.2, 5 requiring board members to be members of member congregations of the Synod). These qualifications grow out of the many technical matters that must be understood and considered as a regent.

1. Each board of regents has the fiduciary responsibility to set strategic directions for the institution and to govern the areas of academics, finance, student life, enrollment, and fund development. The rapidly changing and highly competitive arena of American higher education requires governance by regents who can provide visionary leadership that addresses today's challenges.
2. The Synod's colleges and universities have hundreds of employees and thousands of students. Personnel, legal, and administrative issues are inherent in a complex organization.
3. The colleges and universities of the LCMS have facilities with a replacement value exceeding \$1.5 billion, some of which is financed through tax-exempt bonds. Seven of the colleges and universities manage operational budgets exceeding \$20 million, with two institutional budgets exceeding \$55 million. Governing these institutions requires that the regents provide significant professional competencies.

Concordia University System Board: The national board charged with providing oversight and guidance to the boards of regents should be required to have members with special qualifications corresponding to those of regents.

Therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.6.6, 3.10.5, and 3.12.3 be amended as follows:

Concordia University System

3.6.6 Concordia University System, as a corporation under the laws of the State of Missouri, is operated by its members and board of di-

rectors in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation and corporate bylaws to further the objectives of higher education within the Synod. Any amendments to these articles of incorporation shall be subject to approval by the members.

3.6.6.1 The Board of Directors of the Concordia University System has authority with respect to the Synod's colleges and universities. It shall have the overall responsibility to provide for the education of pre-seminary students, ministers of religion—commissioned, other professional church workers of the Synod, and others desiring a Christian liberal arts education by coordinating the activities of the Synod's colleges and universities as a unified system of the Synod through their respective boards of regents.

3.6.6.2 The members of Concordia University System shall consist of the Synod and the colleges and universities of the Synod. The Board of Directors of the Synod and the Council of Presidents of the Synod each shall elect delegates representing the Synod. The boards of regents of the colleges and universities of the Synod shall elect delegates representing the colleges and universities. The numbers of delegates elected by the Board of Directors of the Synod, the Council of Presidents, and the boards of regents shall be established by the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Concordia University System.

3.6.6.3 The Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall be composed of nine voting members and four nonvoting members (no more than one member elected by the Synod shall be from the same district, and no executive, faculty member, or staff member from a Lutheran institution of higher education may serve on the Board of Directors of Concordia University System as a voting member):

Voting Members:

1. Two ministers of religion—ordained elected by the Synod
2. One minister of religion—commissioned elected by the Synod
3. Two laypersons elected by the Synod
4. Three laypersons appointed by the delegates of the members of Concordia University System
5. The President of the Synod or his representative

Nonvoting Advisory Members:

1. A district president appointed by the Council of Presidents
2. The Chief Financial Officer of the Synod
3. The Chief Mission Officer or his representative
4. One university president

Persons elected or appointed to the Concordia University System Board of Directors should have demonstrated familiarity and support of the institutions and shall possess two or more of the following qualifications: theological acumen, an advanced degree, experience in higher education administration, administration of complex organizations, finance, law, investments, technology, human resources, facilities management, or fund development. The Chief Administrative Officer of the Synod (or a designee) and the Secretary of Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that nominees are qualified to serve as stated above.

3.6.6.4 The presidents and interim presidents of the Synod's educational institutions shall comprise an advisory council which shall meet at the call of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System and report the results of its studies to the board for consideration in making its decisions.

3.6.6.5 In keeping with the objectives and the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall

- (a) develop detailed coordinating policies and procedures for cooperative roles and responsibilities of the colleges and universities;
- (b) together with boards of regents and the Board of Directors of the Synod, coordinate institutional planning and approve capital projects in relation to campus property-management agreements and institutional master plans;

- (c) review and approve new programs and manage peer review of programs in the interest of the institution(s) and the Synod;
- (d) establish policy guidelines involving distribution of grants from the Synod (restricted and unrestricted) and efforts for securing additional financial support from other sources;
- (e) obtain data on liberal arts education and current trends and government regulations in higher education that impact upon collaborative efforts and relationships within the Concordia University System;
- (f) together with the Board of Directors of the Synod, establish and monitor criteria for determining institutional viability, fiscal and otherwise;
- (g) together with districts, congregations, local boards of regents, and national efforts, assist congregations and districts in student recruitment for both professional church work and lay higher education;
- (h) serve as a resource for the development of lists of potential teaching and administrative personnel;

[Note: Paragraph (i) from the version submitted by the CUS Board of Directors has been deleted in this version by Concordia University Irvine.]

- (i) provide prior approval for all initial full-time theology appointments to college or university faculties, based on selection criteria and procedures recommended by the Council of Presidents;
- (k) together with schools, districts, congregations, and national efforts, foster continuing education for ministers of religion—commissioned; and
- (l) have authority, after receiving the consent of the Board of Directors of the Synod by its two-thirds vote and also the consent of either the Council of Presidents by its two-thirds vote or the appropriate board of regents by its two-thirds vote, to consolidate, relocate, separate, or divest a college or university.

3.6.6.6 The Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall receive evidence on a regular basis from the boards of regents and campus administrators that they are doing the following:

1. Actively working to preserve their Lutheran identity by supporting the objectives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and complying with an emphasis on mission-focused leadership in service to church and community
2. Delivering academic and student programs designed to give students Christ-centered values and tools that equip them for vocations within the Church and world
3. Preparing graduates for service as ministers of religion—commissioned and for continued study for ministers of religion—ordained for the Synod
4. Implementing accepted higher education standards, including policies that ensure fiscal and institutional viability:
 - Achieving positive annual financial results
 - Acquiring quality administrators, faculty, and staff
 - Meeting fiscal and academic benchmarks
 - Building endowments and managing investment assets for the long-term benefit of the institutions
 - Acquiring and managing long-term debt carefully and responsibly
5. Sustaining a Concordia experience that reflects strong institutional quality, provides opportunities to be of greater service to the Church and society, and mobilizes individuals in a way that aids the campuses in achieving their collective vision with respect to their identity, quality and viability
6. Maintaining accountability of its institutions to the system-wide board, while expecting stronger governance of the institutions by their boards of regents

Colleges and Universities

College and University Boards of Regents

3.10.5 Each college and university of the Synod, with its president and faculty, shall be governed by a board of regents, subject to general policies set by the Synod.

3.10.5.1 In exercising its relationship to the Synod and to the Concordia University System as set forth elsewhere under Bylaw 3.6.6ff., the board of regents of each institution shall consider as one of its primary duties the defining and fulfilling of the mission of the institution within the broad assignment of the Synod.

3.10.5.2 The board of regents of each college and university shall consist of no more than 17 voting members:

1. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the conventions of the Synod.
2. One ordained minister, one commissioned minister, and two laypersons shall be elected by the geographical district in which the institution is located.
3. No less than four and no more than eight laypersons shall be appointed as voting members by the board of regents.
4. The president of the district in which the college or university is located or a district vice-president as his standing representative shall serve as an ex officio member.
5. College and university boards of regents members may be elected or appointed to serve a maximum of three consecutive three-year terms and must hold membership in a member congregation of the Synod.
6. Not more than two of the elected members shall be members of the same congregation.
7. Persons elected or appointed to a board of regents should be knowledgeable regarding the region in which the institution is located, should have demonstrated familiarity and support of the institution, and shall possess two or more of the following qualifications: theological acumen, an advanced academic degree, experience in higher education administration, administration of complex organizations, finance, law, investments, technology, human resources, facilities management, or fund development. When regents are elected at the national convention of the Synod, qualifications shall be reviewed and verified as outlined in Bylaw 3.12.3.7. When regents are elected at district conventions or appointed by the board of regents, the qualifications of all nominees, including floor nominees, shall be reviewed and verified by the chair and secretary of the district board of directors or their designees. When regents are appointed by the board of regents, qualifications of all nominees shall be reviewed and verified by the chair and secretary of the board of regents. *[Note change from version submitted by the CUS Board of Directors.]*

3.10.5.3 Vacancies that occur on a board of regents shall be filled in the following manner:

- (a) If the vacancy occurs in a position that was previously filled by the board of regents, the board of regents shall be the appointing body.
- (b) If the vacancy occurs in a position that was previously filled at a district convention, the district board of directors shall be the appointing body.
- (c) If the vacancy occurs in a position that had been filled by a national convention of the Synod, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall be the appointing body and shall follow the nomination procedure provided for filling vacancies on elected boards and commissions of the Synod as outlined in Bylaw 3.2.5.

3.10.5.4 The board of regents of each institution shall become familiar with and develop an understanding of pertinent policies, standards, and guidelines of the Synod and the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.

- (a) It shall develop detailed policies and procedures for governance of the institution, including but not limited to
 - (1) attention to specific ways that the institution is confessing Jesus Christ and fulfilling His mission in our world,

- (2) annual certification of the institution's financial viability,
 - (3) creation, modification, and abolition of administrative positions,
 - (4) processes for filling and vacating administrative positions, and
 - (5) a clear plan for succession of administration to assure that the institution continues to function effectively in the case of incapacity or lengthy absence of the president.
- (b) It shall coordinate institutional planning with other Concordia University System schools and approve master plans for its college or university.
- (c) It shall review and approve academic programs recommended by the administration and faculty after assessment of system policies in accordance with Concordia University System standards and guidelines and institutional interests and capacities.
- (d) It shall review and approve the institutional budget.
- (e) It shall approve institutional fiscal arrangements, develop the financial resources necessary to operate the institution, and participate in its support program.
- (1) Only the board of regents is authorized to establish a line of credit or to borrow for operating needs, subject to the policies of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System and the Board of Directors of the Synod.
 - (2) All surplus institutional funds above an adequate working balance shall be deposited with the Concordia University System for investment. Earnings from such investments shall be credited to the depositing institution.
- (f) It shall establish appropriate policies for institutional student aid.
- (g) It shall participate fully in the procedures for the selection and regular review of the president of the institution and of the major administrators; approve of the appointment of faculty members who meet the qualifications of their positions; approve sabbatical and study leaves; and encourage faculty development and research.
- (h) It shall take the leadership in assuring the preservation and improvement of the assets of the institution and see to the acquisition, management, use, and disposal of the properties and equipment of the institution within the guidelines set by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- (i) It shall operate and manage the institution as the agent of the Synod, in which ownership is primarily vested and which exercises its ownership through the Board of Directors as custodian of the Synod's property, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System, and the respective board of regents as the local governing body. Included in the operation and management are such responsibilities as these:
- (1) Carrying out efficient business management through a business manager appointed on recommendation of the president of the institution and responsible to him.
 - (2) Receiving of all gifts by deed, will, or otherwise made to the institution and managing the same, in accordance with the terms of the instrument creating such gift and in accordance with the policies of the board of regents.
 - (3) Demonstrating concern for the general welfare of the institutional staff members and other employees, adoption of regulations governing off-campus activities, development of policies regarding salary and wage scales, tenure, promotion, vacations, health examinations, dismissal, retirement, pension, and other employee welfare benefit provisions.
 - (4) Determining that the charter, articles of incorporation, constitution, and bylaws of the institution conform to and are consistent with those of the Synod.
- (5) Serving as the governing body corporate of the institution, vested with all powers which its members may exercise in law either as directors, trustees, or members of the body corporate, unless in conflict with the laws of the domicile of the institution or its articles of incorporation. In such event, the board of regents shall have power to perform such acts as may be required by law to effect the corporate existence of the institution.
 - (6) Establishing and placing a priority on the capital needs of the institution and determining the plans for the maintenance and renovation of the buildings and property and purchase of needed equipment, but having no power by itself to close the institution or to sell all or any part of the property which constitutes the main campus.
 - (7) Recognizing that the authority of the board of regents resides in the board as a whole and delegating the application of its policies and execution of its resolutions to the president of the institution as its executive officer.
 - (8) Establishing a comprehensive policy statement regarding student life that commits the institution to the principles of Christian discipline, evangelical dealing, and good order.
 - (9) Promoting the public relations of the institution and developing the understanding and cooperation of its constituency.
 - (10) Requiring regular reports from the president of the institution as the executive officer of the board and through him from other officers and staff members in order to make certain that the work of the institution is carried out effectively.

Committee for Convention Nominations

3.12.3 The Committee for Convention Nominations is to be regarded as an ad hoc convention committee to which limitations on holding multiple offices do not apply.

3.12.3.1 In preparation for a convention of the Synod, one-half of the districts shall elect, through their regular election procedures at the district convention, one member to the Committee for Convention Nominations and an alternate:

Atlantic	Nebraska
California-Nevada-Hawaii	North Wisconsin
Central Illinois	Northern Illinois
Florida-Georgia	Northwest
Indiana	Oklahoma
Iowa West	SELC
Minnesota South	South Dakota
Missouri	Southern
	Wyoming

3.12.3.2 In preparation for the following convention, the remaining districts shall elect in the same manner:

Eastern	New Jersey
English	North Dakota
Iowa East	Ohio
Kansas	Rocky Mountain
Michigan	South Wisconsin
Mid-South	Southeastern
Minnesota North	Pacific Southwest
Montana	Southern Illinois
New England	Texas

3.12.3.3 One-half of the electing districts shall be designated by the Secretary of the Synod to elect a professional church worker and the other half a layperson, with roles reversed every six years.

3.12.3.4 The Secretary of the Synod shall handle the preliminary work for the Committee for Convention Nominations.

(a) He shall begin to solicit names of potential nominees from officers, boards, commissions, and agencies of the Synod and its districts at least 24 months prior to the convention.

- (b) Approximately 24 months before a regular meeting of the Synod in convention, he shall solicit from the mission boards and the synodwide corporate entity boards descriptions of criteria for qualified candidates to serve on those boards.
- (c) With such criteria in view, the Secretary shall issue the first call for nominations through a publication of the Synod and on the Synod Web site 18 months before the convention, soliciting names from mission boards and synodwide corporate entity boards, as well as congregations, district presidents, district boards of directors, circuit counselors, and other likely sources.
- (d) All incumbents eligible for reelection shall be considered for nominations.
- (e) Qualifications of each nominee shall be submitted together with the names on forms made available on the Synod's Web site.
- (f) All suggested names and information for consideration by the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod no later than nine months prior to the convention of the Synod.

(g) The Secretary shall present the names and information gathered to the Committee for Convention Nominations at its first meeting.

3.12.3.5 The first meeting of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be at the call of the Secretary of the Synod at least six months prior to the convention of the Synod.

- (a) The Secretary shall not serve as a member of the committee, but he shall convene the initial meeting of the committee and be available, upon call, for consultation.
- (b) The committee shall elect its own chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary and shall organize its work in whatever way it deems necessary.
- (c) The committee shall inform itself as to the duties and requirements of each position to be filled and thereby be guided in its selection of nominees.
- (d) In the case of the boards of regents of educational institutions of the Synod, the committee shall consult with the President of the Synod or the Board of Directors of Concordia University System to receive their input for the committee's consideration. The President of the Concordia University System (or a designee) and the Secretary of Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that the Synod Convention nominees are qualified as stated in Bylaw 3.10.5.2.7.

3.12.3.6 The Committee for Convention Nominations shall nominate candidates for all elective offices, boards, and commissions except President and vice-presidents and elective positions requiring regional nominations (Bylaws 3.12.2.5; 3.3.4.1; 3.8.2.2; 3.8.3.2).

- (a) At least two candidates shall be nominated for each position.
- (b) The committee shall determine its complete list of candidates and alternates, obtain the consent of the persons it proposes to nominate, and transmit its final report at least five months prior to the convention to the Secretary of the Synod, who shall post the list on the Synod's Web site and provide for its publication in a pre-convention issue of an official periodical of the Synod and in the Convention Workbook.
- (c) The committee's report shall list the qualifications of various positions used in the solicitation of candidates and contain pertinent information concerning each candidate, such as occupation or profession; district affiliation; residence; specific experience; number of years as a member of an LCMS congregation; present position; offices previously held in a congregation, district, or the Synod; qualifications for the office in question; and, if the candidate so desires, also a brief personal statement.

3.12.3.7 The chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall submit the committee's report in person to the convention at one of its earliest sessions.

- (a) The convention may amend the slate by nominations from the floor.
- (b) Floor nominations shall be brought individually before the convention for approval before being added to the ballot. No floor nominations shall be accepted which would preclude, by virtue of election

limitations of such office, election of any pending nominee already on the slate of candidates received from the Committee for Convention Nominations without disclosing such potential effect immediately to the convention.

- (c) Such floor nominations may be made only from the list of names which have previously been offered to the Committee for Convention Nominations prior to the final deadline for the submission of nominations, unless the convention shall otherwise order by a simple majority vote. The President of the Concordia University System (or a designee) and the Secretary of Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that all floor nominees to serve as a member of a Concordia University System board of regents possess the qualifications as stated in Bylaw 3.10.5.2.7. The Chief Administrative Officer of Synod (or a designee) and the Secretary of Synod (or a designee) shall review and verify that all floor nominees to serve as a member of the Concordia University System Board of Directors possess the qualifications as stated in Bylaw 3.6.6.3.
- (d) If the convention approves the receipt of such additional nominations, any delegate making such a nomination shall have secured prior written consent of the candidate being nominated and shall immediately submit it to the chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations, along with required pertinent information concerning the nominee as detailed in Bylaw 3.12.3.6(c).
- (e) Whenever possible, the chairman of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall have on hand at the convention a reserve list of nominees, approved by the committee, for use if required.
- (f) Whenever possible, the Committee for Convention Nominations should be informed in advance if any new board or commission is likely to be established at a convention of the Synod, so that it may have a slate of candidates in readiness.

3.12.3.8 The Committee for Convention Nominations, in consultation with officials of the Synod, shall maintain a description of the desirable expertise required for each elected position and shall transmit this information together with suggestions for improvement of procedures to the next committee through the Secretary of the Synod.

Concordia University Irvine

5-06

To Clarify Qualifications for College and University Boards of Regents

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaws include on each Concordia College and University board of regents eight seats for ordained and commissioned ministers and laypersons, to be elected half by the Synod and half by the geographical district in which the institution is located (Bylaw 3.10.5.2, 1–2); and

WHEREAS, "The board of regents of each institution shall consider as one of its primary duties the defining and fulfilling of the mission of the institution within the broad assignment of the Synod" (Bylaw 3.10.5.1); and

WHEREAS, The duties of a board of regents are, therefore, not exclusively and perhaps not even principally financial in nature, their responsibility being the supervision of the overall welfare and mission of these educational institutions within the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as a whole; and

WHEREAS, The list of qualifications expressed in Bylaw 3.10.5.2, 7 (introduced in 2010 Res. 5-09B) reflects almost exclusively administrative and financial qualifications, thus excluding many candidates capable of helping shape and direct the mission of the Concordias "within the broad assignment of the Synod" (e.g., parish pastors and parochial teachers, who would well understand how to prepare church workers and promote church-work professions; solidly Lutheran laymen and women in all fields, who may not have significant

administrative or financial backgrounds but who indeed understand the value of and challenges involved in defining and fulfilling the mission of Lutheran institutions of higher education, etc.); and

WHEREAS, Each board of regents already has the ability to augment itself by appointing no less than four and no more than eight additional laypersons (Bylaw 3.10.5.2, 3), who might be selected for their skills in administrative and financial areas, accomplishing the aim of 2010 Res. 5-09B without excluding many otherwise excellent candidates from consideration for election to boards of regents; therefore be it

Resolved, That in Bylaw 3.10.5.2, 7 the phrase “Persons elected or appointed to a board of regents should possess several of the following qualifications” be replaced with “While any person able to contribute meaningfully to guiding the mission of a Synod college or university is qualified to serve on a board of regents, the following qualities may prove valuable: an aptitude and desire to hold fast the confession of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and a close connection or experience with educational programs of the institution (particularly in church work).”

St. Paul, Park City, Montana; Christ the King, Billings, MT; Holy Cross, Eureka, MT; Mount Calvary, Colstrip, MT

5-07

To Reaffirm That Synod College and University Presidents Be Male

WHEREAS, The Synod has traditionally insisted that a president of one of its institutions of higher education is the “spiritual, academic, and administrative head of the institution” (Bylaw 3.10.5.5); and

WHEREAS, Scripture assigns headship in both home and church (of which Synod colleges and universities are extensions) to the male; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention reaffirm its longstanding scriptural position that those who are elected to be presidents of the Synod’s colleges and universities be male.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

5-08

To Revise Bylaw 3.10.5.5.2 re Election Process for College and University Presidents

WHEREAS, The bylaws assign supervision of an institution’s president to the board of regents. The regents are responsible for establishing the institution’s priorities, setting its policies, and holding the president accountable for meeting the institution’s objectives. The current bylaws were extensively modified in 2010 to make the board of regents responsible for leading the presidential election process while maintaining a legitimate level of participation by the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The current bylaws require that the board of regents undertake an extensive process that includes, among other requirements, publishing requests for nominations, receiving nominations, obtaining the agreement of the nominees to stand for election, publishing the names of the nominees, receiving comments on the nominees from various sources including the congregations of the Synod, undertaking diligence on the nominees, and narrowing the nominees to a manageable number. The current bylaws then require the board of regents to select a short list of at least five candidates

that must be presented to a panel for prior approval. The panel is permitted to remove names by a two-thirds majority vote without any explanation; and

WHEREAS, The board of regents and its members expend considerable time and effort in carrying out their responsibilities in this process and, if candidates are removed from the short list by the prior approval panel as permitted under the current bylaws, the board of regents must consider and determine the steps that the institution is to take in order to move forward with the selection of a president. In order to carry out its duties and responsibilities, the board of regents must be in a position to make considered and intelligent judgments; and

WHEREAS, The proposed amendment is designed to provide the board of regents with information to enable the board of regents to carry out its responsibilities in an intelligent and informed manner; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.10.5.5.2 be amended by adding at the end of the first sentence of clause (d) (3) thereof the phrase, “together with, if any names have been removed from the list, a written explanation of the rationale for the panel’s decision to remove each of the names from the list (which explanation will be held in confidence by the board of regents)” so that the bylaw, as amended, reads, in part, as follows:

3.10.5.5.2 The following process shall govern the selection of a college/university president. ...

(d) The short list of candidates shall receive prior approval before the election.

- (1) The executive director of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall convene a prior-approval panel consisting of the President of the Synod, the district president serving on the institution’s board of regents, and the chair of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.
- (2) The prior-approval panel shall meet to consider the short list submitted by the board of regents. The panel may choose to remove names from the list, but only with a two-thirds majority vote.
- (3) After the prior-approval panel has completed its work, the executive director of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall transmit the finalized list back to the agent of the board of regents together with, if any names have been removed from the list, a written explanation of the rationale for the panel’s decision to remove each of the names from the list (which explanation will be held in confidence by the board of regents). If the amended list contains less than two names, the election process is terminated. The board of regents shall determine whether it will utilize the original list of nominees or generate additional nominations as it resumes the election process.

Ascension; Landover Hills, MD; Ascension, Landover Hills, MD; King of Glory, Williamsburg, VA; Village, Bronxville, NY; Board of Regents, Concordia Bronxville; Our Savior, Fair Lawn, NJ; Our Redeemer, Fords, NJ; Lutheran Church of St. Andrew, Silver Spring, MD

5-09

To Mandate That College and University Theology Professors Teaching Males be Male

WHEREAS, The apostle Paul wrote by inspiration that a woman should neither teach nor exercise authority over men in the Church (1 Tim. 2:11–15); and

WHEREAS, A college professor teaching theology to male students both “teaches” and “has authority” over those males; and

WHEREAS, Whether this college professorship is held to be a function of the pastoral office or an auxiliary office in the church, it cannot be exercised by a woman without violating apostolic and scriptural injunction; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention reaffirm its long-standing scriptural position that in the colleges and universities of the LCMS, all professors whose responsibility it is to teach theology to male students will be males graduated from a Synod seminary or colloquized into the Synod.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

5-10

To Revise Bylaw 3.10.5.6 re College and University Faculties

Rationale:

The boards of regents are responsible for faculty matters. Much of what is specified in the Bylaws no longer is relevant at the Synod level and needs to be removed so that the regents can govern more effectively.

1. The regional accreditation commissions require that institutions have the authority to set policies governing the faculty and academic matters. All of the institutions have faculty and academic policy manuals in place.
2. The level of detail in this section does not serve any useful purpose. In fact, due to differing institutional terminology and procedures, it is confusing.
3. Faculty employment matters are governed by state laws, and are best handled by a board of regents in consultation with its own legal counsel.
4. If a faculty member takes legal action against a college or university, the Synod is exposed to potential legal action because the LCMS Handbook dictates the details of faculty policies.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Concordia University System maintain in its policies a list of subject matters that each institution will address in its own faculty policies, and that each college and university board of regents ensure that its institutional handbooks set appropriate policies regarding faculty matters; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.10.5.6 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

College and University Faculties

3.10.5.6 The faculty of each college or university of the Synod shall consist of the president, the full-time faculty, and the part-time faculty.

- (a) ~~Part-time or temporary faculty members are distinguished by an appropriate prefix or suffix (“visiting,” “guest,” “adjunct,” “emeritus”) or the term “graduate assistant.”~~
- (b) ~~Part-time or temporary faculty members shall hold nonvoting membership on the faculty.~~

3.10.5.6.1 ~~At each school, the president shall propose creation, modification, or abolition of administrative positions to the board of regents for its approval:~~

- (a) ~~The board of regents at each school shall maintain clear policies for filling and vacating administrative positions:~~
- (b) ~~Administrative appointments shall be made by the board of regents on recommendation by the president of the institution. The Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall periodically review the internal administrative organization of the Synod’s institutions:~~

- (c) ~~Each board of regents shall maintain a clear plan of succession of administration to assure that the institution continues to function effectively in the case of incapacity or lengthy absence of the president.~~

3.10.5.6.21 ~~Each educational institution shall state policies and procedures related to faculty appointments, employment contracts, contract renewal, contract termination, faculty organization, modified service, sabbaticals, and dispute resolution within Concordia University System guidelines. Each educational institution shall have established policies and procedures related to appointments. There shall be two levels of faculty appointments: (1) Initial level, where the appointment can be terminated with no formal requirement for a show of cause; and (2) continuing level, where termination requires a formal show of cause:~~

- (a) ~~Institutions are free to decide for themselves what names to apply to these two levels of appointment:~~
- (b) ~~Each educational institution of the Synod normally shall have at least 35 percent of its full-time faculty serving at the continuing-level appointment level:~~
- (c) ~~Each institution shall require specific action by the board of regents for promotion from an initial-level appointment to a continuing-level appointment:~~
- (d) ~~Standards or qualifications for moving a faculty member from initial-level appointment to continuing-level appointment shall be the following:~~

~~(1) The faculty member shall ordinarily have completed four to six years of creditable service (periods of leave are not included) as a member of the faculty of one or more educational institutions of the Synod, at least the last two years of which shall have been in the institution currently served.~~

~~(2) The faculty member shall, as determined by his or her academic discipline, regularly continue to demonstrate scholarly achievement that may be institutionally funded as determined by the board of regents:~~

~~(3) The faculty member’s reputation, character, concern for students, and ability to honor leaders shall present a good reflection on the institution and the church:~~

~~(4) The faculty member’s aptness to teach has been demonstrated by effective communication in the classroom:~~

- (e) ~~Steps in moving a faculty member from an initial-level appointment to a continuing-level appointment shall be the following:~~

~~(1) If the board of regents, on recommendation of the president of the institution, determines that a faculty member meets the above requirements and is still at the initial-level appointment, it shall either carry forward the procedure for promotion to a continuing-level appointment or inform the faculty member of its decision not to do so, in which case the individual either may continue at the initial-level appointment or be terminated. Any continuation of employment at the initial-level appointment shall be on a year-to-year basis. Faculty employment during the initial-level-appointment period may be terminated without disclosure of cause. In cases in which the decision is made to terminate the individual’s contract, the contract shall be extended for at least six months beyond the time at which notice is given. If the board of regents does not take up the question of promotion to a continuing-level appointment at least nine months prior to the end of the sixth year of service, the faculty member may petition the board of regents to do so:~~

~~(2) After final review, the board of regents may promote to a continuing-level appointment status:~~

- (f) ~~Promotion to continuing-level appointment status shall in no case be construed as requiring or indicating advancement in rank or increase in salary.~~
- (g) ~~Other types of faculty appointments may be established by institutions as the need arises.~~

3.10.5.6.32 Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the board of regents on recommendation of the president of the institution shall appoint all full-time members of the faculty. All initial appointments to college/university theology faculties shall require the prior approval of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System. The terms and conditions of every appointment shall be stated in writing and be in the possession of both the institution and the prospective faculty member before the appointment is consummated. Limitations of academic freedom because of the religious and confessional nature and aims of the institution shall be stated in writing at the time of the appointment and conveyed to the person being appointed. Faculty members, full- and part-time, shall pledge to perform their duties in harmony with the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Synod's doctrinal statements. The board of regents on recommendation of the president of the institution shall appoint all full-time members of the faculty. The Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall require certification of theological and professional competency. All initial appointments to college/university theology faculties shall require the prior approval of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System. All other initial full-time appointments shall require prior approval of the board of regents and shall include a thorough theological review involving the district president and selected members of the board of regents:

- (a) ~~The terms and conditions of every appointment shall be stated in writing and be in the possession of both the institution and the prospective faculty member before the appointment is consummated. Limitations of academic freedom because of the religious and confessional nature and aims of the institution shall be stated in writing at the time of the appointment and conveyed to the person being appointed.~~
- (b) ~~When laypersons are employed in full-time teaching positions, they shall pledge to perform their duties in harmony with the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Synod's doctrinal statements.~~
- (c) ~~The board of regents may decline to renew an initial-level appointment of a faculty member at its discretion and without formal statement of cause. If reappointment to the teaching staff is not contemplated, the board of regents shall so notify the faculty member in writing through the president of the institution at least six months prior to the expiration of the current appointment. Notice of non-reappointment shall be made at least six months before the expiration of an initial-level appointment of a faculty member.~~
- (d) ~~The Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall state standards of good practice that provide uniform procedures for renewing faculty employment contracts.~~
- (e) ~~Each institution shall state policies regarding faculty appointments, employment contracts, contract renewal, and contract termination for all employees within Concordia University System guidelines.~~

3.10.5.6.43 A formal procedure shall be in place to carry out performance reviews for all faculty on a regular basis to help faculty identify their strengths as well as areas in which improvement is needed (formative) and to provide the information needed to make a decision about future employment status (summative).

- (a) ~~Performance reviews shall be based on a set of clearly articulated criteria that are shared with faculty prior to their employment and current assignment.~~
- (b) ~~All faculty on initial-level appointments shall be reviewed at least triennially.~~

- (c) ~~All faculty on continuing-level appointments shall be reviewed at least every five years.~~
- (d) ~~The president of an institution may call for a formal review of any faculty member at any time.~~
- (e) ~~The review shall involve input from peers.~~
- (f) ~~A written summary of the results of the review shall be prepared.~~
- (g) ~~The summary shall be shared with the faculty member involved and he/she shall be given an opportunity to respond.~~
- (h) ~~A final decision about any action to be taken as a result of the review shall be made by the board of regents of the institution upon recommendation of the president of the institution.~~
- (i) ~~An appeal process shall be in place for use by faculty members of a continuing-level appointment (those who already have been granted continuing-level appointment status) who wish to challenge a termination decision. The appeal may be about the substance of the decision or the procedures followed in reaching the decision.~~
- (j) ~~Faculty members with an initial-level appointment (who have no expectation of continued employment) shall not be entitled to an appeal process following (or prior to) a decision of non-retention. The only exception is that a faculty member with an initial-level appointment may ask the board of regents to assure that appropriate procedures were followed in reaching the decision or the basis on which the decision was made.~~

3.10.5.6.34 Other than honorable retirement, termination of faculty employment may be the result of the following: The only causes for which members of a faculty may be removed from office, other than honorable retirement, are (1) professional incompetency including, but not limited to, the failure to meet the criteria identified in Bylaw 3.10.5.6.2 (d); (2) incapacity for the performance of duty; (3) insubordination; (4) neglect of or refusal to perform duties of office; (5) conduct unbecoming a Christian; and (6) advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution, Art. II) or failure to honor and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod as defined further in Bylaw 1.6.2 (b):

- (a) professional incompetency;
- (b) incapacity for the performance of duty;
- (c) insubordination;
- (d) neglect of or refusal to perform duties of office;
- (e) conduct unbecoming a Christian;
- (f) advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution, Art. II) or failure to honor and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod as defined further in Bylaw 1.6.2 (b);
- (g) discontinuance of an entire program (e.g., social work, business);
- (h) discontinuance of an entire division or department (e.g., modern foreign language) of a college or university;
- (i) reduction of the size of staff in order to maintain financial viability in compliance with policies concerning fiscal viability; and
- (j) discontinuance, merger, or consolidation of an entire college or university operation.

3.10.5.6.6 The board of regents may decline to renew the appointment of a faculty member during an initial-level-appointment period without a formal statement of cause.

3.10.5.6.6.1 No member of the faculty on a continuing-level appointment or on an initial-level appointment except at the expiration of the term of appointment shall be removed from the faculty either by ecclesiastical authority or by the board of regents except for cause.

3.10.5.6.7 Positions of initial-level appointment as well as continuing-level appointment faculty may be terminated by the board of regents under certain institutional conditions that do not reflect on the competency or faithfulness of the individual faculty member whose position is terminated. These conditions are the following: (1) discontinuance of an entire program (e.g., social work, business); (2) discontinuance of an

entire division or department (e.g., modern foreign language) of a college or university; (3) reduction of the size of staff in order to maintain financial viability in compliance with policies concerning fiscal viability; and (4) discontinuance, merger, or consolidation of an entire college or university operation:

- (a) In the event of termination of a faculty position by the board of regents, a minimum of six months advance notice to initial-level-appointment faculty and 12 months advance notice to continuing-level-appointment faculty must be provided the terminated faculty member in writing.
- (b) The opportunity to serve the college or university in another capacity for which the terminated faculty member has credentials and qualifications shall be offered the terminated faculty member if such a vacancy exists at the time of termination or becomes available within two academic years.
- (c) In identifying which specific faculty positions are to be discontinued or terminated, the board of regents shall follow the guidelines and procedures of that institution's reduction-in-force policy.
- (d) A terminated position may not be filled subsequently by another person during the next two academic years without first offering the last previous incumbent who held the position with continuing-level appointment status the position at his or her last previous salary plus average annual salary increases provided to that faculty during the interim.

3.10.5.6.8.1 A faculty member who is on a roster of the Synod is under the ecclesiastical supervision of the Synod. In the event a member is removed from membership in the Synod pursuant to procedure established in these bylaws, then that member is also considered removed from the position held and shall be terminated forthwith by the board of regents.

3.10.5.6.4.2 An appeal process following Concordia University System dispute resolution guidelines shall be in place for use by faculty members who wish to challenge a termination decision.

3.10.5.6.9 The board of regents shall have authority to investigate, hear, and act on any complaint arising out of Bylaw 3.10.5.6.5:

- (a) If the board of regents receives a complaint against a member of that institution's faculty or administration concerning any matter, including those specified under Bylaw 3.10.5.6.5, it shall direct the complainant first to meet face-to-face with the respondent in an attempt to resolve the issue (in the manner described in Matthew 18:15):
 - (1) ~~The president of the institution shall assist in this attempt.~~
 - (2) ~~If the president himself is the respondent, the chairman of the board shall act in his stead.~~
- (b) If the complainant is of the opinion that such informal reconciliation efforts have failed and there is a wish to pursue the matter, the complainant shall prepare a written statement of the matter in dispute and a written statement setting forth, in detail, the efforts that have been made to achieve informal reconciliation and forward such statements to the board of regents and to the respondent.
- (c) Within 21 days after receipt of the written statement of the matter in dispute, the respondent shall submit a written reply to the board of regents and the complainant. If the respondent fails to reply, the allegations of the statement of the matter in dispute shall be deemed accepted.
- (d) Upon receipt of a reply from the respondent, or if no reply is received and the board of regents determines that all informal reconciliation efforts have failed, the board of regents shall form a review committee of five persons (Matthew 18:16), which shall be chosen as follows:

- (1) ~~Each party shall select one faculty member and one regent.~~
- (2) ~~The Secretary of the Synod shall select the fifth member by blind draw from the Synod's roster of hearing facilitators, who shall serve as chairman.~~
- (3) ~~The selection shall be completed within one month of the date on which the board decides to form the review committee.~~
- (e) If the board decides that the matter is of such a nature that the interests of the institution will best be served, it may limit the activities of the respondent. It may do so by relieving the respondent of teaching and/or administrative duties pending final resolution of the conflict. However, contractual obligations of the institution shall continue until the matter is resolved.
- (f) The review committee shall proceed as follows:
 - (1) ~~The committee shall hold its first hearing no later than 60 days after the last committee member has been appointed.~~
 - (2) ~~The chairman of the committee shall notify the complainant and the respondent, at least 28 days in advance, of the date, time, and place of the said hearing.~~
 - (3) ~~If any part of the dispute involves a specific question of doctrine or doctrinal application, each party shall have the right to an opinion from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. If it involves questions of Constitution or Bylaw interpretation, each party shall have a right to an interpretation from the Commission on Constitutional Matters. The request for an opinion must be made through the review committee, which shall determine the wording of the question(s). The request for an opinion must be made within four weeks of the final formation of the review committee. If a party does not request such an opinion within the designated time, such a request may still be made to the review committee, which shall, at its discretion, determine whether the request shall be forwarded. The review committee shall also have the right, at any time, to request an opinion from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations or the Commission on Constitutional Matters. When an opinion has been requested, the time limitations will not apply until the opinion has been received by the parties. Any opinion received must be followed by the review committee.~~
 - (4) ~~All hearings shall be private, attended only by the parties and the witnesses who can substantiate the facts relevant to the matter in dispute. The review committee shall follow the procedures set forth in the Standard Operating Procedures Manual for this bylaw to be followed in the hearing and shall establish the relevancy of evidence so that each party shall be given an opportunity to present fully its respective position. In performing its duty, the review committee shall continue efforts to reconcile the parties on the basis of Christian love and forgiveness. If a party is a board or commission of the Synod or its districts, it shall be represented by its chairman or a designated member.~~
 - (5) ~~Within 60 days after completion of the final hearing, the review committee shall issue a written decision which shall state the facts determined by the committee and the reasons for its decision and forward them to the parties and the board of regents. The board of regents shall then take appropriate action, which shall be final.~~
- (g) If the committee decides there is a valid complaint
 - (1) ~~regarding matters under Bylaw 3.10.5.6.5 (1)-(4), it~~

~~may take whatever action it deems appropriate, including recommendation for termination of the employment contract.~~

~~(2) regarding matters under Bylaw 3.10.5.6.5 (5) (6), if the member of the institution's faculty or administration is a member of the Synod, it must also refer the complaint to the district president, who shall follow the procedure set forth in Bylaw sections 2.14 or 2.17.~~

- ~~(h) At every stage of the above-described procedure, all parties must be furnished copies of all documents filed.~~
- ~~(i) Any decision made pursuant to Bylaw 3.10.5.6.9 shall be final and binding on the parties involved with no right of further appeal.~~
- ~~(j) In consultation with the Commission on Constitutional Matters, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall maintain and amend, as necessary, a *Standard Operating Procedures Manual*, which shall serve as a comprehensive procedures manual for this bylaw.~~

3.10.5.6.10—Each institution shall have established policies and procedures related to salary, faculty organization, faculty involvement in establishing institutional education policies, dispute resolution, modified service, sabbaticals and leaves. It shall also have policies and procedures related to student discipline:

- (a) The salary schedules of all institutional employees shall be fixed by the board of regents on recommendation of the president of the institution. The salary schedules shall be established within the broad guidelines provided by the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.
- (b) The board of regents, on recommendation of the president of the institution, shall establish an effective faculty organizational structure:
 - ~~(1) The president or his designee shall preside at regular and special meetings.~~
 - ~~(2) The faculty shall elect a secretary and provide for the election of committees, consisting of faculty members or of faculty members and other persons, who shall study, evaluate, and report to the faculty on policy matters affecting the academic activity of the institution, the activity and welfare of the members of the faculty, and the life and welfare of the students.~~
 - ~~(3) The faculty shall elect a standing hearings committee or assign the functions of such a committee to another standing committee.~~
- (c) Each faculty shall recommend policy to the board of regents through the president for the admission, transfer, dismissal, or withdrawal of students, set the standards of scholarship to be maintained by students, determine criteria for graduation or failure, and act on recommendations in the matter of granting certificates, diplomas, and such academic or honorary degrees as may lawfully be conferred by the institution.
- (d) Each faculty shall develop and construct curricula implementing the recognized and established purposes of the institution and designed to attain the objectives of preparation for professional church workers and other Christian leaders approved by the Synod.
- (e) Each faculty shall pursue the improvement of teaching and learning and the evaluation of their effectiveness in every segment of the institution and its curriculum.

~~(f) Each faculty shall recommend policy to the board of regents through the president regarding out-of-class life and activity of its students so that the co-curricular and off-campus activities of the students contribute to the attainment of the educational objectives of the institution. The faculty shall recommend such policies as will be conducive to the cultivation of a Christian department on the part of all students, will stimulate the creation of a cultured and academically challenging atmosphere on and about the whole campus, and will make a spiritually wholesome community life possible.~~

~~(g) Each faculty shall recommend policy to the board of regents through the president regarding the maintenance of wholesome conditions of faculty service and welfare.~~

~~(h) The faculty of each institution which prepares professional workers directly for service in the Synod shall conform its placement policies to the provisions for the distribution of candidates and workers through the Board of Assignments of the Synod.~~

~~(i) Controversies and disagreements among faculty members or other employees (other than those involving matters described in Bylaw 3.10.5.6.5) shall be submitted to the president of the institution for mediation.~~

~~(1) If this proves unsuccessful, he shall report the matter to the board of regents for arbitration.~~

~~(2) After hearing the parties, the board will render its decision, which shall be final, without the right of appeal under the provisions of the dispute resolution process of the Synod.~~

~~(3) A record of the proceedings shall be filed with the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.~~

~~(j) Faculty members may request early retirement under the applicable provisions of the Concordia Retirement Plan.~~

~~(1) Upon retirement, faculty members who are ordained or commissioned ministers of religion are retained on the emeritus roster of the Synod on the basis of Bylaw 2.11.2.1 and may, by action of the board of regents, be retained on the roster of their faculty as "emeriti" (Bylaw 3.10.5.6).~~

~~(2) Service loads and the conditions of service after retirement shall be determined by the board of regents.~~

~~(k) Each institution shall state policies regarding sabbaticals for faculty and leave-of-absence procedures for all employees within Board of Directors of Concordia University System guidelines.~~

~~(l) Each board of regents, on recommendation of the president, shall adopt a comprehensive policy statement committing the school to the principles of Christian discipline, evangelical dealing, and good order, governing the students individually and collectively.~~

~~(1) Each student shall be informed regarding the disciplinary policy and procedure and under what conditions and to whom an appeal from a disciplinary decision may be made.~~

~~(2) There shall be no right of appeal under the provisions of the dispute resolution process of the Synod.~~

CUS Board of Directors; LCMS Board of Directors; Board of Regents, Concordia St. Paul; Concordia University Texas; Concordia University Nebraska; Concordia University St. Paul

5-11

To Revise Bylaw 3.10.5.6, College and University Faculties

Rationale

The boards of regents are responsible for faculty matters. Much of what is specified in the Bylaws no longer is relevant at the Synod level and needs to be removed so that the regents can govern more effectively.

1. The regional accreditation commissions require that institutions have the authority to set policies governing the faculty and academic matters. All of the institutions have faculty and academic policy manuals in place.
2. The level of detail in this section does not serve any useful purpose. In fact, due to differing institutional terminology and procedures, it is confusing.
3. Faculty employment matters are governed by state laws, and are best handled by a board of regents in consultation with its own legal counsel.
4. If a faculty member takes legal action against a college or university, the Synod is exposed to potential legal action because the LCMS Handbook dictates the details of faculty policies.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Concordia University System maintain in its policies a list of subject matters that each institution will address in its own faculty policies, and that each college and university board of regents ensure that its institutional handbooks set appropriate policies regarding faculty matters; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.10.5.6 be amended as follows:

College and University Faculties

3.10.5.6 The faculty of each college or university of the Synod shall consist of the president, the full-time faculty, and the part-time faculty.

3.10.5.6.1 Each educational institution shall state policies and procedures related to faculty appointments, employment contracts, contract renewal, contract termination, faculty organization, modified service, sabbaticals, and dispute resolution within Concordia University System guidelines.

3.10.5.6.2 ~~Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws,~~ The board of regents on recommendation of the president of the institution shall appoint all full-time members of the faculty. ~~All initial appointments to college/university theology faculties shall require the prior approval of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.~~ The terms and conditions of every appointment shall be stated in writing and be in the possession of both the institution and the prospective faculty member before the appointment is consummated. Limitations of academic freedom because of the religious and confessional nature and aims of the institution shall be stated in writing at the time of the appointment and conveyed to the person being appointed. Faculty members, full- and part-time, shall pledge to perform their duties in harmony with the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Synod's doctrinal statements. *[Note in this paragraph significant differences from the overture submitted by the CUS Board of Directors.]*

3.10.5.6.3 A formal procedure shall be in place to carry out performance reviews for all faculty members on a regular basis.

3.10.5.6.4 Other than honorable retirement, termination of faculty employment may be the result of the following:

- (a) Professional incompetency
- (b) Incapacity for the performance of duty
- (c) Insubordination
- (d) Neglect of or refusal to perform duties of office
- (e) Conduct unbecoming a Christian

- (f) Advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution, Art. II) or failure to honor and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod as defined further in Bylaw 1.6.2 (b)
- (g) Discontinuance of an entire program (e.g., social work, business)
- (h) Discontinuance of an entire division or department (e.g., modern foreign language) of a college or university
- (i) Reduction of the size of staff in order to maintain financial viability in compliance with policies concerning fiscal viability
- (j) Discontinuance, merger, or consolidation of an entire college or university operation

3.10.5.6.4.1 A faculty member who is on a roster of the Synod is under the ecclesiastical supervision of the Synod. In the event a member is removed from membership in the Synod pursuant to procedure established in these bylaws, then that member is also considered removed from the position held and shall be terminated forthwith by the board of regents.

3.10.5.6.4.2 An appeal process following Concordia University System dispute resolution guidelines shall be in place for use by faculty members who wish to challenge a termination decision.

Concordia University Irvine

5-12

To Restore Historic Right of Prior Approval of Initial Theological Faculty Appointments by CUS Board of Directors

WHEREAS, The board of directors of the Concordia University System, which also served as the Board for University Education (a program board which was formerly known as the Board for Higher Education) since its formation in 1938 had been entrusted with prior approval of the initial appointments of faculty to the theological departments of the Concordia colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, Prior to 2010, the LCMS *Handbook* contained the following statement:

3.8.3.4 In keeping with the objectives of the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, the Board for University Education shall ... (f) grant approval for initial appointments of theological faculty;

and

WHEREAS, As a result of restructuring mandated by the 2010 LCMS convention, the Board for University Education was discontinued as a program board but the Concordia University System remained as a synodwide corporate entity that continued to have an elected board of directors; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.6.6.1 provides:

The Board of Directors of Concordia University System has authority with respect to the Synod's colleges and universities. It shall have the overall responsibility to provide for the education of pre-seminary students, ministers of religion—commissioned, other professional church workers of the Synod, and others desiring a Christian liberal arts education by coordinating the activities of the Synod's colleges and universities as a unified system of the Synod through their respective boards of regents;

and

WHEREAS, Upon recodification of the bylaws in the 2010 *Handbook*, the language of Bylaw 3.8.3.4 (f) was not included in the duties of the board of directors of Concordia University System in Bylaw 3.6.6.5, but instead the following language was carried over and included in Bylaw 3.10.5.6.3:

The board of regents on recommendation of the president of the institution shall appoint all full-time members of the faculty. The Board of Directors of the Concordia University System shall require certification

of theological and professional competency. *All initial appointments to college/university theological faculties shall require the prior approval of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System. (emphasis added)*

The bylaw further entrusted the board of directors of Concordia University System to “state standards of good practice that provide uniform procedures for renewing faculty employment contracts” and required each institution to “state policies regarding faculty appointment, employment contracts, contract renewal, and contract termination for all employees within Concordia University System guidelines”; and

WHEREAS, The CCM, in its opinion 12-2643 (August 10–12, 2012) entitled “Prior Approval of Theological Faculty,” opined that the above-italicized portion of Bylaw 3.10.5.6.3 should be “stricken” from the bylaw; and

WHEREAS, The effect of the decision of the CCM undermines the Article III Objectives of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (“1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith [Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10] ... 3. Recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth”) and creates opportunity for the loss of authentic Lutheran doctrine and practice in the theology departments of the colleges and universities by permitting ten different schools of theological thought to develop at the risk of losing the proper proclamation of the Gospel; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.6.6.5 be amended to add to the duties of the board of directors of Concordia University System, the following:

“(1) grant approval for the initial appointments of theological faculty to the Synod’s colleges and universities”;

and be it further

Resolved, That the language of Bylaw 3.10.5.6.3 appearing in the 2010 *Handbook* that was stricken by CCM Opinion 12-2643 be restored.

St. Paul
Fort Wayne, IN

5-13

To Establish Master’s Program in Creation Apologetics

WHEREAS, Scripture urges us, “In your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15–16); and

WHEREAS, Part of the hope that is in us is that the God who made the world in six days and redeemed it with the blood of His Son will one day restore creation (Rom. 8:20–22; 2 Pet. 3:13); and

WHEREAS, The scriptural teachings on creation, the fall, redemption, the resurrection of the body, and the new creation are all closely connected; and

WHEREAS, Atheistic evolutionary teaching permeates our public schools and popular media, its challenges to Bible-believing Christians often going unanswered; and

WHEREAS, Many of our own members and even some of our Synod-trained church workers are ill-equipped to make a vigorous defense of the Bible’s teaching about creation; and

WHEREAS, Many of our church members and many students at our Lutheran schools can easily be misled by proponents of atheistic evolution, who often caricature and twist scriptural teaching and creation science; and

WHEREAS, The scriptural teaching of creation and the fall (including the first promise of the Savior [Gen. 3:14–15]) tells us who we are, where we came from, to whom we are accountable, and what our future is in Christ; and

WHEREAS, Though defense of a young earth and a powerful and wise Creator God cannot work faith in a person’s heart—only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can do that—yet a defense of scriptural teaching of creation can for some remove barriers to faith in Christ; and

WHEREAS, Many young Christians are mistakenly led to believe that they cannot be good scientists and Bible-believing Christians at the same time; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention direct the Concordia University System to establish a master’s program in Creation Apologetics at one or more of the Concordia universities; and be it further

Resolved, That this master’s program include but not be limited to the following elements: thorough biblical teaching on the doctrines of creation, the fall, the redemption and restoration of creation; evangelism training centered on the cross of Christ; scientific, logical, and philosophical critiques of evolutionary teaching; and sound methods for evaluating and interpreting scientific data from various disciplines in light of our confidence that God’s eyewitness account of origins recorded in Genesis 1–11 (and elsewhere in Scripture) is historical; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Southern Illinois District in convention submit this resolution as an overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Southern Illinois District

5-14

To Require Investigation of Teaching of Evolution in Synod Institutions of Higher Education

WHEREAS, In the Brief Statement of 1932, the Synod stated, “We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Gen. 1 and 2, namely, by His almighty creative word, and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture”; and

WHEREAS, The 2004 LCMS convention adopted Res. 2-08A “To Commend Preaching and Teaching Creation,” which included the resolve “That no educational agency or institution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod tolerate any teaching that contradicts the special, immediate, and miraculous creation by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as an explanation for the origin of the universe”; and

WHEREAS, The All Workers Conference of the Montana District heard reports that the teaching of evolution as fact is taking place within the Concordia University System schools; and

WHEREAS, Repeated calls for specific investigation have been denied by floor committees of the Synod convention, with the reasoning that a system of ecclesiastical supervision is already in place; and

WHEREAS, The current system as yet has not brought comfort or confidence to the Synod by laying to rest the concerns regarding the teaching of evolution as fact in our schools; and

WHEREAS, The Synod owes our students an education that is congruent with the Word of God and our Lutheran Confessions, which would include the ability to recognize and critically analyze the false assumptions of the evolutionary theory; and

WHEREAS, Any failure in our Synod’s schools regarding the truth of a six-day, young earth creation and the error of evolutionary theory

will directly impact the faith and confession of elementary and high school students in LCMS parochial schools; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has given to the President of the Synod general ecclesiastical supervision responsibilities, stating in Bylaw 3.3.1.1, “As the chief ecclesiastical officer of the Synod, the President shall supervise the doctrine taught and practiced in the Synod, including all synodwide corporate entities”; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has given to the President of the Synod specific responsibilities with respect to what is being taught at the Synod’s institutions of higher education, stating in Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1 (c), “He shall at regular intervals officially visit or cause to be visited all the educational institutions of the Synod to exercise supervision over the doctrine taught and practiced in those institutions”; therefore be it

Resolved, That, for the comfort and confidence of the Synod, during the coming triennium, the instructions for those visiting the Synod’s institutions of higher education require a specific investigation of faculty and interview of students regarding the manner in which the issue of creation and evolutionary theory is being taught; And be it further

Resolved, That the President of the Synod report the findings of this investigation in a regular edition of *The Lutheran Witness* by October 31, 2015; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Montana District All Workers Conference meeting in Billings, Montana, October 17–19, 2012, memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to make this resolution its own.

Montana District All Workers Conference

5-15

To Affirm Teaching of Six-Day Creation in Synod Schools

WHEREAS, Evolutionary assumptions are erroneous, being neither biblical nor scientific; and

WHEREAS, Evolutionary assumptions have had a devastating impact on our culture, undermining human morality and the institutions God has appointed (e.g., marriage, family, government, etc.); and

WHEREAS, Evolutionary assumptions in the church undermine the authority of Holy Scripture and have attacked the church’s confession of every major doctrine of the Scripture; and

WHEREAS, Unconditional subscription to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions requires teaching a six-day creation; and

WHEREAS, Synod colleges, universities, and seminaries are obligated to provide an education that is truly biblical and scientific, so that students might critically assess and respond to the erroneous assumptions of evolutionary theory; and

WHEREAS, Synod-trained teachers have a life-long impact on their elementary and high school students as they prepare them for a life of confession of and service to God’s truth in Jesus Christ; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Montana District memorialize the Synod to instruct the President of the LCMS to clarify what is and is not being taught at LCMS colleges, universities, and seminaries regarding evolution and creation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Montana District memorialize the Synod to instruct the President of the LCMS to provide specific means for LCMS colleges, universities, and seminaries to prepare Synod college and graduate students to challenge evolutionary theory and the assumptions upon which it rests; and be it further

Resolved, That the Montana District memorialize the Synod to instruct Concordia Publishing House to prepare and provide resources and curricula to equip teachers in parochial grade schools and high schools for equipping their students to recognize and refute evolutionary theory on the basis of Holy Scripture and science; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Montana District memorialize the Synod to instruct its district presidents, as ecclesiastical supervisors, to hold Concordia college and university faculties in their respective districts accountable to be faithful in the classroom to the faith we have been given to confess.

Montana District

5-16

To Study Historical Practices and New Paradigms for Pastors Serving Congregations

WHEREAS, The Lord of the Church promises and continues to provide faithful servants to serve in His Kingdom; and

WHEREAS, The pastors and congregations of the LCMS have a high esteem for the Office of the Public Ministry; and

WHEREAS, The Synod is passionate about remaining faithful and obedient in the use of this great gift from God; and

WHEREAS, The numbers of available rostered clergy within the next decade is certain to contribute to difficulties related to providing pastoral oversight to all of our churches in the common forms; and

WHEREAS, Attempts already made to lessen the anticipated difficulties through licensed deacons and the Specific Ministry Pastor program will help but not solve the shortage issue; and

WHEREAS, These difficulties will be compounded by the changing population trends in small towns and rural areas; and

WHEREAS, History has shown that there are many challenges (physical, emotional, and fiscal) in asking parishes to enter into cooperative agreements and in providing service to parishes which become unsustainable; and

WHEREAS, It is wise and preferable to prepare for these realities before they result in a severe crisis; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2012 Minnesota South District Convention memorialize the 2013 convention of the Synod to direct the Council of Presidents, in conjunction with the seminaries of the LCMS, to direct a study to identify the wide array of historical practices used by our Synod to provide pastors; and be it further

Resolved, That such a study identify new and creative paradigms for congregations to be served pastorally, in ways faithful to God’s Word and the Confessions; and be it further

Resolved, That the findings of said study be available to the 2016 convention of Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That these findings be disseminated through presentation at subsequent district conventions and circuit gatherings; and be it further

Resolved, That these findings in published format, print and electronic, be provided to individual congregations; and be it finally

Resolved, That district staff and circuit counselors become familiar with the resource and proactively present the same to congregations, especially encouraging those congregations whose future is endangered.

Minnesota South District

To Provide for Distance Seminary Education

Background

The formation of pastors for ministry is a vital responsibility of the Synod (which is defined as congregations and its representatives in our Synod's universities and seminaries). Distance education has become an accepted standard in the academic community for general education, professional training, and degree completion. Distance learning has been used in the past with varying degrees of success (DELTO). We believe it is unfortunate that our Synod did not persist in its laudable effort to fully utilize the increasing benefits of technology just as this educational methodology is being broadly embraced by virtually all institutions of higher learning.

In addition, the practical realities of being stewards of limited resources comes to bear. Great resources should be invested in the proper preparation of men to serve our Synod in the pastoral office. But good stewardship should also prevail, particularly in times of declining resources, both for the individual answering God's personal call to service as well as for the institutions charged with the responsibility of pastoral formation and certification.

The following resolution seeks to address the following questions: How can the rising, prohibitive costs both to the student and the seminaries be evaluated and then brought to a point of appropriate, manageable stewardship of resources? How can the tools of technology most appropriately be utilized to address both cost as well as broadening the educational opportunities available to students in the Synod and even around the globe?

WHEREAS, The cost of residential seminary education continues to rise at rates prohibitive to the individual student, resulting in costs and debt debilitating both the enrollment of new students and the performance of their ministry under such burden (most students spending approximately \$60,000 on their seminary education and many incurring debt exceeding that amount upon graduation); and

WHEREAS, The availability of distance learning through new technologies has become a common practice utilized by the most respected institutions of higher learning; and

WHEREAS, Such technologies have proven to lower costs both for the individual students and institutions while providing access to additional learning sources and broadening experiences regionally and globally; and

WHEREAS, While the optimal formation of pastors involves "residential education," it can effectively be accomplished "on site" in a congregational ministry setting; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of Presidents and the seminaries develop a model that balances the need for relational learning within the context of the residential setting within the use of modern technology for distance learning; and be it further

Resolved, That such distance learning be made available both nationally and at the district level as a much-needed, cost-effective alternative source of continuing education; and be it further

Resolved, That this model be implemented on a pilot basis prior to the 2016 LCMS convention; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Northwest District in convention send this resolution to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Northwest District

To Train Pastoral Candidates Thoroughly

WHEREAS, Jesus commanded His apostles to make disciples of all the nations by baptizing and teaching "all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20, emphasis added); and

WHEREAS, God, through the apostle Paul, listed as one of the qualifications for pastors that they be "able to teach" (1 Tim. 3:3); and

WHEREAS, Believers and unbelievers alike benefit from a clergy that is well trained and well versed in all areas of Christian doctrine; and

WHEREAS, Even society at large stresses the great benefits of receiving more college education and not less; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Williamsburg Circuit of the Iowa District East memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to do two things: (1) encourage our district and Synod officials and the officials of our seminaries in St. Louis and Fort Wayne to strongly impress upon prospective seminary students the great benefits of receiving as much seminary education as possible, and (2) put an upper limit of 10 percent of Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) students for the following academic school year. (E.g., if Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne had 50 first-year students enrolled at the beginning of the 2012–2013 academic school year, it could accept up to five SMP students for the 2013–2014 academic school year.)

Williamsburg Circuit Forum

Iowa District East

To Limit Use of Specific Ministry Pastor Program

WHEREAS, Jesus commanded His apostles to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching "all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20, emphasis added); and

WHEREAS, God through the apostle Paul listed as one of the qualifications for pastors that they be "able to teach" (1 Tim. 3:3); and

WHEREAS, Believers and unbelievers alike benefit from a clergy that is well trained and well versed in all areas of Christian doctrine; and

WHEREAS, Even society at large stresses the great benefits of receiving more education and not less; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program was established because "the needs for providing pastoral ministry in specific and specialized situations where a traditionally prepared seminary candidate or pastor is not available continue to multiply" (2007 Res. 5-01B); and

WHEREAS, Men are using Specific Ministry Pastor program, with its reduced residential education requirements, to be placed in locations where there is already a pastor; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct its district and Synod officials and the officials of its seminaries in St. Louis and Fort Wayne to prohibit the use of the SMP program for men to be called to congregations that already have a pastor; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southern Illinois District in convention submit this resolution as an overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Southern Illinois District

5-20

To Address Pastoral Formation and Education

WHEREAS, Jesus commanded His apostles to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20); and

WHEREAS, God, through the apostle Paul, listed as one of the qualifications for pastors that they be “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2); and

WHEREAS, Believers and unbelievers alike benefit from a clergy that is well trained and well versed in all areas of Christian doctrine; and

WHEREAS, Society at large stresses the great benefits of receiving more education and training and not less; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Indiana District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to encourage our district and Synod officials and the officials of our seminaries in St. Louis and Fort Wayne to strongly impress upon prospective seminary students and candidates for the pastoral ministry (no matter the program track they are participating in) the great benefits of receiving as much residential seminary education as possible; and be it further

Resolved, That the Indiana District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to require that by the 2016 LCMS convention, the officers and boards of the Synod present a model (or models) for pastoral formation and funding that maximizes collegiality, community, and academic content and rigor.

Indiana District

5-21

To Require High Standard of Education for Ordained Ministers

WHEREAS, Jesus instituted the Office of the Holy Ministry, commanding His apostles to make disciples of all the nations by baptizing and teaching “all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20, emphasis added); and

WHEREAS, God, through the apostle Paul, listed as qualifications for pastors that they be “able to teach,” “not be a recent convert” (1 Tim. 3:3), and must “hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that [they] may be able to give good instructions in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9); and

WHEREAS, Currently, the alternate route program candidates enrolled in the Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS), Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program, Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), and Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT) complete the requirements for ordination with less than half of the academic education of Master of Divinity, Certificate, and Cross Cultural Ministry Center (CCMC) students; and

WHEREAS, Believers and unbelievers alike benefit from a clergy that is well trained and well versed in all areas of Christian doctrine; and

WHEREAS, Even society at large stresses the great benefits of receiving more education and not less; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2012 convention of the Montana District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to direct the Chief Mission Officer and the Executive Director of Pastoral Education to require all pastoral ministry alternate route programs to share the same high standard of education; and be it further

Resolved, That this standard require all alternate route programs to share the same entry-level standard of education as the certificate (colloquy) alternate route program; and be it further

Resolved, That this standard of education for all alternate route programs be, at the minimum, equivalent to the certificate alternate route program, especially the study of the biblical Greek language; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Montana District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to direct the Chief Mission Officer and Executive Director of Pastoral Education to implement these standards by the 2015 academic year or sooner.

Montana District

5-22

To Commend and Continually Improve Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been blessed by the Lord of the Church with seminary programs and faculties that are able to effectively instruct students both on campus and through the utilization of distance education methods; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program enables men to receive theological training from our seminaries at the same time as they are receiving practical training work under the guidance of a mentor pastor while serving in the parish; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program was adopted in 2007 with the proposed purpose that it would produce “church planters and missionaries” (2007 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 133); and

WHEREAS, The SMP program is overseen by two seminaries; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the Indiana District express their appreciation for and continued support of the SMP program; and be it further

Resolved, That the seminaries be encouraged to coordinate similar admissions and training programs, and publish in their catalogs a course syllabus outlining additional requirements necessary to gain a Master of Divinity degree; and be it further

Resolved, That candidates and graduates of the SMP program be encouraged to continue their theological education; and be it further

Resolved, That the admissions process for the SMP program be turned over to the sole authority of the seminaries so that all students received for the pastoral ministry, in any program, have the same process of examination of fitness for ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That duties held by district offices in the pastoral training admissions process be reduced to whatever they presently have in the residential seminary M. Div. program; and be it further

Resolved, That the President of the Synod be respectfully requested to appoint a task force from faculty members of both seminaries and members of the Council of Presidents to review the SMP program, assess its graduates, and report its findings and recommendations to the 2016 LCMS convention; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2012 convention of the Indiana District of the LCMS send this resolution to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Indiana District

5-23

To Support Specific Ministry Pastor Program

WHEREAS, The 2007 LCMS convention established the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program at both seminaries to develop pastors for “specific ministries” (Res. 5-01B); and

WHEREAS, 2007 Res. 5-01B states that “specific ministries will include such categories as church planter, staff pastor, and others as needs arise”; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program has a well-thought-out curricula consisting both of class work, taught by seminary professors, and of field education and extended vicarage, overseen by a local pastor; and

WHEREAS, The seminaries retain the certification process; and

WHEREAS, Specific ministry pastors agree to certain conditions on their call (e.g., they are always under supervision of another pastor, they cannot serve as circuit counselors, they cannot serve as delegates to Synod conventions, etc.); and

WHEREAS, At least one congregation in the New England District has been blessed by an SMP program pastor serving as its assistant pastor; therefore be it

Resolved, That the New England District commend the Specific Ministry Pastor program; and be it further

Resolved, That the New England District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention, encouraging it to keep the SMP program open for various types of ministries, including “staff pastors”; and be it finally

Resolved, That the New England District encourage men to consider the SMP program as an opportunity to serve churches as pastors within the LCMS.

New England District

5-24

To Recommend Continued Development of SMP Program

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been blessed by the Lord of the Church with seminary programs and faculties that are able to effectively instruct students both on campus and utilizing distance education methods; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program enables men to receive theological training from our seminaries at the same time as they are receiving practical training under the guidance of a mentor pastor while serving in the parish; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the Northern Illinois District express their appreciation for and continued support of the SMP program; and be it further

Resolved, That the faculties of the seminaries be directed to work closely with the mentor pastor to develop practical application exercises that integrate the specific ministry context with the seminary’s curricula; and be it further

Resolved, That the seminaries be encouraged to coordinate more closely so that the programs offered by each seminary are guided by a similar training approach; and be it further

Resolved, That the faculties of the seminaries be directed to publish in the catalog and course syllabi any additional requirements within SMP classes necessary to gain M.Div. credit; and be it further

Resolved, That candidates and graduates of the SMP program be encouraged to continue their theological education; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2012 convention of Northern Illinois District of the LCMS send this resolution to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Northern Illinois District

5-25

To Encourage Use of Specific Ministry Pastor Program

WHEREAS, Mission work in our postchurched and increasingly diverse society calls for a diversity of gifted mission leaders; and

WHEREAS, There is an unmet need for qualified and capable mission planters to provide the necessary leadership for this work; and

WHEREAS, There are ministry settings that are vacant and waiting for a worker; and

WHEREAS, Ministries of our districts are being blessed with the service of workers who have come through alternate routes of ministry education, especially that of the Specific Ministry Pastor program; and

WHEREAS, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Luke 10:20); and

WHEREAS, The Eastern District by convention resolution has commended the LCMS for its bold and courageous work in addressing real need with a real solution through the adoption of alternate route programs such as the Specific Ministry Pastor program; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention commend the seminaries for their work in the development and execution of the Specific Ministry Pastor program; And be it further

Resolved, That congregations, church agencies, and districts of the LCMS be encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunity to augment the Lord’s work through the Specific Ministry Pastor program.

Eastern District

5-26

To Change Specific Ministry Pastor Title

WHEREAS, The LCMS has sought to provide Word and Sacrament ministry in locations that cannot be served by an ordained pastor since 1989; and

WHEREAS, The oversight committee revised the Distance Education Leading To Ordination (DELTO) program, which resulted in the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program in 2007; and

WHEREAS, The distinction between specific ministry pastors and ordinary pastors has led to confusion in the congregations as well as among pastors, creating a perception of two classes of pastors; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Christian Church has long had a venerable office of deacon; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention replace the office of specific ministry pastor with the office of ordained deacon in the LCMS roster of ministers of religion—ordained; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS maintain the seminaries specific ministry pastor program and rename it the deacon program; and be it further

Resolved, That the status of currently ordained specific ministry pastors be changed to ordained deacons; and be it finally

Resolved, That authorized deacons previously trained and serving congregations be evaluated by their district presidents for certification as appropriate to the Council of Presidents for ordination.

Saint Paul, Susanville, CA; Circuits 4 and 19, CNH District

5-27

To Encourage Continuing Support of Specific Ministry Pastor Program

WHEREAS, Mission work is emerging in new forms requiring a variety of mission leaders; and

WHEREAS, There is an unmet need for qualified and capable mission planters to provide the necessary leadership for this work; and

WHEREAS, There are ministry settings that are vacant and waiting for a worker; and

WHEREAS, Ministries of the Southeastern District and other districts are being blessed with the service of workers who have come through alternate routes of ministry education, especially that of the Specific Ministry Pastor program; and

WHEREAS, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Luke 10:2); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention commend the LCMS for its bold and courageous work in addressing a real need with a real solution through the adoption of alternate route programs, such as the Specific Ministry Pastor program; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southeastern District in convention commend the seminaries for their work in the development and execution of this program; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Southeastern District memorialize the LCMS in convention to continue offering the Specific Ministry Pastor program so that new workers for specific ministries are prepared for service to the church.

Southeastern District; Florida-Georgia District

5-28

To Upgrade SMP Program

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture sets high standards for the theological aptitude of pastors, saying that they are to be “able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2) and “able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9), and that “not many of you should become teachers, my brothers” (James 3:1); and

WHEREAS, The curriculum and standards for the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program are significantly lower than they are for the M.Div. program at our two residential seminaries; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod President and the two seminaries work together to upgrade the curriculum and standards of the Specific Ministry Pastor program, bringing them more in line with the curriculum and standards of the residential seminaries.

Farmington Circuit Forum, Missouri District; St. Matthew, Bonne Terre, MO

5-29

To Discontinue Specific Ministry Pastor Program

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Office of the Holy Ministry so that called men preach the Word and administer the Sacraments; and

WHEREAS, The disciples left their homes to follow Christ (Matt. 19:27); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Confessions state that no one is to preach or teach without a proper call (Augsburg Confession XIV); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has two seminaries of the highest quality, providing for the acquisition of sound theological knowledge; and

WHEREAS, Each congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, whether large or small, deserves a pastor with theological training formed in residence at the seminary; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program is causing much concern in our Synod among the laity and clergy; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention discontinue the SMP program and encourage men presently enrolled in the program to take up residence at one of the seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Dubuque Circuit
Iowa District East

5-30

To Appoint a Task Force to Review the SMP Program

WHEREAS, The “Specific Ministry Pastor” (SMP) program was adopted in 2007 with the claim that it would produce “church planters and missionaries” (2007 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 133); and

WHEREAS, The SMP program to date has produced no “church planters” or “missionaries” but, rather, 70 percent of the students in the program are identified as “staff pastors” of large congregations (2010–11 enrollment statistics); and

WHEREAS, The SMP program altered the pastoral training admissions process so that the district offices are heavily involved in the admissions process with the seminaries, and this inhibits the seminary admissions offices from fulfilling their vocation of ensuring that candidates for seminary admission meet the biblical requirements for admission to the pastoral ministry as found in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9; and

WHEREAS, There continues to be concern about the fact that SMP students receive about one-third the amount of training as M.Div. students and also do not have to be graduates of a college or high school; therefore be it

Resolved, That the admissions process for the SMP program be immediately turned over to the sole authority of the seminaries so that all students received for the pastoral ministry, in any program, have the same process and same rigorous examination of fitness for ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That any duties held by district offices in the pastoral training admissions process be reduced to whatever they presently have in the M.Div. program; and be it finally

Resolved, That the President of the Synod appoint a task force from faculty members of both seminaries and members of the Council of Presidents to review the SMP program, assess its graduates, and report its findings and recommendations to the 2016 Synod convention.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Evansville, Indiana; Zion, Corunna, IN

5-31

To Commend and Enhance Specific Ministry Pastor Program

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program was adopted by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention for the purpose of answering the call to raise up workers for the

harvest and to provide the training of qualified pastors for our Synod congregations; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program was adopted as an official avenue for the raising up and education of qualified pastors for our Synod congregations; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program is a distance-based, specialized program of theological education thoughtfully developed and offered by both of our LCMS seminaries and is available to those who are involved in a ministry site where they will serve as vicars for the first two years of the program. After successful completion of the first two years of the program and certification by the seminary faculty, students are ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry and then complete two more years of seminary instruction; and

WHEREAS, Each SMP student has the approval and support of his home congregation and the LCMS district in which he serves, with each SMP student being supervised by an experienced LCMS pastor during and after his program of study; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program is already providing well-trained, biblically grounded, and confessionally committed pastors for the congregations of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Rocky Mountain District of the LCMS, meeting in convention, offer our thanks to the two seminaries of the LCMS for their diligent work in the development of the excellent SMP education programs at each seminary; and be it further

Resolved, That we offer thanks to God Almighty for the men who are now serving the Lord and His Church faithfully as pastors in Synod congregations because of the excellent education and preparation for ministry they have received through the SMP program; and be it further

Resolved, That the Rocky Mountain District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention with a resolution that celebrates the above-mentioned benefits and blessings of the SMP program and calls for the enhancement of the of the SMP program of the LCMS; and be it finally

Resolved, That the delegates of the 2012 Rocky Mountain District Convention stand and offer a doxology of praise to Almighty God, Father, Son, and Spirit for the new pastors who now bless the ministry of our Synod and district as a result of the SMP program.

Rocky Mountain District

5-32

To Encourage Cost Reduction and Additional Funding for SMP Program

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod recognized the need for specific ministry pastors (SMPs) and passed Resolution 5-01B at the 2007 Synod convention authorizing the creation of the SMP program; and

WHEREAS, Many congregations of the Mid-South District have benefitted from the Word and Sacrament ministry of SMP vicars and pastors; and

WHEREAS, Many more congregations could benefit from having a specific ministry pastor; however, they find it cost-prohibitive; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Mid-South District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to appoint a task force to work with both seminaries, the Council of Presidents, and the Board of Directors of the Synod to reduce costs to the congregations and SMP students and to seek additional funding for the SMP program.

Mid-South District

5-33

To Affirm and Support Specialized Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program

WHEREAS, The needs for providing pastoral ministry in specific and specialized situations where a traditionally prepared seminary candidate or pastor is not available continue to multiply; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod needs to find a way to provide for an increase in pastoral ministry to meet such needs of the Church, especially in light of the mission challenges of today's world; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod has resolved to plant 2,000 new congregations by 2017, for which pastors will be needed; and

WHEREAS, All those who regularly and publicly perform the functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry should do so as those called to and placed into that office because “[i]t is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call” (AC XIV); and

WHEREAS, Any way of providing for pastoral ministry must be faithful to our Lutheran Confessions, faithful to our historic commitment to a well-educated and well-formed ministerium, faithful to our historic commitment to provide pastors in both academic and practical tracks, and faithful to our historic commitment to provide pastoral ministry and leadership at the cutting edges of the mission fields, wherever they might be; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program and its development faithfully bring together and address several issues that have concerned our Synod for many years as it seeks to

a. find a way to meet the existing and expanding needs for pastoral ministry, especially in the variety of contexts of mission and ministry in today's church;

b. respect our commitment to the doctrine of church and ministry, especially in light of AC XIV;

c. honor our commitment to responsible theological education that provides the church with well-educated pastors, who as missional leaders are faithful to Lutheran theology and practice;

d. retain our commitment to the importance, need, and great strengths of residential pastoral education at both the certificate and M.Div. level, along with a commitment to the continuing education of all clergy;

e. restore our past creativity in recognizing the importance, need, and great strengths of alternative models of pastoral education leading to ordination, including a commitment to continuing education;

f. utilize the advances in educational technology that allow for responsible pastoral education and formation through distance-education models;

g. develop a more coherent and comprehensive model for pastoral education by which various routes leading to certification, call, and ordination are coordinated; and

h. be potentially interrelated, so that, for example, a student in a non-residential certificate route might be able to engage also in a residential degree program; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program has provided an opportunity for our Synod to build on its rich experience in providing faithful theological education and to coordinate and consolidate programs and curriculum into a more cohesive and comprehensive curriculum design that engages the best practices of educational design and pedagogy, including much of the current course materials already proven and in use; and

WHEREAS, The process of conversation and collaboration over the past 20 years of work in developing alternate models of pastoral education (including such programs as SOTEX, DELTO, CCM-Irvine) has brought together representatives of the needs of the field with the

entities of the Synod to whom leadership for pastoral education and certification is entrusted, and in so doing provided a helpful model for continuing such collaborative work; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program is supported by the Office for Pastoral Education, the faculties of both seminaries, and the Council of Presidents; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program, in its four years of operation, has established a proven track record of excellence in preparing pastors for the specialized ministry category; and

WHEREAS, SMP vicars and pastors have proven to be faithful servant shepherds, well received and appreciated by those they serve; and

WHEREAS, The SMP program is faithfully meeting the ministry needs for which it was designed; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CNH District affirm the SMP program as a great blessing to the LCMS in its endeavor to raise up faithful laborers for Christ's harvest and pledge its ongoing support of the SMP program; and be it further

Resolved, That the CNH District thank and commend the extraordinary service of the faculties and staffs of both Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and the Office for Pastoral Education for developing, administrating, and monitoring the progress of the SMP program; and be it finally

Resolved, That the CNH District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to commend and affirm the SMP program and pledge its ongoing support.

California-Nevada-Hawaii District

5-34

To Continue Offering Specific Ministry Program

WHEREAS, Mission work in our post-churched and increasingly diverse society calls for a diversity of gifted mission leaders; and

WHEREAS, There is an unmet need for qualified and capable mission planters to provide the necessary leadership for this work; and

WHEREAS, There are ministry settings that are vacant and waiting for a worker; and

WHEREAS, Ministries of the Eastern District are being blessed with the service of workers who have come through alternate routes of ministry education, especially that of the Specific Ministry Pastor program; and

WHEREAS, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Eastern District in convention commend The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for its bold and courageous work in addressing real need with a real solution through the adoption of alternate route programs such as the Specific Ministry Pastor program; and be it further

Resolved, That the Eastern District in convention commend the seminaries for their work in the development and execution of this program; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Eastern District memorialize The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention to continue offering the Specific Ministry Pastor program so that new workers for specific ministries are prepared for service to the church.

Eastern District

5-35

To Amend Bylaw 3.6.6.5 re Procedure to Consolidate Colleges/Universities

Rationale

The current procedure for consolidating, relocating, separating, or divesting a college or university makes it a complicated and potentially lengthy process. This process is inappropriate in the case of a potential separation (making independent) or divestiture (sale), given the irreversible nature of those decisions.

However, a potential consolidation of two LCMS colleges or universities or a potential relocation of a college or university is a matter that may be necessary within a relatively short period of time. Since such action would retain the institutions as part of the Synod, it seems advantageous to accomplish such consolidation or relocation with a less arduous, more agile procedure.

The proposed bylaw will make it easier to consolidate or relocate by allowing the decision to be made by the LCMS Board of Directors plus one of three other entities, rather than one of two other entities; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.6.6.5 be amended as follows:

Concordia University System

3.6.6.5 In keeping with the objectives and the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall ...

(j) together with schools, districts, congregations, and national efforts, foster continuing education for ministers of religion—commissioned; and

(k) have authority to consolidate or relocate a college or university after receiving the consent of the Board of Directors of the Synod by its two-thirds vote and the consent of any one of the following: the Board of Directors of Concordia University System by its two-thirds vote, the Council of Presidents by its two-thirds vote, or the appropriate board of regents by its two-thirds vote; and

(kl) have authority to separate or divest a college or university after receiving the consent of the Board of Directors of the Synod by its two-thirds vote and also the consent of either the Council of Presidents by its two-thirds vote or the appropriate board of regents by its two-thirds vote. to consolidate, relocate, separate, or divest a college or university.

LCMS Board of Directors

6. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

6-01

To Increase Financial Support

WHEREAS, God desires for us to use His gracious gifts to us, including financial, for the furthering of the kingdom of God (Matt. 25:14–30; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7–11; 1 Tim. 6:17–19); and

WHEREAS, We have formed a synod to administer those ministries that can be accomplished more effectively in association with other member congregations through the Synod and assist in bringing the saving Gospel to every corner of the world; and

WHEREAS, There are entities within the Synod that are vital to the mission and ministry of the Synod and which have seen a reduction in their financial support from the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That Iowa District West memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to make its financial support of our two seminaries, the institutions of the Concordia University System, LCMS World Relief and Human Care, and those programs of the Offices of National and International Missions a higher priority.

Iowa District West

6-02

To Increase Financial Support of Seminaries

WHEREAS, Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:37–38); and

WHEREAS, A stated objective of the LCMS is to “recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth” (Constitution, Art. III 3); and

WHEREAS, The seminaries of the LCMS have been established to prepare men to serve as pastors and to prepare women to serve as deaconesses for the congregations and missions of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The seminaries increasingly rely on student tuition, fees, and gifts from congregations and individuals, rather than funds from the LCMS, in order to fund their mission to the Synod of providing theological education (about 2 percent of the seminaries’ annual budgets are provided by direct subsidy from the Synod’s operating budget [*The Lutheran Witness*, May 2011]); and

WHEREAS, The continued existence of both Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, is critical to the long-term faithfulness and well-being of the LCMS; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS give thanks to the Lord of the Church for having answered the prayers of His people by sending laborers into His harvest; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations and individuals be encouraged to provide financial support for the seminaries of the LCMS; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Montana District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to increase direct financial support for the seminaries of the Synod, starting with 5 percent of the seminaries’ annual operating budgets in 2014 and increasing another 5 percent of the seminaries’ annual operating budgets each year until 2023, after which time the Synod will support the seminaries at a minimum of 51 percent of their annual operating budgets, to be continued at this level indefinitely.

Montana District

6-03

To Increase Synod’s Support for Seminaries

WHEREAS, The financial support given to our two seminaries has continued to decline over the past years; and

WHEREAS, Our LCMS congregations deserve the very best trained and educated men as pastors; and

WHEREAS, Article III 3 of our Synod’s Constitution states that one of the main objectives for forming our Synod was to “recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers, and provide opportunity for their continued growth”; and

WHEREAS, The seminaries are important for conserving and promoting the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6); therefore be it *Resolved*, That the 2013 LCMS convention designate that it positively supports both of our seminaries; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention immediately implement a plan to increase the financial support of the seminaries by an additional 10 percent of its budget.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

6-04

To Increase Support of Our Seminaries

WHEREAS, We, as a Synod, a body “walking together,” are called to raise up pastors and missionaries; and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention has previously voted to support men and their families in attending seminaries in order for the men to be trained as pastors to serve God and His people; and

WHEREAS, The Synod presently supplies only about 2 percent of the two seminaries’ financial needs; and

WHEREAS, Educating all congregations on this fact would be quite beneficial; and

WHEREAS, In order for pastors to be well and serve well it is certainly helpful to have their financial burdens minimized; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS increase its support of its seminaries to 12 percent of the seminaries’ needs.

Minnesota North District

6-05

To Increase Synod’s Financial Support of Seminaries and Universities

WHEREAS, The Scriptures say,

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: “He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God (2 Cor. 9:6–11);

and

WHEREAS, The financial support provided by the Synod at the national level to LCMS seminaries and Concordia universities has continued to decline; and

WHEREAS, LCMS congregations deserve the very best trained and educated professional church workers for building God's kingdom; and

WHEREAS, Art. III 3 of the Synod's Constitution states that one of the main objectives for forming Synod was "(3) Recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth"; and

WHEREAS, The seminaries and universities are important in conserving and promoting the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3-6); and

WHEREAS, The Southeastern District has increased financial support to the Synod at the national level for ministry purposes, including seminaries and universities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southeastern District affirms the role of LCMS seminaries and the Concordia University System in recruiting and training pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers; and be it further

Resolved, That the Southeastern District acting in convention memorialize the Synod at its 2013 convention to direct the Synod's Board of Directors to increase its financial support to the seminaries and to the Concordia universities.

Southeastern District

6-06

To Address Educational Costs Shouldered by Seminarians

WHEREAS, The Church relies on the Office of the Holy Ministry and those men who are called to it; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was originally formed with a goal to establish and maintain a seminary; and

WHEREAS, The current costs of education are high and the typical pastoral salaries are modest; therefore be it

Resolved, That congregations throughout the Synod be encouraged to consider adopting a seminary student; and be it further

Resolved, That districts, as part of their pre-enrollment interview procedures, provide debt awareness and counseling services to help seminarians understand what to expect financially; and be it further

Resolved, That districts be encouraged to offer debt reduction for candidates placed to them and to coordinate efforts for their respective congregations to help relieve student indebtedness; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod incrementally increase its financial support of the seminaries.

Board of Directors
New Jersey District

6-07

To Fund Missionaries Fully

WHEREAS, It is our collective responsibility as a Synod to spread the Gospel through missionary efforts; and

WHEREAS, That responsibility should include paying the cost for men to occupy those mission posts; and

WHEREAS, Currently when men are called to be missionaries, they are responsible for raising a significant portion of their own costs through personal fund-raising efforts; and

WHEREAS, These men are trained to be pastors and shepherds of souls, not fund-raisers; and

WHEREAS, Insisting they find their own funding before they are deployed places an undue burden on them and does not befit a Synod that pledges to be responsible in sending out missionaries; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod reevaluate how missionaries are funded; and be it further

Resolved, That the responsibility for raising funds for mission work be removed from our missionaries and that our Synod President be given the charge to find a way for the Synod to shoulder this burden from within its budget within the next triennium.

St. John, Hubbard, IA; Iowa District East Board of Directors

6-08

To Review Synod Support for Ordained Missionaries

WHEREAS, Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17); and

WHEREAS, People cannot hear without someone to preach the Word (Rom. 10:14); and

WHEREAS, The cost of mission work has become the sole responsibility and burden of the missionary; and

WHEREAS, God's Holy Word states that those who preach the Gospel should receive sustenance from the Gospel (Matt. 10:9); therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention acknowledge the current shortcomings in monetary support of ordained missionaries; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention appoint a task force to evaluate the situation and provide necessary funding for ordained missionaries.

Dubuque Circuit Forum
Iowa East District

6-09

To Reconsider LCMS Missionary Self-Funding

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a rich history and practice of overseas, ethnic, career, and short-term missionaries; and

WHEREAS, This missionary work was historically funded to a large degree by congregational and individual financial gifts routed through "mission offerings" to the district and the Synod; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, more and more of the financial burden of missionary support has been shifted to funding strategies outside of district and Synod "mission offerings"; and

WHEREAS, All LCMS missionaries (career, short-term, and GEO) are now required to self-fund their expenses through programs such as "Together in Mission" and direct congregational and individual support; and

WHEREAS, This places an exhausting burden upon the missionaries themselves to spend most of their furlough time (vacation) traveling from one location to the next to bolster existing donors and recruit new donors; and

WHEREAS, Congregations and individuals are encouraged to support said missionaries in addition to keeping current district and Synod "mission offerings" funded at a continuing level; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the Office of International Mission to reconsider the current plan of missionary self-funding; and be it further

Resolved, That the Office of International Mission develop a funding model that equitably balances self-funding with more traditional models of funding through district and Synod offerings; and be it finally

Resolved, That congregations of the Synod be encouraged to exercise due diligence in determining how and where they can financially support individual career, short-term, and GEO missionaries creatively.

Pacific Circuit 9, Northwest District; St. Peters, Cornelius, OR

6-10

To Pay Foreign and Domestic Missionary Salaries

WHEREAS, One of the objectives of the LCMS is to “Strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world” (Art. III 2); and

WHEREAS, Another of the objectives of the LCMS is to “Provide evangelical supervision, counsel, and care for pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers of the Synod in the performance of their official duties” (Art. III 8); and

WHEREAS, When full-time LCMS domestic and international missionaries have to raise their own funds to support themselves during their assignments, it takes away time these missionaries could spend on the mission field; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS is now paying the salaries and benefits of three full-time mission executives (Chief Mission Officer, Executive Director of International Missions, Executive Director of National Missions); and

WHEREAS, Most LCMS districts are now paying the salaries and benefits of one or more mission executives; and

WHEREAS, “The time has come for the gifts of God’s people to support the core purposes of Synod—seminaries, church-work programs at our colleges, and missions ... mission offerings must directly support ordained Word and Sacrament missionaries at home and abroad” (Daniel L. Gard, *The Lutheran Witness*, June 2010, p. 20); and

WHEREAS, “When seminaries and missions are financial priorities, proper stewardship is exercised and giving will increase” (Gard, p. 20); therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention direct the national Board of Directors to develop a plan that will make fully funding national and international missionary salaries a priority, perhaps with a combination of unrestricted and restricted funds raised for this purpose; and be it further

Resolved, That the aforementioned plan include recommendations for districts to make funding national and international missionary salaries a priority; and be it finally

Resolved, That the aforementioned plan be presented to the 2016 national convention for scrutiny and possible approval.

Holy Cross
Kansas City, MO

6-11

To Make Available International Center Salaries and Benefits

WHEREAS, The preponderance of the monies made available to the Synod are provided by the stewardship of its members; and

WHEREAS, The membership of the Synod has a right and stewardship obligation to have a voice in the administration of such funds; and

WHEREAS, The representative of the Synod to the Iowa District East convention has stated that salary and benefits information, except for a few of the top officers of the Synod, will not be disclosed to the membership; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has experienced severe budgetary shortfalls necessitating stringent budget cuts that affect the mission and ministry of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, We understand that overtures to the 2013 LCMS convention may come from district conventions; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Iowa District East in convention petition the 2013 LCMS convention to direct that the salaries and benefits of the elected, appointed, contracted, and hired employees at the Synod’s International Center be made available to the general membership of the Synod.

Iowa District East

6-12

To Address Board of Directors Budget and Management Responsibilities (Bylaw 3.3.4.5.)

Rationale

Following the 2010 LCMS convention, it was recognized that restructuring decisions had resulted in lack of clarity and even contradictions in the *Handbook* of the Synod that would require additional attention by the 2013 convention. These concerns were discussed during a daylong November 2, 2012, joint meeting of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, the Commission on Handbook, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Chief Mission Officer, and a member of the President’s Office staff. The commission offers the following proposed amendments to the 2013 convention of the Synod to satisfy a number of these concerns in the 2010 *Handbook* of the Synod.

Questions have been raised during the triennium related to distribution of budget dollars from the corporate Synod budget. The questions arise due to the wording change from “program board” to “mission board” in Bylaw 3.3.4.5 as a result of the structure changes made at the 2010 convention. The additional changes to Bylaw 3.3.4 recommended below are intended to reorganize the content of this section and provide clarity.

Resolved, That in order to clarify the role of the Board of Directors regarding the corporate Synod budget and Board of Directors management, the 2013 LCMS convention adopt the following bylaw changes:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.3.4.5 (e) The Board of Directors shall be responsible for providing operating and capital funds to carry out the work of the Synod.

- (a) The Board of Directors shall allocate available funds to the mission boards, commissions, councils, offices, and departments of corporate Synod and hold them responsible therefor. ~~(a) To the extent of its responsibilities relative to the general management and supervision of the business and legal affairs of the Synod:~~

- (1) ~~It shall receive such reports as it requests on the operations and policies of the mission boards, commissions, offices, and councils.~~
- (2) ~~It shall have the right to request review of any action or policy of a mission board, commission, office, or council which primarily relates to business, property, and/or legal matters and, after consultation with the agency involved and when deemed necessary, require modification or revocation thereof, except opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters.~~
- (b) The Corporate Synod's budgeting process and the budget itself shall be designed to support the worldwide mission and ministry of the Synod.
- (1) The board shall establish policies and guidelines relating to the preparation of the annual budget of the Synod.
 - (2) The board shall adopt the annual budget of the corporate Synod.
- 3.3.4.6 (d) Regarding the Synod's seminaries, the board shall, together with national fund-raising operations, establish policy guidelines for the distribution of grants of the Synod (restricted and unrestricted) and efforts for securing additional financial support from other sources.
- 3.3.4.7 (e) Regarding the Synod's colleges, universities, and seminaries, the board shall approve capital projects in relation to campus property management agreements and institutional master plans, and shall establish and monitor criteria for determining institutional viability, fiscal and otherwise.
- 3.3.4.8 To the extent of its responsibilities relative to the general management and supervision of the business and legal affairs of the Synod:
- (a) ~~It shall receive such reports as it requests on the operations and policies of the boards, commissions, offices, and councils.~~
 - (b) ~~It shall have the right to request review of any action or policy of a board, commission, office, or council which primarily relates to business, property, and/or legal matters and, after consultation with the agency involved and when deemed necessary, require modification or revocation thereof, except opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters.~~
- 3.3.4.69 The Board of Directors shall exercise general oversight over the operations and activities of the synodwide corporate entities, the Concordia Plans, and Concordia Plan Services as required of it in the Constitution of the Synod and specified in these Bylaws.
- (a) It shall assure itself that their accounting, budgeting, and financial policies comply with generally accepted accounting standards.
 - (b) It shall assure itself that audits are performed by internal auditors or independent certified public accountants for the Synod's
 - (1) synodwide corporate entities;
 - (2) colleges, universities, and seminaries;
 - (3) districts;
 - (4) Concordia Plan Services; and
 - (5) the Concordia Plans.
 - (c) It shall be furnished with copies of these and any interim financial reports it requests.
- 3.3.4.710 The Board of Directors shall serve as the custodian of all the property of the Synod as defined in Bylaw 1.2.1 (q). Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, it shall have the authority and responsibility with respect to the property of the Synod as is generally vested in and imposed upon a board of directors of a corporation.
- (a) It shall, however, delegate to district boards of directors the authority to buy, sell, and encumber real and personal property in the ordinary course of performing the functions which the district carries on for

the Synod in accord with general policies (which shall be applicable to all districts) established from time to time by itself or the Synod in convention.

- (b) It may, however, delegate to any agency of the Synod powers and duties with respect to property of the Synod for which such agency of the Synod has direct supervisory responsibility.
 - (c) Such delegation shall be in writing and shall be subject to change at any time by the Synod's Board of Directors, provided that reasonable deliberations, as determined by the Board of Directors, take place with such agency prior to the change.
- 3.3.4.811 The Board of Directors shall be empowered to authorize the Chief Financial Officer of the Synod to borrow capital funds after the board has determined the amounts and the conditions under which these capital funds shall be borrowed, for capital-fund outlay, for site acquisition, or for construction projects that are authorized by conventions of the Synod.
- (a) It and the responsible officers of the Synod are empowered to do all things necessary to effect such capital-fund borrowings if and when required, including the pledging of real and other property belonging to the Synod in order to secure loans to obtain the necessary funds.
 - (b) The borrowed capital funds shall not be used for any operating expenditures and shall be subject to provision for amortization.
- 3.3.4.912 The Board of Directors of the Synod may appoint other officers, subject to the approval of the President of the Synod, may appoint other officers and staff required from time to time to carry out the business and legal affairs of the Synod.

Commission on Handbook

6-13

To Restore Balance to Composition of LCMS Board of Directors

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is a gathering of congregations walking together in confession of faith; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has historically provided balanced representation between pastors and laity on the various boards and commissions at the Synod level; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 LCMS convention adopted Res. 8-16A, amending Bylaw 3.3.4.1 regarding the composition of the Synod's Board of Directors to provide for four ministers of religion—ordained, one minister of religion—commissioned, and up to ten laypersons; and

WHEREAS, Concern was expressed from the floor of the convention about the imbalance in the composition of the Board of Directors between laity and ministers of religion; and

WHEREAS, the original proposal of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance maintained that near balance (eight ordained/commissioned ministers and nine laypersons) by increasing the representation both of pastors and laity; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 LCMS convention increased the number of laypersons while reducing the number of pastors to below previous levels; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Central Illinois District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to amend Bylaw 3.3.4.1 as follows:

3.3.4.1 The Board of Directors shall consist of no more than 15 voting members, as follows:

1. One layperson elected from each of the five designated geographical regions

2. Four ministers of religion—ordained elected at-large by the Synod in convention
3. One minister of religion—commissioned elected at-large by the Synod in convention
4. Up to three at-large laypersons appointed by the elected members of the Board of Directors to obtain needed additional skill sets (legal, financial, investment, administration, etc.)
5. The President and the Secretary of the Synod

With the exception of the President and Secretary of the Synod, no more than one voting member from each category and no more than two voting members total may be elected from any one district. The First Vice-President of the Synod shall be a nonvoting member.

Central Illinois District

6-14

To Amend Bylaw for Filling Board and Commission Vacancies

WHEREAS, Between conventions, vacancies arise on Synod boards and commissions. Usually these vacancies are filled by the Synod Board of Directors. Until 2004, lists of candidates for these vacant positions were developed by a “three-member committee,” as it were, consisting of the chair of the previous Synod convention’s nominating committee, the Secretary of the Synod, and the Synod’s Director of Human Resources—that is, a person with knowledge of the previous convention’s nomination process, a national officer of the Synod, and a staff person who knows the field of human resources. This arrangement served the Synod well for years; and

WHEREAS, With 2004 Res. 7-14, the Synod changed the pertinent bylaw to provide that the “three-member committee” consist of the chairman and two other members of the previous Synod convention’s nominating committee—all three of whom were elected to the nominating committee by only one district—with the proviso that the Director of Human Resources be consulted in the work; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, the Synod abolished all its program boards, creating two new mission boards, members of whom are not nominated by the nominating committee; and

WHEREAS, The nominating committee’s scope of responsibilities has been reduced by the 2010 LCMS convention but its authority in filling vacancies was increased by the 2004 LCMS convention; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Missouri District memorialize the Synod to amend Bylaw 3.2.5 to read as follows:

- 3.2.5 Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, vacancies that occur on elected boards or commissions of the Synod shall be filled by the Board of Directors of the Synod.
- (a) The Secretary of the Synod shall be responsible for gathering a list of nominees from the board or commission where the vacancy occurs, the President of the Synod, the district boards of directors, and the slate of candidates from the previous convention of the Synod within 90 days of notification of the vacancy.
 - (b) A list of at least three but no more than five candidates shall be submitted as soon as possible to the appropriate appointing body.
 - (c) This list shall be determined by the Secretary of the Synod, the Synod’s Director of Human Resources, and the chairman and two members of the Committee for Convention Nominations as determined by the committee. The Synod’s Director of Human Resources shall be consulted in developing the candidate list.
 - (d) The appointing board may nominate from the floor before appointing not amend the list of candidates.

Missouri District

6-15

To Amend Bylaw Procedure for Filling Vacancies

Rationale

Between conventions, vacancies arise on Synod boards and commissions. Usually these vacancies are filled by the Synod Board of Directors. Until 2004, lists of candidates for these vacant positions were developed by a “three-member committee,” as it were, consisting of the chair of the previous Synod convention’s nominating committee, the Secretary of the Synod, and the Synod’s Director of Human Resources—that is, a person with knowledge of the previous convention’s nomination process, a national officer of the Synod, and a staff person who knows the field of human resources. This arrangement served the Synod well for years.

With 2004 Res. 7-14, the Synod changed the pertinent bylaw to provide that the “three-member committee” consist of the chairman and two other members of the previous Synod convention’s nominating committee—each of the three of whom were elected to the nominating committee by only one district—with the proviso that the Director of Human Resources be consulted in the work. This change may have seemed good on the surface since the Secretary is also a member of the Board of Directors and the Director of Human Resources is a non-elected staff member. However, the “three-member committee” simply proposes nominees. It does not actually appoint them to office, so having the Director of Human Resources as a member of this committee need not present a concern. Moreover, the Synod’s Secretary can always recuse himself in any Board of Directors vote. It should be noted, however, that the Synod does not expect nominating committee members who are also voting delegates at conventions to recuse themselves from participating in convention elections.

In 2010, the Synod abolished all of its program boards. It created two new mission boards, but almost all of their members are elected on the basis of regional nominations. None of the mission board members are to be nominated by nominating committee. Thus, the Synod nominating committee is now processing far fewer board nominations than it has in the past. Whatever sense it made in 2004 for the “three-member committee” to be composed entirely of nominating committee members, it makes much less sense today.

This resolution would return to the previous composition of the “three-member committee,” with the proviso that any appointing body retains the standard parliamentary privilege of nominating from the floor. Floor nominations help to ensure that minority voice(s) can be heard. Moreover, floor nominations can become important when unforeseen circumstances present themselves just before an appointment is to be made; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Carrollton Circuit Forum memorialize the Synod to make Bylaw 3.2.5 read as follows:

- 3.2.5 Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, vacancies that occur on elected boards or commissions of the Synod shall be filled by the Board of Directors of the Synod.
- (a) The Secretary of the Synod shall be responsible for gathering a list of nominees from the board or commission where the vacancy occurs, the President of the Synod, the district boards of directors, and the slate of candidates from the previous convention of the Synod within 90 days of notification of the vacancy.
 - (b) A list of at least three but no more than five candidates shall be submitted as soon as possible to the appropriate appointing body.
 - (c) This list shall be determined by the Secretary of the Synod, the Synod’s Director of Human Resources, and the chairman and two members of the Committee for Convention Nominations as determined by the committee. The Synod’s Director of Human Resources shall

be consulted in developing the candidate list.

- (d) The appointing board may not amend the list of candidates make nominations from the floor before appointing.

Carrollton Circuit Forum
Missouri District

6-16

To Revise Definitions in the *Handbook* (Bylaw Section 1.2.1 *et al.*)

Introduction

Subsequent to the 2010 Synod convention, the Commission on Constitutional Matters and the Commission on Handbook were tasked with identifying and updating all bylaws related to the adopted resolutions. In the course of that assignment, some bylaw clarifications were overlooked and some were incorrectly updated.

Additionally, during the course of the triennium, a number of questions arose which suggested that clarification of certain definitions would be appropriate and helpful.

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention adopts the following bylaw changes to Bylaw 1.2.1:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.2 Definition of Terms

1.2.1 The following definitions ~~apply to are for use in understanding the terms as used in~~ the entire Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod:

- (a) **Agency**: An instrumentality other than a congregation or corporate Synod, whether or not separately incorporated, which the Synod in convention or its Board of Directors has caused or authorized to be formed to further the Synod's ~~objectives~~ Objectives (Art. III of the Constitution).
- (1) Agencies include each board, commission, council, seminary, university, college, district, Concordia Plan Services, and each synodwide corporate entity.
 - (2) The term "agency of the Synod" does not describe or imply the existence of principal and agency arrangements as defined under civil law.
- (b) **Chief Executive**: The top staff administrator of ~~an a~~ separately incorporated agency of the Synod, who may be referred to as president, ~~other than a mission board or commission~~.
- (c) **Commission**: A group of persons, elected or appointed as prescribed in the Bylaws, rendering a precisely defined ~~service~~ function of the Synod and responsible, as the case may be, to the Synod in convention, to the President of the Synod, or to the Board of Directors of the Synod. The commissions of the Synod are:
- (1) Commission on Constitutional Matters
 - (2) Commission on Doctrinal Review
 - (3) Commission on Handbook
 - (4) Commission on Theology and Church Relations
- (d) **Concordia Plans**: ~~Concordia Plan Services is a controlled entity of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod created to manage the Concordia Plans. The Concordia Plans, while operating under the supervision of the Synod Board of Directors, are trust agencies whose assets are not the property of corporate Synod.~~
- (e) **Corporate Synod**: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Missouri nonprofit corporation, including ~~its offices, boards, commissions and the departments operating under the supervision of the Board of Directors of the Synod and its mission boards and commissions.~~
- (1) "Corporate Synod" is not an agency of the Synod.

~~(2) Concordia Plan Services is a controlled entity of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod created to manage the Concordia Plans.~~

~~(3) The Concordia Plans, while operating under the supervision of the Synod Board of Directors, are trust agencies whose assets are not the property of corporate Synod.~~

~~(24) The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in referencing the laws of the State of Missouri in these Bylaws and in the Synod's Articles of Incorporation, intends to acknowledge its responsibility to be subject to civil authority. In all such references, however, the Synod intends to retain all authority and autonomy allowed a church under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the State of Missouri.~~

(fe) **Council**: An officially established group elected or appointed as an advisory body. The council of the Synod is the Council of Presidents.

(gf) **District**: A division of the Synod as determined by a national convention of the Synod.

(hg) **Ecclesiastical supervision**: The responsibility, primarily of the President of the Synod and district presidents, to supervise on behalf of the Synod the doctrine, life, and administration of its members, officers, and agencies. Such supervision, subject to the provisions of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, includes visitation, evangelical encouragement and support, care, protection, counsel, advice, admonition, and, when necessary, appropriate disciplinary measures to assure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are followed and implemented. Thus, ecclesiastical supervision is also the presenting, interpreting, and applying of the collective will of the Synod's congregations. Ecclesiastical supervision does not include the responsibility to observe, monitor, control, or direct the day-to-day activities of individual members of the Synod, whether in the conduct of their work or in their private lives (cf. Bylaw 2.14.1 [a]). Further, those constitutional articles and bylaws pertaining to ecclesiastical supervision shall determine the full definition of ecclesiastical supervision.

(hh) **Executive Director**: ~~The top staff administrator of a mission board or commission of corporate Synod.~~

(i) **Governing Board**: A board that directs a separately incorporated agency of the Synod. Governing boards are such as a board of directors, a board of trustees, a board of regents, a board of managers, or a board of governors.

(j) **May**: Permissive, expressing ability, liberty, or the possibility to act.

(k) **Member of the Synod**: See Art. V of the Constitution. Members of the Synod are of two classes: corporate members (congregations that have joined the Synod) and individual members (ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—commissioned on the roster of the Synod).

(l) **Mission Board**: An officially established group of persons elected as prescribed in the Bylaws, charged with developing and determining policies for ~~an operating a~~ ministry function of the Synod as prescribed in the Bylaws. These policies shall establish boundaries, parameters, and principles that guide the respective mission office in determining present and future activities and programs. The mission board shall have oversight of the implementation of these policies. The President of the Synod shall be responsible for supervising the implementation of mission board policies in accordance with his responsibilities under Constitution Art. XI and Bylaws 3.3.1.1.1–3.3.1.3. The mission boards of the Synod are:

(1) Board for National Mission

(2) Board for International Mission

(m) **Officer**: Those positions identified in Constitution Art. X A or Art. XII 3 or Bylaw sections 3.3 and 3.4 unless qualified by a modifier.

(n) **Operating Board**: ~~The Board of Directors and mission boards of the Synod, the Board of Directors of Concordia Plan Services, and the governing boards of the synodwide corporate entities.~~

(no) **Oversight**: For the purpose of these Bylaws, to monitor; to make inquiry and receive a response thereto; to make suggestions; to bring

concerns to the attention of a higher authority.

- (op) **Praesidium:** The President and the vice-presidents of the Synod.
- (pq) **Property of the Synod:** All assets, real or personal, tangible or intangible, whether situated in the United States or elsewhere, titled or held in the name of the Synod, its nominee, or an agency of the Synod. "Property of the Synod" does not include any assets held by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod or by an agency of the Synod in a fiduciary capacity (including, for purposes of example, the funds managed for the Concordia Plans by Concordia Plan Services and certain funds held by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation).
- (qr) **Region:** A division of the Synod for the purpose of regional elections.
- (rs) **Shall:** A word of command that must always be given an imperative or compulsory meaning.
- (t) ~~Subcommittee: Persons who are voting or advisory members of a board or commission who perform a specific function and are in a reporting relationship to the parent group. Subcommittees may be standing or ad hoc.~~
- (st) **Supervision:** For the purpose of these Bylaws (other than those pertaining to ecclesiastical supervision), to have authority over, to direct actions, to control activities.
- (tv) **Synod:** Refers collectively to the association of self-governing Lutheran congregations and all its agencies on the national and district levels. The Synod, as defined herein, is not a civil law entity.
- (uw) **Synodwide Corporate Entity:** A separate corporation established by the Synod for business and legal reasons. For the purposes of these Bylaws, the "synodwide corporate entities" of the Synod are the following corporations:
 - (1) Concordia Historical Institute
 - (2) Concordia Publishing House
 - (3) Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod
 - (4) Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation
 - (5) Concordia University System

The term "synodwide corporate entity" is not used in these Bylaws to include foreign corporations created by the Synod in order to undertake foreign missions.
- (vx) **Task Force:** An appointed group that has an *ad hoc* assignment to accomplish a specific task and whose duties have a definite expiration date.
- (wy) **Voting Member:** A member congregation of the Synod. (See Art. V A of the Constitution.)

Commission on Handbook

6-17

To Address Handbook Issues re Synodwide Corporate Entities

Background

During the triennium, concerns related to bylaws governing synodwide corporate entities were brought to the attention of the Commission on Handbook. This overture identifies those concerns and advocates bylaw amendment solutions proposed by the commission for adoption by the 2013 LCMS convention.

(A) Synodwide Corporate Entity Governing Documents (Bylaw 3.6.1.7)

Rationale

Current Bylaw 3.6.1.7 as currently worded requires synodwide corporate entities to provide specific provisions in each of their governing documents, a requirement which, taken literally, would be

burdensome to these corporations, given the fact that "each governing instrument" can refer to many documents including policy manuals. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following amendments to clarify the expectation of the bylaw.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.6.1.7 Each synodwide corporate entity shall provide the following in its governing instruments:

- (a) ~~Each governing instrument shall include the a~~ provision that every member of the governing board shall be a member of a congregation that is a member of the Synod;
- (b) ~~Each governing instrument shall include the a~~ provision that it is a component part of the Synod, is subject to the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, and its governing instruments are subordinate to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod;
- (c) ~~Each governing instrument shall include the a~~ provision that any amendment to a provision of its governing instruments which relate to its objects and purposes, the designating of its members, or the procedure for amending its governing instruments shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of its members, if any, who are appointed by the Board of Directors of the Synod; and
- (d) ~~Each governing instrument shall include the a~~ provision that upon dissolution of a synodwide corporate entity, its remaining assets shall be transferred to the Synod. Any amendment to this provision shall require the affirmative vote of the Synod in convention.

(B) Required Background Checks for Board Candidates (Bylaw 3.12.4.2)

Rationale

The nominations/elections process during the 2010 convention was complicated by the requirement of background checks for candidates for positions on the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod. While the nominations process provided by Synod Bylaws 3.12.3.6ff was followed and background checks were completed for the candidates for the offices, floor nominations prompted questions regarding how the background check requirement was to be satisfied in their regard. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following bylaw changes to the 2013 convention to resolve the matter.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.12.4.2 The President shall determine and announce a period of time during the convention for the election of the members of all elective boards and commissions.

- (a) After the election of the President, the First Vice-President, and the other vice-presidents in that order, the election by ballot of the Secretary shall next be conducted.
- (b) The election by ballot of the members of the Board of Directors shall next follow. Each category (ordained, commissioned, and lay) shall be elected separately, the order of the elections to be rotated to allow each category to be the first elected at every third convention, as monitored by the Secretary of the Synod.
- (c) The election by ballot of the members of all elective boards and commissions shall next follow.
- (d) A majority of all votes shall be required for election to all elective offices and elective board positions. Candidates receiving a majority on the first ballot shall be declared elected.
- (e) Persons elected to positions requiring a background check shall not assume office until an appropriate background check has been completed. If a person is elected and subsequently fails to pass a required background check, the position will be deemed vacant and will be filled according to Bylaw 3.2.5.
- (fe) Except in the elections of president and vice-presidents, when a second or succeeding ballot is required for a majority, the candidate

receiving the fewest votes and all candidates receiving less than 15 percent of the votes cast shall be dropped from the ballot, unless fewer than two candidates receive 15 percent or more of the votes cast, in which case the three highest candidates shall constitute the ballot.

- (gf) The tally of the votes cast for each candidate shall be announced after each ballot in all elections.

Commission on Handbook

6-18

To Clarify Appointment of Chief Executives of Synodwide Corporate and Trust Entities and Executive Director of Commission on Theology and Church Relations

Introduction

As reporting relationships within corporate Synod were addressed in light of the 2010 convention restructuring decisions, it became evident that Bylaw 1.5.5 was not updated sufficiently to provide clarity regarding the appointment of certain staff positions within corporate Synod. Additionally, with the 2010 restructuring, all executive directors within corporate Synod, with the exception of the executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), now report to an officer of the organization and are filled in accordance with the human resources policies of corporate Synod by the officer to whom they report unless bylaws or policies of the Board of Directors (BOD) specify otherwise (see Bylaw 3.3.1.3 and BOD Policy 5.6.6.7).

Resolved, That in order to provide clarity regarding the appointment of certain staff positions within corporate Synod and the synodwide corporate entities, the 2013 LCMS convention adopt the following bylaw changes:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.2.1 The following definitions are for use in understanding the terms used in apply to the entire Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod:

- (h) ~~**Executive Director:** The top staff administrator of a mission board or commission of corporate Synod~~

Agency Operations

1.5.5 Every agency of corporate Synod and every synodwide corporate entity shall operate under the general human resources policies of the Synod as provided by the Board of Directors of the Synod, in accordance with Bylaw 3.3.4.3. Specific policies under these general policies may be adopted by each synodwide corporate entity agency's governing board in order to accommodate the unique character of its operations.

~~1.5.5.1~~ Every agency of corporate Synod that has staff reporting to it and every synodwide corporate entity may create chief executive (who may be designated as an officer of the corporation) or executive director positions, pursuant to Bylaw 1.2.1, and fill them in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod and the human resources policies adopted pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.5:

- (a) The chief executive or executive director shall serve at the pleasure of the board or commission:

(1) The slate of candidates for the initial appointment of the chief executive or executive director shall be selected by the board or commission in consultation with and with the mutual concurrence of the President of the Synod.

~~(2) In the event of a vacancy, the appropriate board or commission and the President of the Synod shall act expeditiously to fill the vacancy. This board or commission shall present its list of candidates to the President.~~

~~(3) The board or commission shall conduct an annual review of its chief executive or executive director and, before the expiration of five years, conduct a comprehensive review.~~

~~(4) At the conclusion of each five-year period, the appointment shall terminate unless the board or commission takes specific action to continue the person in the office, each subsequent term not to exceed five years.~~

- (b) Any interim appointments of a chief executive or executive director shall follow a process similar to the initial appointment of a chief executive or executive director:

(1) Such interim appointees must be approved by the President of the Synod, and may not serve more than 18 months without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.

(2) Such interim appointees shall be ineligible to serve on a permanent basis without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.

- (c) The chief executives and executive directors shall normally attend all meetings of their board or commission except when their own positions are being considered.

~~1.5.5.2~~ Every agency of corporate Synod that has staff reporting to it and every synodwide corporate entity may create and fill other staff positions in accordance with the human resources policies adopted pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.5. Such staff may attend meetings of their board or commission upon request of the board or commission.

~~1.5.5.3~~ All agencies shall develop policies regarding their relations with staffs in accordance with general human resources policies adopted by the Board of Directors of the Synod.

3.6 Synodwide Corporate Entities

General Principles

3.6.1.4 Each governing board of a synodwide corporate entity shall elect its own chair, vice-chair, and secretary and such operating officers as may be necessary.

- (a) The executive officer of each synodwide corporate entity shall serve at the pleasure of the governing board:

(b) The governing board of each executive shall conduct an annual review and, before the expiration of each five-year period, the appointment shall terminate unless the governing board takes specific action to continue the person in the office.

(c) In the event of a vacancy, the appropriate governing board and the President shall act expeditiously to fill the vacancy. The board shall present its list of candidates to the President of the Synod.

(d) The slate of candidates for the initial appointment of an executive officer shall be selected by its governing board in consultation and mutual concurrence with the President of the Synod.

(e) Any interim appointments of an executive officer shall be processed in a similar manner. Such appointee must be approved by the President of the Synod, may not serve more than 18 months without the concurrence of the President of the Synod, and shall be ineligible to serve on a permanent basis without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.

~~1.5.5.1~~ 3.6.1.5 Synodwide corporate entities Every agency of corporate Synod that has staff reporting to it and every synodwide corporate entity may create chief executive positions (who may be designated as an officer of the

corporation) ~~or executive director positions~~, pursuant to Bylaw 1.2.1, and fill them in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod and the human resources policies adopted pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.5.

- (a) The chief executive ~~or executive director~~ shall serve at the pleasure of the governing board or commission.
- (1) The slate of candidates for the initial appointment of the chief executive ~~or executive director~~ shall be selected by the governing board or commission in consultation with and with the mutual concurrence of the President of the Synod.
 - (2) In the event of a vacancy, the appropriate governing board or commission and the President of the Synod shall act expeditiously to fill the vacancy. This governing board or commission shall present its list of candidates to the President.
 - (3) The governing board or commission shall conduct an annual review of its chief executive ~~or executive director~~ and, before the expiration of five years, conduct a comprehensive review.
 - (4) At the conclusion of each five-year period, the appointment shall terminate unless the governing board or commission takes specific action to continue the person in the office, each subsequent term not to exceed five years.
- (b) Any interim appointments of a chief executive ~~or executive director~~ shall follow a process similar to the initial appointment of a chief executive ~~or executive director~~.
- (1) Such interim appointees must be approved by the President of the Synod, and may not serve more than 18 months without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.
 - (2) Such interim appointees shall be ineligible to serve on a permanent basis without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.
- (c) The chief executives ~~and executive directors~~ shall normally attend all meetings of their board ~~or commission~~ except when their own positions are being considered.

3.7 Synodwide Trust Entities

- 3.7.1 The synodwide trust entities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are collectively known as the Concordia Plans.

The Concordia Plans

- 3.7.1.5 The position of chief executive shall be filled according to the process outlined in Bylaw 3.6.1.5.

Commission on Theology and Church Relations

- 3.9.5 The Commission on Theology and Church Relations exists to assist congregations in achieving the objectives of Art. III 1 and 6 of the Constitution of the Synod and to assist the President of the Synod in matters of church relationships.

- 3.9.5.1 The Commission on Theology and Church Relations shall consist of 16 voting and 4 advisory members:

Voting Members:

1. ~~Two~~ Four ordained ministers who are parish pastors
2. One commissioned minister who is a parish teacher
3. ~~Two~~ Four laypersons
4. ~~Two additional ordained ministers (one of whom shall be a district president)~~
5. ~~Two additional laypersons~~
6. 4. Four seminary faculty members
7. 5. Two additional members

8. 6. A member from the faculties of the colleges and universities of the Synod

Nonvoting Advisory Members:

9. 7. The President and the First Vice-President of the Synod
10. 8. The presidents of the St. Louis and Fort Wayne seminaries

- 3.9.5.1.1 The members of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations shall be selected as follows:

- (a) ~~The two~~ Two parish pastors, the parish teacher, and two laypersons shall be elected by a convention of the Synod.
- (b) ~~The two additional~~ Two ordained ministers (one of whom shall be a district president) and ~~the two additional~~ two laypersons shall be elected by ballot by the Council of Presidents (~~as in #4 and #5 above~~).
- (c) The St. Louis and Fort Wayne seminary theological faculties shall each appoint or elect two members of their faculties (as in #4 above).
- (d) The two additional members (as in #5 above) shall be appointed by the President of the Synod, in consultation with the vice-presidents.
- (e) The member from the faculties of the colleges and universities of the Synod shall be appointed by the President of the Synod.
- (f) Vacancies that occur in the positions that were filled by appointment shall be filled by the same appointing body.
- (g) In the case of vacancies that occur in positions that were filled by election of a national convention of the Synod, the appointing body shall be the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which shall follow the nominating procedures for filling vacancies on the boards and commissions elected by the Synod as outlined in the Bylaws of the Synod.

- 3.9.5.3 The Commission on Theology and Church Relations shall operate under the human resources policies of the Synod as provided by the Board of Directors of the Synod, in accordance with Bylaw 3.3.4.3.

- 3.9.5.3.1 The Commission may create an executive director position and fill it in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod and the human resources policies of corporate Synod.

- (a) The executive director shall serve at the pleasure of the commission.
- (1) The slate of candidates for the initial appointment of the executive director shall be selected by the commission in consultation with and with the mutual concurrence of the President of the Synod.
 - (2) In the event of a vacancy, the commission and the President of the Synod shall act expeditiously to fill the vacancy. This commission shall present its list of candidates to the President.
 - (3) The commission shall conduct an annual review of its executive director and, before the expiration of five years, conduct a comprehensive review.
 - (4) At the conclusion of each five-year period, the appointment shall terminate unless the commission takes specific action to continue the person in the office, each subsequent term not to exceed five years.
- (b) Any interim executive director appointment by the commission shall follow a process similar to the initial appointment of the executive director.
- (1) Such interim appointee must be approved by the President of the Synod, and may not serve more than 18 months without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.
 - (2) Such interim appointee shall be ineligible to serve on a permanent basis without the concurrence of the President of the Synod.

- (c) The executive director of the commission shall normally attend all meetings of the commission except when his own position is being considered.
- (d) The commission may create and fill other staff positions in accordance with the human resources policies of corporate Synod adopted pursuant to Bylaw 1.5.5. Such staff may attend meetings of their board or commission upon request of the board or commission.

[Existing Bylaws 3.9.5.3ff. will be renumbered 3.9.5.4ff.]

1.3 Synod Relationships: Congregations, National, District, Circuit

- 1.3.8 The Synod in convention or through the Board of Directors of the Synod may authorize holding membership in national inter-Lutheran entities. Representatives of the Synod to various national inter-Lutheran entities (a) shall be named by the President of the Synod on recommendation of the Chief Mission Officer or the executive director of the directors of boards and commissions of the Synod Commission on Theology and Church Relations; (b) shall participate in the activities of the respective inter-Lutheran entities according to the constitutions and bylaws of those entities and in keeping with the theological and constitutional principles of the Synod; and (c) shall submit formal reports to the President.

Terms of Office

- 3.2.4 The term of office of all elected officers of the Synod (Bylaw 3.2.1) shall be three years; of the elected members of the Board of Directors and all other boards and commissions of the Synod, six years; of all members of college and university boards of regents, three years; and of all appointed members of boards, commissions, and standing committees, three years, unless these Bylaws specifically provide otherwise.
- (a) The President, First Vice-President, regional vice-presidents, Secretary, and members of all elected boards and commissions of the Synod shall assume office on September 1 following the convention and shall be inducted into office on a date subsequent to September 1 following the convention.
- (b) In the interim, the newly elected President shall meet with the re-elected and newly elected vice-presidents to assess the state of the Synod, to plan for the communication and carrying out of the resolutions adopted at the convention, to assign areas of responsibility to the vice-presidents, and to gather names and obtain information helpful for making wise appointments; he shall meet with the chairman and executive directors of the staff supporting the boards and commissions to discuss their convention reports, to assess with them the financial support they will need; he shall meet with the financial and administrative officers to assess the financial status of the Synod and the estimate of the financial resources available for the coming year.
- 3.3.1.3 The President shall have responsibilities and duties that are both ecclesiastical and administrative.
- (e) Prior to appointing, he shall engage in consultation with the appropriate mission board to reach concurrence on a slate of candidates for the position of executive director of a mission office. He shall engage in consultation with each mission board, commission, and the governing board of each synodwide corporate entity to reach mutual concurrence on a slate of candidates for the position of chief executive or executive director.

Commission on Handbook

6-19

To Amend Bylaw 3.7.1.3 re Membership on Concordia Plans Board to Allow Four Successive Terms of Office

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services and the Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans consist of the same board members, 13 voting members (two parish pastors, one teacher, and ten laypersons) all appointed by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and one nonvoting member (the Chief Financial Officer of the LCMS); and

WHEREAS, At present, Bylaw 3.7.1.3 provides that the voting members on the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services/Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans shall include “Ten laypersons, at least four of whom shall be experienced in the design of employee benefit plans, at least four of whom shall be experienced in the management of benefit plan investments, and at least one of whom shall have significant financial/audit experience”; and

WHEREAS, Due to the strong need for specialized expertise in employee plan design and investment management, and the wide scope of benefit products and services offered by Concordia Plan Services, Concordia Plan Services and Concordia Plans would benefit from the service of two additional layperson board members experienced in the design of employee plans and in the management of plan investments; and

WHEREAS, Due to the complexity of employee benefits, especially those designed to meet the unique needs of the variety of workers served by Concordia Plan Services, it is beneficial for the members of the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services/Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans to serve on those boards for lengthy periods so that the contributions of their knowledge can be maximized; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the Synod limit the terms of office of members of all boards of the Synod to three successive three-year terms of office, unless otherwise provided in the Synod Bylaws; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the Synod are otherwise silent as to terms of office of the members of the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services/Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.6.4.3 provides: “All voting members of the board of directors of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall serve a maximum of four three-year terms”; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation is seeking amendment of Bylaw 3.6.5.2.1 to add at the end thereof the following sentence: “The members of the Board of Trustees of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation appointed by the voting members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation shall serve a maximum of four successive three-year terms”; and

WHEREAS, Concordia Plan Services and Concordia Plans would similarly benefit from their voting board members being permitted to serve four successive three-year terms of office; and

WHEREAS, At its February 2013 meeting, a resolution was adopted by the Board of Directors—Concordia Plan Services/Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans to request the 2013 LCMS convention to amend Bylaw 3.7.1.3 to add two additional laypersons to the membership of the Board of Directors of Concordia Plan Services/Board of Trustees of Concordia Plans, with such laypersons to be appointed by the Board of Directors of the Synod (as are all other such board members), to increase the number of voting board members to 15, and to allow all of such voting board members to serve a maximum of four successive three-year terms; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention amend Bylaw 3.7.1.3 as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.7.1.3 The ~~b~~Board of ~~d~~Directors of—Concordia Plan Services and the ~~b~~Board of ~~t~~Trustees of—Concordia Plans shall consist of ~~13~~15 voting members appointed by the Board of Directors of the Synod and the Chief Financial Officer of the Synod as a nonvoting member. Voting members shall be appointed to three-year terms, which shall not exceed four terms in a successive period. The ~~13~~15 voting members shall include:

1. Two parish pastors
2. One teacher

3. ~~Ten~~Twelve laypersons, at least ~~four~~five of whom shall be experienced in the design of employee benefit plans, at least ~~four~~five of whom shall be experienced in the management of benefit plan investments, and at least one of whom shall have significant financial/audit experience.

Board of Directors
Concordia Plans

6-20

To Amend Bylaws re Removal and Filling of Vacancies of LCEF Board Members

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) and the Synod’s Bylaws indicate that the Board of Directors of LCEF shall consist of three directors elected by the Synod in convention, with the remaining voting directors elected/chosen by the members of the LCEF; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of LCEF grant the LCEF Board of Directors the authority to remove for cause LCEF board members elected by members of LCEF and grant the Board of Directors of the Synod the authority to remove for cause LCEF board members elected by the convention; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of LCEF grant LCEF members the authority to fill vacancies in LCEF board positions elected by the members of LCEF, and grant the Board of Directors of the Synod the authority to fill vacancies in LCEF board positions elected by the Synod in convention; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the Synod currently require a three-quarters affirmative vote of both the Board of Directors of LCEF and the Board of Directors of the Synod to remove LCEF board members for cause; and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the Synod do not clearly state that LCEF members have authority to fill vacancies in LCEF board positions elected by LCEF members; and

WHEREAS, It is appropriate and proper, due to the separate corporate status of the LCEF, for the Board of Directors of LCEF to have the authority to remove LCEF board members elected by the members of LCEF and for the members of LCEF to fill vacancies for the LCEF board positions elected by its members; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be amended to read as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Removal of Individual Members from Board or Commission Membership

1.5.7 Individual members of the Synod’s commissions and the boards of its agencies, as well as the individual members of its Board of Directors, shall discharge the duties of their offices in good faith. The following are considered cause for removal pursuant to this bylaw:

1. Incapacity
2. Breach of fiduciary responsibilities to the Synod or agency
3. Neglect or refusal to perform duties of office
4. No longer satisfying any of the qualifications for directors set forth in the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the entity as in effect at the beginning of the member’s term
5. Conviction of a felony
6. Failure to disclose conflicts of interest to the Synod or agency
7. Conduct evidencing a scandalous life
8. Advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution, Art. II)
9. Failure to honor and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod
10. Accumulation of three unexcused absences within any term of office

1.5.7.1 Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, ~~t~~The procedure for removal of a member of a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors, except for those persons subject to Bylaws 2.15 and 2.16, shall be as follows:

- (a) Action for removal shall require written notice to each member of the relevant commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors at least 30 days prior to a special meeting of the commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors called for that purpose. A copy of such notice shall be sent to the President and the Secretary of the Synod and to the ecclesiastical supervisor, if applicable.
- (b) The special meeting shall be held no later than 60 days after the provision of the written notice, unless extended by the mutual agreement of the parties.
- (c) Removal shall be effected by
 - (1) recommendation of such to the Synod’s Board of Directors by a vote in favor of removal by at least three-fourths of all current members (excluding the person whose membership is in question) of the applicable commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors; and
 - (2) by a vote in favor of the recommendation of removal by at least three-fourths of all current members (excluding the person whose membership is in question) of the Board of Directors of the Synod.
- (d) Removal may be appealed by a member who has been removed from a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors through the use of the Synod’s dispute resolution process as provided in Bylaw section 1.10.
- (e) From the time that written notice is given until the commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors takes action with respect to the removal, the member(s) subject to removal may not vote on matters before the commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors.

1.5.7.2 To the extent that the application of this bylaw is limited by applicable law with respect to the removal of members of a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors, the commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors on which the member serves may recommend the removal and attempt to cause the appropriate procedures under applicable law, these Bylaws, and the governing documents of the affected entity to be followed to permit the removal of such commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors member.

[Insert new Synod Bylaw 3.6.4.3.1]

3.6.4.3.1 Directors elected by the members of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod at any time, for cause. A vacancy occurring in the position of a director elected by the members of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod shall be filled by the members of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod at any regular or special meeting, in accordance with its bylaws.

[Renumber current bylaw 3.6.4.3.1 to 3.6.4.3.2]

Lutheran Church Extension Fund

6-21

To Amend Bylaw 3.6.5.2.1 re Terms of Office of LCMS Foundation Board Members

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the LCMS Foundation have in the past permitted trustees elected by its voting members to serve four successive three-year terms of office; and

WHEREAS, The current Bylaws of the Synod limit the terms of office of trustees of the LCMS Foundation who are elected by its members to three successive three-year terms of office; and

WHEREAS, In order to allow the LCMS Foundation to continue its past practice of four successive terms of office for trustees elected by its members, it is necessary to amend the Bylaws of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That Synod Bylaw 3.6.5.2.1 be amended to add at the end thereof the following sentence:

The members of the Board of Trustees of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation appointed by the voting members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation shall serve a maximum of four successive three-year terms.

LCMS Foundation

6-22

To Amend Bylaws re Removal and Filling of Vacancies of LCMS Foundation Board Members

Whereas, The Bylaws of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation (LCMS Foundation) and the Synod's Bylaws indicate that the LCMS Foundation's Board of Trustees shall consist of two trustees elected by the Synod in convention and seven trustees elected by the members of the LCMS Foundation; and

Whereas, The Bylaws of the Synod currently grant the Board of Directors of the Synod the authority to remove LCMS Foundation board members for cause and to fill board-member vacancies regardless of whether the member was elected by the Synod in convention or by the members of the LCMS Foundation; and

Whereas, It is appropriate and proper, due to the separate corporate status of the LCMS Foundation, for the Board of Trustees of the LCMS Foundation to have the authority to remove board members elected by the members of the LCMS Foundation and for the members of the LCMS Foundation to fill vacancies for the board positions elected by its members; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be amended to read as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Removal of Individual Members from Board or Commission Membership

1.5.7 Individual members of the Synod's commissions and the boards of its agencies, as well as the individual members of its Board of Directors, shall discharge the duties of their offices in good faith. The following are considered cause for removal pursuant to this bylaw:

1. Incapacity
2. Breach of fiduciary responsibilities to the Synod or agency
3. Neglect or refusal to perform duties of office
4. No longer satisfying any of the qualifications for directors set forth in the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the entity as in effect at the beginning of the member's term
5. Conviction of a felony
6. Failure to disclose conflicts of interest to the Synod or agency

7. Conduct evidencing a scandalous life
8. Advocacy of false doctrine (Constitution, Art. II)
9. Failure to honor and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod
10. Accumulation of three unexcused absences within any term of office

1.5.7.1 Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, The procedure for removal of a member of a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors, except for those persons subject to Bylaws 2.15 and 2.16, shall be as follows:

- (a) Action for removal shall require written notice to each member of the relevant commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors at least 30 days prior to a special meeting of the commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors called for that purpose. A copy of such notice shall be sent to the President and the Secretary of the Synod and to the ecclesiastical supervisor, if applicable.
- (b) The special meeting shall be held no later than 60 days after the provision of the written notice, unless extended by the mutual agreement of the parties.
- (c) Removal shall be effected by
 - (1) recommendation of such to the Synod's Board of Directors by a vote in favor of removal by at least three-fourths of all current members (excluding the person whose membership is in question) of the applicable commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors; and
 - (2) by a vote in favor of the recommendation of removal by at least three-fourths of all current members (excluding the person whose membership is in question) of the Board of Directors of the Synod.
- (d) Removal may be appealed by a member who has been removed from a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors through the use of the Synod's dispute resolution process as provided in Bylaw section 1.10.
- (e) From the time that written notice is given until the commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors takes action with respect to the removal, the member(s) subject to removal may not vote on matters before the commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors.

1.5.7.2 To the extent that the application of this bylaw is limited by applicable law with respect to the removal of members of a commission, agency board, or the LCMS Board of Directors, the commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors on which the member serves may recommend the removal and attempt to cause the appropriate procedures under applicable law, these Bylaws, and the governing documents of the affected entity to be followed to permit the removal of such commission, agency board, or LCMS Board of Directors member.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation

[Insert new Synod Bylaw 3.6.5.2.2]

Trustees elected by the members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Trustees of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation at any time, for cause. Trustees elected by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention may be removed by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod. A vacancy occurring in the position of a trustee elected by the members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation shall be filled by the Members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation at any regular or special meeting, in accordance with its Bylaws. A vacancy occurring in the position of a trustee elected by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention shall be filled by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod.

[Rename current Bylaw 3.6.5.2.2 to 3.6.5.2.3]

LCMS Foundation

6-23

To Amend Bylaw 3.9.2.2.3 re CCM Review of Agency Documents

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.2.2.3 states:

3.9.2.2.3 The Commission on Constitutional Matters shall examine the articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policy manuals of every agency of the Synod to ascertain whether they are in harmony with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.

- (a) Agencies intending to make amendments to articles of incorporation or bylaws shall make such intentions known and receive approval from the commission in advance.
- (b) The commission shall maintain a file of the articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policy manuals of all agencies of the Synod.

and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 1.2.1 (a) (1) states: “Agencies include each board, commission, council, seminary, university, college, district, Concordia Plan Services, and each synodwide corporate entity”; and

WHEREAS, Districts amend their articles of incorporation and bylaws in conventions, at which the Synod Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) is not present, and therefore could not give “approval ... in advance” for any changes in wording of articles of incorporation or bylaws made at such conventions; and

WHEREAS, The parliamentarian at the 2007 LCMS convention ruled that, according to the Synod’s Bylaws, amendments from the floor could not be debated unless they had first been examined by the CCM, in effect allowing the CCM to kill any amendments simply by failing to examine them; and

WHEREAS, By such a reading, Bylaw 3.9.2.2.3 would rule out all amendments from the floor of any district convention, thus robbing the districts of the insights of the delegates who are not on floor committees, even prohibiting districts from voting on their own bylaws if their floor committees failed to provide the CCM with advance copies of their proposed changes or if the CCM failed to approve them, thus giving the five appointed members of the CCM veto power over all the district conventions of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.9.2.2.3 be amended to read as follows:

3.9.2.2.3 The Commission on Constitutional Matters shall examine the articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policy manuals of every agency of the Synod to ascertain whether they are in harmony with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.

- (a) Agencies intending to make amendments to articles of incorporation or bylaws shall submit their proposed amendments to the commission for review.
- (b) The commission shall examine the proposed wording of all amendments received from these agencies and report their findings to the submitting agency, including suggestions for any corrections the commission deems necessary.
- (c) After agencies amend their articles of incorporation or bylaws, they shall submit them to the commission for similar review.
- (d) The commission shall maintain a file of the articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policy manuals of all agencies of the Synod.

and be it further

Resolved, That the Central Illinois District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod submit this resolution as an overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Central Illinois District

6-24

To Take Up Bylaw Amendments from Convention Floor without CCM Examination

Rationale

The duties and responsibilities of the Commission on Constitutional Matters are spelled out in two places in the *Handbook*: Bylaws 3.9.2.2 and 3.9.2.2.1 and also, regarding amendments to the Bylaws at conventions, in Bylaw 7.1.1 (paragraph [c]):

7.1.1 Amendments may be made by conventions of the Synod.

- (a) They shall be presented in writing to a convention of the Synod.
- (b) They shall be specified as bylaw amendments and considered by a convention floor committee.
- (c) They shall be examined by the Commission on Constitutional Matters prior to presentation to the convention to determine that they are not in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.
- (d) They shall be adopted by the affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates present and voting.

[Note: This applies specially only to amendments to the Bylaws of the Synod. This was interpreted at the 2010 convention of the Synod to mean that each time a delegate offered an amendment to a resolution on the floor of the convention, the Commission on Constitutional Matters had to be queried, with a commensurate delay of business.]

In the general jurisprudence of the United States and its separate states, the president or executive branch of government proposes bills, regulations, policy changes, and perhaps amendments to the Constitution. The legislative branch passes the bills, and they are signed or vetoed by the president or governor. Then somebody may file suit that a provision of a bill is unconstitutional, and the judicial branch gets involved. Now, perhaps it would be beneficial for the courts to review a bill before it is passed, but it is not required.

As this relates to conventions of Synod, the convention may vote on resolutions to the Constitution or Bylaws of the Synod. If the resolution is a change to the Constitution, then the congregations must also ratify the convention decision. (If it is only a change to the Bylaws, then it is implemented without further action.) If after an amendment is passed and ratified by the congregations and, if necessary, a member of the Synod, be that an officer, pastor, congregation, etc., questions whether an amendment or other change is in accord with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, such member may appeal to the CCM for a ruling.

WHEREAS, The duties of the CCM, specified in the bylaws referenced above, pertain to examining “all reports, overtures, and resolutions to the Synod asking for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2.1); and

WHEREAS, Amendments shall be presented in writing to a convention (Bylaw 7.1.1[a]); and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Constitutional Matters shall be “represented at the meetings of national convention floor committees considering constitution and bylaw matters” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2.2), but there is no requirement for their presence or voice on the convention floor other than in an advisory capacity; and

WHEREAS, Review on the convention floor for a single word may drag on for many minutes; and

WHEREAS, Other pertinent discussion is delayed or even bypassed as time runs out; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Circuit Forum of the Mondovi Circuit of the North Wisconsin District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commends the CCM for its dedicated work to ensure that changes to

the Bylaws of the Synod do not conflict with the Constitution; and be it further

Resolved, That no time be granted to the CCM on the convention floor to review amendments to resolutions.

Mondovi Circuit
North Wisconsin District

6-25

To Overrule CCM Opinion 02-2309

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) states, “An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod. Overtures to a convention that seek to overrule an opinion of the commission shall support the proposed action with substantive rationale from the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod. All such overtures shall be considered by the floor committee to which they have been assigned and shall be included in a specific report to the convention with recommendations for appropriate action”; and

WHEREAS, The Synod’s Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) has given an opinion that the “Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod do not allow or contemplate the expulsion of a member of the Synod on the basis of an action taken with the full knowledge and approval of the appropriate ecclesiastical supervisor” (02-2309); and

WHEREAS, The CCM’s opinion is incompatible with Scripture, for the Word of God repeatedly warns against partiality in judgment (Deut. 1:17; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; James 2:1, 9) and against “making the Word of God of none effect through [human] tradition” (Mark 7:13 KJV) and “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:7 KJV), Scripture also teaching that “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29 KJV); and

WHEREAS, The CCM’s opinion is incompatible with the Lutheran Confessions, which teach that “it is not lawful for a human being to repeal an obligation that is plainly a matter of divine right” (Augsburg Confession XXVII 24, Kolb-Wengert, p. 85), and the Confessions deny that biblical texts such as Luke 10:16 and Hebrews 13:17 grant ecclesiastical supervisors any authority beyond the Gospel itself (Apology XXVIII 17–21, pp. 291–92); and

WHEREAS, The CCM opinion in effect changes the Synod’s Constitution by granting immunity from expulsion to those who do not comply with the conditions of membership so long as they have secured permission of their ecclesiastical supervisors; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Northern Illinois District East Region Pastor Conference memorialize the Synod in convention to overrule CCM Opinion 02-2309.

NID East Region Pastor Conference

6-26

To Provide for Review of Opinions of Commission on Constitutional Matters

WHEREAS, Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) states, “An opinion rendered by the commission [on Constitutional Matters] shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod”; and

WHEREAS, This, in effect, produces a body of law binding on members of the Synod, of which they may be unaware; and

WHEREAS, This body of law, having accumulated since 1962, amounts to roughly 1,500 pages of material; and

WHEREAS, The current *Handbook* of the Synod, consisting of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, amounts to 213 pages; and

WHEREAS, This Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) seems to place the Commission on Constitutional Matters above the Synod in convention in terms of legislative authority, contrary to Bylaw 3.1.1; and

WHEREAS, Previous attempts to address this issue have been halted at the floor committee level (see 2007 *Convention Workbook*, pp. 272–274 [Ov. 8-31–38]); therefore be it

Resolved, That the first sentence of Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) be amended to read, “An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the case at hand, but it shall not have precedential value unless and until it is upheld by a convention of the Synod”; and be it finally

Resolved, That all previous CCM opinions shall be deemed to have no precedential value except those individually upheld by the 2016 LCMS convention.

Board of Directors
Montana District

6-27

To Require Convention Consideration of Contested CCM-Related Overtures and Resolutions Pertaining to Theological Matters

WHEREAS, “The Commission on Constitutional Matters exists to interpret the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod and ensure that the governing instruments of the Synod and its agencies are in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod” (Bylaw 3.9.2); and

WHEREAS, “An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod. Overtures to a convention that seek to overrule an opinion of the commission shall support the proposed action with substantive rationale from the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod. All such overtures shall be considered by the floor committee to which they have been assigned and shall be included in a specific report to the convention with recommendations for appropriate action” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2 [c]); and

WHEREAS, There is a review procedure when “an opinion pertains to business, legal, or property matters and the board of directors of the Synod concludes that such opinion of the commission is contrary to the laws of the State of Missouri” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2 [c]); and

WHEREAS, The only remedy when the opinion pertains to theological matters is that such overtures “shall be considered by the floor committee” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2 [c]), which does not necessarily result in consideration by the convention of the Synod, thus allowing an opinion on theological matters to remain binding without review of the convention; and

WHEREAS, Amendments to the Bylaws are the responsibility of only the conventions of the Synod (Bylaws 7.1.1 and 7.1.2); therefore be it

Resolved, That any overtures and resolutions submitted to a convention of the Synod regarding theological opinions rendered by the CCM must be given time for consideration by the convention of the Synod and may not be removed from the docket; and be it further

Resolved, That any opinion of the CCM which has been challenged as outlined above and which receives no time for consideration by the convention of Synod be declared null and void upon the adjournment of that convention of the Synod.

Christ, Trego, WI; Circuit 3, North Wisconsin District

6-28

To Revise Selection of CCM Members

WHEREAS, “The Commission on Constitutional Matters [CCM] exists to interpret the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod and ensure that the governing instruments of the Synod and its agencies are in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod” (Bylaw 3.9.2); and

WHEREAS, All five voting members of the CCM currently are appointed by “[t]he President of the Synod, in consultation with the vice-presidents of the Synod” from the list of candidates presented by the Council of Presidents (Bylaw 3.9.2.1.1); and

WHEREAS, “An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2 [c]); and

WHEREAS, The President of the Synod also appoints the convention floor committees (Bylaw 3.1.7) and is responsible for the overall organization and operations of the conventions of the Synod (Bylaw 3.1.9); and

WHEREAS, The same man who currently appoints all CCM members also appoints and organizes the floor committees, the mechanism provided through which resolutions must be passed within the LCMS for overruling CCM decisions; and

WHEREAS, This structure creates a potential conflict of interest which may cause an unbiased observer to wonder if unbiased opinions can be obtained through the CCM and/or the review of a questioned opinion can be reasonably obtained through our present highest court structure, thereby creating doubt about our Synod’s system of adjudication; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod return to electing the five voting members of the Commission on Constitutional Matters at Synod conventions, with the Committee for Convention Nominations soliciting names and nominating the candidates per Bylaws 3.12.3.1–8, with terms per Bylaw 3.9.2.1.

Circuit 3 Forum
North Wisconsin District

6-29

To Encourage Use of Electronic Media for Synod Meetings

WHEREAS, The LCMS has a concern for good stewardship of finances; and

WHEREAS, In the September 2012 issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, “The State of the Synod,” President Harrison urged the Synod, saying, “It’s time to get our financial house in order for the sake of the Gospel, starting with the national church. And we’ve taken huge steps in that direction” (p. 1); and

WHEREAS, The same issue of *The Lutheran Witness* indicates that the Synod has had to, for at least four years (2009–2012), practice “internal borrowing” (i.e., borrowing from restricted revenues to compensate for a lack in unrestricted funds, p. 19); and

WHEREAS, There are many meetings conducted by the Synod’s officers and agencies, such as the Council of Presidents, Board of Directors, Commission on Handbook, and many more; and

WHEREAS, Meetings that are held in person require extensive costs for travel, lodging, location (if it is at a site not associated with the LCMS), and other costs; and

WHEREAS, Electronic media is cheaper, already used by many, and much more convenient; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS explore using electronic media for more Synod-level meetings instead of meeting in person; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of Presidents and Board of Directors especially look into this for their meetings; and be it further

Resolved, That a year after this convention, a report be made to the Synod, published on the Synod’s Web site and in the monthly *Reporter* newspaper, that includes full financial disclosure about the costs of such meetings as well as the feasibility of using electronic media for more meetings and conferences instead of meeting in person; and be it further

Resolved, That if it is feasible and will save money, the Synod and its districts begin using electronic media for the purpose of holding board and council meetings by July of 2014, instead of requiring meetings in person.

Immanuel
Beemer, Nebraska

6-30

To Encourage Paperless Communication

WHEREAS, Our Synod has made significant and well-received strides in adopting paperless communication methods, including electronic submission of congregation statistics reports, electronic voting, and online access to the church worker database; and

WHEREAS, Increased use of paperless communication could reduce the amount of paper and plastic generated by mass mailings of our Synod, its publisher, and districts; and

WHEREAS, Many pastors, congregations, and parishioners are inundated with paper mail; and

WHEREAS, Additional opportunities exist for efficient, effective paperless communication; and

WHEREAS, Increasing the fraction of communications sent electronically instead of on paper would in many cases improve our stewardship of finances, natural resources, and filing space; and

WHEREAS, Electing to receive paperless communications could be optional; therefore be it

Resolved, That our Synod, its publisher, and districts strive to enable pastors, congregations, and other recipients of unsolicited mass mailings to receive them in paperless (e.g., electronic) format and opt out of receiving them in paper format; and be it further

Resolved, That our Synod, its publisher, and districts conspicuously publicize paperless communication options among recipients of mass mailings; and be it finally

Resolved, That our Synod, its publisher, and districts need not provide paperless options for communications sent by request (e.g., subscriptions, ordered items, individual correspondence).

Circuit 1
English District

6-31

To Change Location of Next Available LCMS Convention

WHEREAS, It is a blessing of almighty God for a convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to be held in any city of the United States because of the Christian witness that such an assembly provides in and to that city; and

WHEREAS, The cities of Detroit, Michigan; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Cleveland, Ohio, have each previously hosted a convention of the Synod, but not in the last two decades; and

WHEREAS, Each of these cities is a location of member congregations of the Synod, including those belonging to the English District and supporting networks; and

WHEREAS, Each of these cities is served by major international airports that provide easy access for domestic and international travelers to a convention of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The English District is willing to serve, help, and assist with hosting a convention of the Synod in any of these three cities; therefore be it

Resolved, That the English District memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to approve holding the next available convention of the Synod in Detroit, Pittsburgh, or Cleveland.

English District

7. STRUCTURE AND ECCLESIASTICAL MATTERS

7-01

To Set Forth Clear Mutual Expectations in Carrying Out Office of Visitation

Preamble

The 2010 LCMS convention created by means of Res. 8-07 a task force that was charged among other things to make recommendations concerning “the purpose and function of a district.” This fundamental directive to all of the other work assigned to it has been the first priority of the task force.

While “visitation” has been noteworthy in the history of the church through the ages, the importance of the Office of Visitation in evangelical Lutheranism has been recognized from the time of Dr. Martin Luther all the way through recent LCMS conventions. Because of the central concern for the Word and the need to reform parish life and pastoral work according to the evangelical doctrine, Luther proposed formal visitations at the outset of the Reformation. Philip Melancthon drafted the Visitation Articles in 1528 for the proper supervision of the congregations and pastors in Ducal Saxony with Luther providing the Preface (*Luther’s Works*, 40:262–319).

The importance of *episcopo* (i.e., the task of ecclesiastical supervision or visitation) to Luther was described in letters in which he articulated the need for all parishes to be inspected in regard to poor economic and spiritual conditions. His concern was for the souls of people and the preaching of the pure Gospel. The instructions for the visitors of parish pastors cited the Old and New Testament evidence of the divinely wholesome value of pastors and Christian congregations being visited by understanding and competent persons (Acts 8:14; 9:32; 15:2; 1 Sam. 7:17; 10:8; 11:14; 13:8; 15:12; 21:1; 1 Kings 17–21; 2 Kings 2–13; Luke 1:39).

Other Scripture passages helpful in understanding the Office of Visitation not cited in Luther’s Preface in the 1528 “Visitation Articles” include “And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are’” (Acts 15:36); “Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for His name” (Acts 15:14); “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people . . . because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high” (Luke 1:68, 78); “Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and ‘God has visited His people!’” (Luke 7:16); and “It has been testified somewhere, ‘What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man, that You care for [visit] him?’” (Heb. 2:6).

At the founding of the Synod, the 1847 Constitution stated:

Article IV. I. Business of the Synod.

1. Supervision of the purity and unity of the doctrine within the synodical constituency, and opposition to false doctrine.
2. Supervision over the administration of the preachers and teachers of the synodical constituency.

Article V. I. Execution of Synodical Business.

7. The Synod requires a report from the president on the result of his visitations in the preceding year in conformity with instruction [viz. from Synod], in order to supervise [the] doctrine, life, and administration of the preachers and school teachers (see under Article VI A., Para. 7).

Article VI. Rights and Duties of the Officers and Remaining Members of the Synod.

Of the President

7. He is to make use of all diligence during his three-year administration to visit every parish of the synodical constituency at least one time, whereupon he presents his report at the annual synodical convention.
13. In his supervisory capacity he himself is to act strictly according to the written instructions, which he hereto received from the Synod.

In 1854, seven years after the founding of Synod, and with only 89 congregations and 15,000 baptized members, the 73 voting delegates found it “necessary” and “salutary” to reorganize the Synod with providing a new “outward means of assistance” by “arranging” and establishing the structure and governance of districts and the office of the district president as ecclesiastical supervisor in the district. It was stated that administrative matters [ecclesiastical supervision/visitations] could be dispatched with much greater ease if broken down to the district level with greater participation of both pastors and congregations anticipated in district sessions.

In 1866, 19 years after the founding of the Synod, with 205 congregations and over 65,000 baptized members, the 215 delegates at the Synod convention found it “necessary” and “salutary” to reorganize the Synod by providing yet another “outward means of assistance” by “arranging” and establishing the structure and governance of circuits and the office of the circuit visitor as assistant to the district president in his function as ecclesiastical supervisor in the district. This new circuit structure was for the purpose of more effectively carrying out ecclesiastical administration (including visitations) and to broaden the engagement of pastors and congregations.

Thus, the 1854 and 1866 Synod conventions placed the matter of the office of the visitor into the hands of the individual districts. By 1866, President C. F. W. Walther deplored the fact that only two of the district presidents had salaried assistants (Western and Eastern) and encouraged that others follow suit. The district presidents by this time were so overburdened with other responsibilities that they could no longer adequately supervise the parishes in their districts on a planned visitation program.

In his 1879 essay “Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod,” Walther indicated: “A Synod that is ‘faithful to the Confessions’ must also ‘supervise the faithfulness of its members.’” In the essay, Walther clearly bases the supervision polity of the Synod on Scripture and Confessions as well as the provision and practice of the Early Church and the Reformation, as evidenced by “church-visitations,” “visitorial responsibility,” and the “true episcopal and supervisory Office.”

In this essay, Walther also stated: “However, for the welfare of the church we set up a system of supervision . . . the church must be beautifully united by the bond of love; it must work together under the best possible system of supervision.” Walther also quoted Gerhard: “In our churches, however, we maintain a system of supervision among church workers . . . , and we insist that such supervision must be continued, so that there are ‘some bishops’ [supervisors], ‘some presbyters’ [pastors], ‘some deacons’ etc. . . the establishment of a system of supervision among church workers promotes harmony and unity, prevents divisions that arise from self-love and ambition on the part of lower-level (*Niedrigerer*) church workers and curbs the presumption of those who want to destroy the tranquility of the church.”

The 2001 Synod convention resolved “To Clearly Delineate [the] Ministry of Visitation in [the] Bylaws” (Res. 8-01), now reflected in Synod Bylaw 4.4.4:

- (a) He shall arrange in advance for an official visit to each congregation of his district at least once every three years and otherwise as he

deems it necessary. He may call upon the circuit counselors and vice-presidents to assist him with the triennial visitation of congregations.

(b) In his official visits, he shall seek to bring about to the greatest possible degree the achievement of the Synod's objectives as expressed in Article III of its Constitution.

(c) He shall conduct his official visits in an evangelical manner.

(d) He shall come to the pastor and the congregation as a brotherly advisor, reminding them of the joy of serving in the mission and ministry of the church.

(e) In his visits, he shall include fraternal discussion in regard to worship and communion attendance; participation by the congregation in missions and the work of the church at large; the congregation's evangelism and education endeavors; its cultivation of sound stewardship principles; all aspects of compensation for professional church workers; the need for maintenance of purity of doctrine; the strengthening of the bond of Christian fellowship; and the provision of resources, opportunities, and assistance so God's people can grow in their faith, hope, and love.

The same 2001 resolution resolved that the Council of Presidents (COP) develop guidelines to be used to define the intent and purpose of congregational visits and to provide a foundation for training the visitors. The COP has identified such guidelines.

The 2004 convention made clear the essence of ecclesiastical supervision as provided in Bylaw 1.2.1 (g):

The responsibility, primarily of the President of the Synod and district presidents, to supervise on behalf of the Synod the doctrine, life, and administration of its members, officers, and agencies. Such supervision, subject to the provisions of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, includes visitation, evangelical encouragement and support, care, protection, counsel, advice, admonition, and, when necessary, appropriate disciplinary measures to assure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are followed and implemented. Thus, ecclesiastical supervision is also the presenting, interpreting, and applying of the collective will of the Synod's congregations. Ecclesiastical supervision does not include the responsibility to observe, monitor, control, or direct the day-to-day activities of individual members of the Synod, whether in the conduct of their work or in their private lives (cf. Bylaw 2.14.1 [a]). Further, those constitutional articles and Bylaws pertaining to ecclesiastical supervision shall determine the full definition of ecclesiastical supervision.

In his presidential address to the 1848 Synod convention, Walther stated, "We can hardly consider any other constitution as the most salutary but one under which the congregations are free to govern themselves, but enter into a synodical organization such as the one existing among us with the help of God, for enjoying fraternal consultation, supervision, and aid and to spread the kingdom of God jointly and to make possible and accomplish the aims of the Church in general."

While, as clearly seen above, the office of visitation among us has been clearly defined both as to its importance and its function, the carrying out of that office has been irregular throughout our Synod. In an effort better to enjoy the "fraternal consultation, supervision, and aid and spread the kingdom of God jointly and to make possible and accomplish the aims of the Church in general," and desiring to set forth the following minimal expectations concerning the Office of Visitation as practiced among us, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention reaffirm that visitation is a primary function of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That in keeping with that function the current title of Circuit Counselor be returned to its previous designation of Circuit Visitor; and be it further

Resolved, That the district presidents be commended for all their efforts toward visitation heretofore; and be it further

Resolved, That the President of the Synod, with the aid of the Vice-Presidents of the Synod, shall be expected to visit with every district president and district board of directors at least once every triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That every district president, with the aid of the district vice-presidents, shall be expected to visit every circuit counselor (visitor) and his congregation at least once every three years, and other congregations as he deems necessary; and be it further

Resolved, That the circuit counselor (visitor) shall be expected to visit every congregation in his circuit at least once every three years; and be it further

Resolved, That the above expectations be understood as minimal expectations and that visitation beyond those expectations is encouraged; and be it further

Resolved, That because of the great importance of the spiritual office of circuit counselor (visitor), the Synod encourage pastors and congregations to give careful attention to the qualifications and responsibilities for the selection of circuit counselors (visitors) (Bylaw 5.2); and be it further

Resolved, That districts and circuits be encouraged to consider using qualified retired pastors as circuit counselors (visitors) where available; and be it further

Resolved, That the Council of Presidents be encouraged to investigate and consider means of improving appropriate visitation, care, support, and encouragement of all rostered members of the Synod, including ordained and commissioned ministers serving outside the congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That each district president develop a regular program for the evaluation of the circuit counselor (visitor); and be it further

Resolved, That all visitations shall follow the general guidelines established by the Council of Presidents adapted to local circumstance; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Commission on Handbook be authorized to incorporate these resolves into the *Handbook*, changing the terminology where necessary and adding the appropriate expectations to the duties of Synod and district officers where necessary.

Res. 8-07 Task Force

7-02

To Return to Use of Title "Circuit Visitor"

WHEREAS, The congregations of the Wyoming District, at the 1991 Wyoming District convention, adopted Res. 1-03-91, "To Continue Visitation of Pastors and Congregations," articulating the following points:

1. A concern for unity and purity of doctrine and practice, as well as the welfare of congregations and pastors prompted Dr. Martin Luther to draw up instructions for, and make provisions for, visitation of parishes and pastors.
2. Dr. C. F. W. Walther and his colleagues had the same concerns and thus organized The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in order to provide for such support and assistance, unity and protection for congregations and pastors through visitation and oversight.
3. Our Wyoming District has had the same concerns for unity in doctrine and practice and assistance and support for congregations and pastors and has therefore gone back to this visitation process.

And

WHEREAS, The same Wyoming District convention also adopted Res. 1-04-91, “To Change the Name of Circuit Counselor in the Wyoming District to Circuit Visitor,” based on the following points:

1. The majority of a circuit counselor’s work is visitation of the circuit congregations and their pastors and their families.
2. The circuit counselor shall “visit” each congregation once in three years, and as he feels necessary.
3. The Wyoming District has initiated the “Episcope” program among the congregations—visiting congregations on a personal level and visiting the pastor and his family.
4. The circuit counselor in past history was referred to as a “circuit visitor” and not a counselor (as his task is the support and supervision of the pastors and congregations in his circuit).

And

WHEREAS, The LCMS Handbook still speaks of the circuit counselor making a “triennial visitation of the congregations of the circuit” (Bylaw 5.2.3.1) and “an official visit” and “visits” (Bylaw 5.2.3.1 [c]); and

WHEREAS, The 1991 Wyoming District convention (Res. 1-04-91) adopted the use of “circuit visitor” in place of “circuit counselor” in the Wyoming District Handbook and such terminology has been practiced in the Wyoming District for eighteen years; and

WHEREAS, The same Res. 1-04-91 memorialized the Synod to make this change in terminology and practice; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations of the Wyoming District in convention memorialize The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to return to the use of the historic title “circuit visitor” rather than the title “circuit counselor.”

Wyoming District

7-03

To Establish Visitation Circuits to Best Meet Needs of Congregations

WHEREAS, Circuits are the Synod at the local level and are the primary organizations in serving the office of visitation to maintain consistency of doctrine and communication of God’s mission, and they should therefore be organized in a manner that best fulfills the office of visitation; and

WHEREAS, The member congregations of the Synod are the basic unit of the Synod’s polity; and

WHEREAS, A circuit is a network of congregations structured “for congregations to review decisions of the Synod, to motivate one another to action, and to shape and suggest new directions” (Bylaw 1.3.6); and

WHEREAS, A primary purpose of circuits is to carry out the office of visitation so as to walk together to conserve and promote both the unity of faith and to carry out their mission and ministry (Bylaw 1.3.3); and

WHEREAS, Circuits have also carried out the function as a basic electoral unit for selecting delegates to the Synod’s conventions; and

WHEREAS, Grouping congregations into circuits based on needs for visitation and electoral needs may sometimes be in conflict; and

WHEREAS, Districts are authorized to create this component part of the Synod (Bylaw 1.3.2); and

WHEREAS, The circuit network of congregations is that forum where the voice of each congregation of the Synod may most clearly impact the work of congregation, circuit, district, and the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the individual districts may establish visitation circuits different from electoral circuits should a district determine that

this would best serve the needs of the congregations and be beneficial to the office of visitation among its congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That the circuit network of congregations be encouraged to gather regularly during the triennium to celebrate their common confession and give voice to opportunities to share in mission and ministry.

Res. 8-07 Task Force

7-04

To Preserve Focus of Districts as Functional Units of Ecclesiastical Supervision When Realigning Districts

WHEREAS, The true unity of the Church is found in the pure teaching of the Gospel and right administration of the Sacraments (Augsburg Confession VII); and

WHEREAS, The primary constitutional objective of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is, “under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions,” to “conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10) ... and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17) and heresy” (Constitution Art. III 1); and

WHEREAS, District presidents shall “especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their district and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the congregations of their district” (Constitution Art. XII 7); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has, in Bylaws 4.4.4, 4.4.5, and 4.4.6, elaborated upon the duties of district presidents in these regards, requiring congregational visitations, theological interaction with ministers under his ecclesiastical supervision, and investigation and resolution of problems in doctrine and practice, these being well-reasoned and godly responsibilities and demanding of a district president’s time and energy in proportion to the number congregations he serves; and

WHEREAS, The most intimate and influential interaction of the Synod with pastors and congregations (including visitations, encouragement and consolation, call and placement of new ministers, and dispute resolution) is through their respective district presidents; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has, at the direction of her 2010 convention (Res. 8-07), undertaken to study the realignment of her districts; therefore be it

Resolved, That any process of district realignment have as its primary focus the preservation or realignment of districts as functional units of ecclesiastical supervision, to be of such size and character that district presidents can reasonably carry out their duties; and be it further

Resolved, That this concern for effective ecclesiastical supervision, which requires district presidents’ close interaction with church workers and member congregations, be considered chief among the “general principles of viability for a district” as called for in Bylaw 4.1.1.3 (b) (3); and be it further

Resolved, That the Minnesota North District in convention give thanks to God for the faithful and diligent service of its district presidents, past and present; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Minnesota North District convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to adopt this resolution as its own.

Minnesota North District

7-05

**To Adopt General Principles for Judging
Viability of Districts
(Whether Proposing a New District or Realigning,
Enlarging, or Dividing Existing Districts)**

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention gave to the task force established by 2010 Res. 8-07 the responsibility of “establishing” general principles of viability for a district; and

WHEREAS, The task force located previously existing and adopted “General Principles for Formation or Realignment of Districts” (1969 Res. 4-03); and

WHEREAS, Those general principles read as follows:

“A viable district:

1. offers adequate parish services;
2. provides adequate mission development, guidance and support;
3. is adaptable and flexible in meeting new and various needs for ministry;
4. has boundaries corresponding to the major communications spheres in a given area;
5. centers in a metropolitan area and has boundaries and internal structures adapted to the metropolitan areas within its boundaries;
6. evidences balance rather than mere homogeneity;
7. is compact in terms of travel patterns and travel times;
8. has sufficient potential financial resources for its own programs and for the support of the Synodical ministries;
9. is large enough to be effective and efficient;
10. has general acceptance by the constituency involved. (1969 *Proceedings*, p. 102)

And

WHEREAS, The task force has reviewed and revised these principles; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention adopt these revised “General Principles for Judging the Viability of a District” as follows:

These general principles should be considered for judging the viability of a district. Does the District do the following:

1. Provide appropriate guidance and support to member congregations for participating in the mission God has given to the church, including how that is carried out in the various missions and ministries of the church?
2. Carry out ecclesiastical supervision as defined in the Synod’s Constitution (Art. XII) and Bylaws (Bylaw 1.2.1 [g]) in a reasonable and timely manner?
3. Provide encouragement and needed congregational services (e.g., stewardship, conflict resolution, crisis counseling, financial counseling, calling process, collaborative efforts, networking, nourishment, and help with evangelistic outreach, etc.) to member congregations, and provide advice and counsel to member congregations struggling to carry out their core functions?
4. Adapt to new circumstances and meet changing needs related to the mission and ministry of the church?
5. Ensure that the district president is carrying out the minimum requirements for official visits to each of the member congregations as outlined in Bylaws 4.4.4ff., including coming to the pastors and member congregations at least once every three years as a brotherly adviser, “reminding them of the joy of serving in the mission and ministry of the church”?
6. Meet its financial responsibilities and obligations, and receive sufficient financial resources from its membership to (i) support the mission and ministry of the church in the district, and (ii) financially assist the mission and ministry of the Synod?
7. Find itself to be of a size and configuration to be effective, efficient, and capable of serving all who make up its constituency?
8. Provide adequate assistance and support to allow the district president to carry out the functions and obligations of the office of district

president as set forth in the Bylaws?

And be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention adopt these general principles as guidelines for judging the viability of a district when forming, consolidating, or dividing a district of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That during the next triennium, each district be encouraged (and required) to evaluate itself through its officers and board of directors in light of these general principles and actively to consider and pursue ways in which it could possibly work with or join with other districts to carry out more effectively its mission in light of those principles and provide a report to the 2016 Synod convention.

Res. 8-07 Task Force

7-06

**To Modify Process of Study for Synodwide District
Reconfiguration**

WHEREAS, LCMS Bylaw 4.1.1.3 states: “The Synod decides when and whether a district shall be formed, divided, realigned, or merged with another or other districts, or dissolved”; and

WHEREAS, 2010 LCMS Res. 8-07 “To Study Future District Function and Configuration” in its first *Resolved* statement directed the President of the Synod to convene a special task force to work in consultation with the Council of Presidents and the Synod’s Board of directors to submit to the next Synod convention a recommendation that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- General principles of viability for a district as called for in Bylaw 4.1.1.3 (b) (3);
- The purpose and function of a district;
- Recommendations to improve efficiency and coordination between the Synod and districts and among the districts, including possible changes in the number and configuration of districts; and
- An implementation plan for any recommended changes that will address staff personnel and financial operations, as called for in Bylaw 4.1.1.3 (b) (5);

and

WHEREAS, Res. 8-07 in its third *Resolved* statement directed that “the work of the task force be done with great care and sensitivity to the history and tradition of current districts, working cooperatively and collegially with each district”; and

WHEREAS, Res. 8-07 in its fourth *Whereas* clause stated: “General principles of viability have never been adopted by conventions of the Synod”; and

WHEREAS, The restructuring of the organization of Synod that was adopted under Res. 8-08A at the 2010 Synod convention eliminated the existing “program boards” of Synod that previously provided many resources to districts and congregations, and in their place it established an Office of National Mission, which has been described as a “policy office” to coordinate the ministries of the former “program boards”; and

WHEREAS, Res. 8-07 in its first *Whereas* clause states that “districts may become the primary leaders in providing services (youth, stewardship, education, and outreach)”; and

WHEREAS, Districts through their service or program areas and the offices of the district president and other district executives already provide significant resources for youth, stewardship, education, and outreach; and

WHEREAS, Districts through the offices of the district presidents and other district executives already share many resources through networking arrangements; and

WHEREAS, Many congregations, schools, and other agencies within the respective districts have enjoyed a unique district history and identity characterized by close relationships and a strong and long-standing sense of partnership with one another and with the respective district office and administration; and

WHEREAS, Many districts not only have identified and adopted significant district-related mission and ministry endeavors, but also have engaged the congregations of the districts to support these endeavors financially as district-wide projects. Such endeavors include but are not limited to

- ethnic ministries both in metropolitan and remote areas;
 - mission and ministry to and with the deaf;
 - new mission congregations and other mission starts and endeavors;
 - humanitarian assistance ministries;
 - funding acceptance for campus ministries;
 - direct support for international missionaries and mission partnerships;
 - grants-in-aid to students preparing for church vocations;
 - grants to assist professional church workers in reducing educational debt; and
 - programs for training and equipping lay leaders;
- and

WHEREAS, In gratitude for God's blessings, many of which have been channeled through district-related missions and ministries, many dedicated individuals and families have chosen to give significant gifts and bequests to districts specifically for the support of special missions and ministries associated with their respective district; and

WHEREAS, Seven districts operate their own church extension funds (CEFs), which through their assets, investments, and loans have been able to provide loans to self-supporting and mission congregations, to schools, and to other mission or ministry agencies within their districts at rates below commercial loan rates, while providing investor rates comparable to or above many commercial investments; and

WHEREAS, Both the current geographic size of many districts and the number of congregations and schools within those districts allow on-site visitation by the district president assisted by the district vice-presidents and circuit counselors in accord with Synod Bylaw 4.4.4 as well as visitation by other district executives—without excessive travel time or cost, enhancing the close relationship between districts and congregations; and

WHEREAS, A reconfiguration of the districts of Synod will not only result in the loss of unique district identities and partnerships associated with each district's mission and ministry endeavors, but "upon dissolution of a district, all property and assets to which the district holds title or over which it has control shall be transferred immediately to the Synod or its nominee" (Bylaw 4.1.4); and

WHEREAS, 2010 Res. 8-07 in its first *Resolved* statement established that a special task force will submit to the 2013 Synod convention a recommendation that includes "general principles of viability" for districts; therefore be it

Resolved, That after the 2013 LCMS convention adopts these "general principles of viability" in accordance with Bylaw 4.1.1.3 (b) (3), at least two convention cycles (six years) will be allowed for the reconfiguration task force to continue its study; and be it further

Resolved, That each district in the Synod be given four years during which time it will review the "general principles of viability" along with its unique mission and ministry endeavors. Such a study will involve the congregations and circuits of the district. If a district initially finds that it is not viable according to Synod's "general principles of viability," it will be allowed time within the four year

period to address this matter and attempt to make appropriate adjustments; and be it finally

Resolved, That the reconfiguration task force give due consideration to the input from each district of Synod prior to making any recommendation for district reconfiguration and that if "general principles of viability" for districts are adopted at the 2013 LCMS convention, no recommendation for synodwide reconfiguration of districts be proposed for adoption prior to the 2019 LCMS convention.

Board of Directors, South Dakota District

7-07

To Emphasize Ecclesiastical Supervision in Reorganization of Districts

WHEREAS, The true unity of the church is found in the pure teaching of the Gospel and right administration of the sacraments (AC 7); and

WHEREAS, The primary constitutional objective of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is, "under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions," to "[c]onserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10) ... and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom 16:17), and heresy" (Art. III 1); and

WHEREAS, District presidents shall "especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their district and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the congregations of their district" (Art. XII 7); and

WHEREAS, The Synod has elaborated in Bylaws 4.4.4, 4.4.5, and 4.4.6 the duties of the district president in these regards, requiring congregational visitations, theological interaction with ministers under his ecclesiastical supervision, and investigation and resolution of problems in doctrine and practice, these being well-reasoned and godly responsibilities and demanding of a president's time and energy in proportion to the number of congregations he serves; and

WHEREAS, The most intimate and influential interaction of the Synod with pastors and congregations, including visitations, encouragement, and consolation, the call and placement of new ministers, and dispute resolution, is through their respective district presidents; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has, at the direction of the 2010 convention (Res. 8-07), undertaken to study the realignment of her districts; therefore be it

Resolved, That any process of district realignment have as its primary focus the preservation or realignment of districts as functional units of ecclesiastical supervision, to be of such a size and character that can be properly supervised by a district president; and be it further

Resolved, That this concern for effective ecclesiastical supervision, which entails the district president's close interaction with ministers and member congregations, be considered chief among the "general principles of viability for a district" as called for in Bylaw 4.1.1.3 (b) (3); and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations and ministers benefiting from the ecclesiastical supervision afforded by their district presidents be granted the right of advice and consent regarding any proposed realignment, being themselves the best judges of the viability of their districts; and be it further

Resolved, That district presidents be encouraged to take up this chief aspect of their duties with zeal and faithfulness toward the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the ministers and congregations committed to their care; and be it further

Resolved, That those they supervise would endeavor to make this service a joy and not a burden, committing themselves to study and be fully subject to the Word of God in all things, and, recognizing this as the chief duty of their ecclesiastical supervisors as men who will give an account, committing themselves to building the unity that is of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, by speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4); and be it further

Resolved, That the Montana District in convention give thanks to God for the faithful and diligent care afforded to each of her members through her district presidents, past and present, and for the atmosphere of brotherly love and concern among her ministers and sisterly love and concern among her congregations, all of which are furthered by her constitution as a district of reasonable and viable size, and pray that these benefits may continue and flourish among us; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Montana District in convention memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to adopt as its own this resolution, with an appropriately generalized thanksgiving for the faithful and diligent service of our district presidents as ecclesiastical supervisors, and to pray that it may continue and flourish among us.

Montana District

7-08

To Study the Definition of Electoral Circuits

WHEREAS, An electoral circuit is defined in Bylaw 3.1.2 (a) as consisting of “7 to 20 member congregations, involving an aggregate communicant membership ranging from 1,500 to 10,000”; and

WHEREAS, In many districts of the Synod, such electoral circuits can be established only by joining adjacent circuits, as is stated in Bylaw 3.1.2 (a); and

WHEREAS, It becomes increasingly more difficult in some districts to realign circuits to meet the appropriate criteria for electoral circuits to exist properly; and

WHEREAS, Congregational size, population trends, geographic issues, and other such considerations continue to make the matter of establishing electoral circuits challenging throughout the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Iowa District West in convention June 24–26, 2012, petition The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to study the definition of electoral circuits so that circuits might function effectively.

Iowa District West

7-09

To Restore Bylaw Language re Circuit Counselor Nominations

WHEREAS, The 2010 revision of the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod omitted language from Bylaw 5.2.2, which defined those eligible for nominations for circuit counselor, the process for making nominations, and limitations on nominations; and

WHEREAS, The omitted language was helpful in guiding congregations in the nomination process, and its absence makes possible the nomination and election of a circuit counselor from outside the circuit, which would be detrimental to the purpose and spirit of the circuit counselor office and circuit structure in the vast majority of cases; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following bylaw changes be adopted by the 2013 LCMS convention:

Bylaw 5.2.2 (b) Nominations for candidates for the office of circuit counselor may be submitted by a voting congregation of the circuit and suggested by the district president, in consultation with the praesidium of the district.

(1) Every voting congregation of each circuit shall be entitled to nominate as a candidate for the office of circuit counselor one or two individual pastors of the member congregations of the circuit or from among the emeriti who hold membership in one of the member congregations of that circuit.

(2) The nominations shall be made prior to the meeting of the circuit forum for selection of the circuit counselor and submitted to the current circuit counselor by or at that meeting.

(3) Suggestions from the district president shall also be individual pastors of the member congregations of the circuit or emeriti who hold membership in one of the member congregations of that circuit, and shall be submitted to the current circuit counselor by or at the meeting of the circuit forum for selection of the circuit counselor.

[(c)remains the same]

(d) All pastors nominated in accordance with the procedure outlined in paragraph (b) above shall be eligible for election in accordance with section 4.3 of these Bylaws. [The rest of paragraph (d) and following remains the same.]

and be it further

Resolved, That the Southern Illinois District convention refer this overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.

Southern Illinois District

7-10

To Change Meeting Requirements for Circuit Forums

WHEREAS, LCMS Bylaw 5.2.2 (c) states, “Selection of the circuit counselor shall be by election by written ballot,” implying a need for a face-to-face meeting to elect the circuit counselor; and

WHEREAS, Bylaw 5.2.2 implies that the election of the circuit counselor takes place at a time before the district convention, so eliminating a meeting of the circuit at said convention for election of circuit counselors; and

WHEREAS, For circuits comprised of large geographical areas, a short meeting to elect the circuit counselor requires a long drive and considerable time and expense; and

WHEREAS, Because of said distance, time, and expense for a short meeting, many congregations choose not to participate in the election; and

WHEREAS, Congregations have access to conference-call services and the Internet; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Southern District meeting in its seventy-third convention requests the 2013 LCMS convention to revise the bylaws to allow circuits to meet electronically (via phone conference or computer conferencing or the like) or in some other non-face-to-face way for the purpose of circuit elections.

Southern District

7-11

To Require Membership in Circuit for Election/Appointment of Circuit Counselors

WHEREAS, It is not a requirement in the Synod’s Constitution and/or Bylaws that a circuit counselor be a member of a congregation in the circuit to which he is elected or appointed; and

WHEREAS, It is beneficial that the circuit counselor be familiar with and closely associated with the circuit's congregations, workers, and members in order to promote and preserve harmony and trust; and

WHEREAS, That close association is best built and maintained by both a close physical and spiritual presence as a member of the circuit; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention amend the Constitution and/or Bylaws so that only an ordained clergyman who is a member of a congregation within the circuit may be elected/appointed as its circuit counselor unless no ordained clergyman within the circuit is willing or eligible to stand for election/appointment.

Circuit 22
Texas District

7-12

To Afford Local Circuit First Option in Filling Circuit Counselor Vacancy

WHEREAS, The spirit of our last Synod convention was to encourage grassroots involvement; and

WHEREAS, The circuit counselor is the Synod representative most closely relating to the circuit congregations and most expected to understand local needs and challenges; and

WHEREAS, Under normal conditions, circuit counselors are chosen by vote of the circuit congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention amend the Bylaws to direct district presidents to first offer the local circuit the opportunity to nominate and elect a replacement circuit counselor in the event of a vacancy before filling the vacancy by appointment.

Ebenezer
Paige, Texas

7-13

To Improve Circuit Forum Meeting Process for Selection of Circuit Counselors

WHEREAS, In the 1980s, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod adopted a three-year cycle for its principal meetings: circuit forums, followed about a year later by district conventions, followed about a year later by a Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, Nominating candidates for the office of circuit counselor is a required action of the circuit forums meeting in session in order to be reported to the district convention for ratification; and

WHEREAS, The Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters has interpreted "meeting" to mean a "face-to-face" gathering; and

WHEREAS, In some instance in numerous districts participation in circuit forums by some congregations ranges from a major difficulty to an impossibility due to geography, distance, and wise economical stewardship, thus effectively disenfranchising those congregations in the important process of nominating their circuit counselor; therefore be it

Resolved, That the English District memorialize the 2013 Synod convention to adopt the following proposed changes to Bylaw 5.2.2 (changes underlined):

5.2.2 The circuit counselor shall hold his position by virtue of his selection by the circuit forum and ratification by the district convention.

- (a) Circuit forums shall meet at the call of their circuit counselors to select their circuit counselors no later than the time established by the district. When expedient, the Praesidium of the district may authorize a circuit counselor to conduct meetings of the circuit forum

by means of video telecommunication.

- (d) All nominated pastors serving congregations and emeriti pastors shall be eligible for election in accordance with section 4.3 of these Bylaws.

- (4) At circuit forums being conducted by means of video telecommunication, ballots may be submitted in digital format.

English District

7-14

To Amend Process for Electing Synod Convention Delegates

WHEREAS, The Synod convention is the "principal legislative assembly, which amends the Constitution and Bylaws, considers and takes action on reports and overtures, and handles appropriate appeals ... establishes general positions and policies of the Synod, provides overall program direction and priorities, and evaluates all such positions, programs, policies, directions, and priorities in order to provide responsible service for and on behalf of its members" (Bylaw 3.1.1); and

WHEREAS, Voting membership in the Synod is held by all member congregations of the Synod and exercised through their elected representatives to Synod and district conventions; and

WHEREAS, Removal of electoral function of circuits eliminates the need for so-called exceptional circuit delegates; and

WHEREAS, The number of delegates to a Synod convention should be established to enable greater engagement of the delegates in the discussion and the proceedings of mission and business; ensure equity in the number of delegates each district is apportioned; and allow for a greater stewardship of the gifts of God's people for the work of mission and ministry by opening up less expensive venues; and

WHEREAS, It is important that representatives of member congregations understand in advance of the election of delegates for Synod conventions that an orderly process will be followed, one that includes an apportioning of congregations in light of the district's prescribed number of delegates; a selection of delegates in a manner that takes into consideration reasonable and equitable representation; a process for creating electoral clusters; and an election by those electoral clusters; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Nebraska District memorialize The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to establish a fixed number of voting delegates to the Synod convention based on 10 percent of the number of member congregations in the Synod six months prior to the first district convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the Nebraska District memorialize The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to establish that voting delegates for Synod conventions be elected by electoral clusters; and be it further

Resolved, That the Nebraska District memorialize The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to allow each district to select advisory delegates retaining the proportionate representation to voting delegates as is currently followed; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Nebraska District memorialize The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to amend Bylaws 3.1.2, 3.1.2.1, 3.1.2.2, and 3.1.3.1 accordingly, the final wording of these bylaws to read as follows:

Voting Delegates

3.1.2 The Office of the Secretary of the LCMS shall facilitate the election of voting delegates to the next following Synod convention. These delegates shall be elected for three-year terms during the conventions of the districts of the Synod.

- (a) The total number of voting delegates shall be set at 10 percent of the number of congregations in the Synod six months prior to the start of the first district convention. Such number shall be rounded to the higher even number to enable delegate pairs (lay and minister of religion—ordained).
- (b) Two factors shall be averaged to determine the number of delegates from each district:
 - (1) The percentage of the district's member congregations compared to the number of member congregations of the Synod; and
 - (2) The percentage of the number of confirmed members of the district's congregations compared to the number of confirmed members of the Synod's congregations.
- (c) The most recent available roster statistics shall be used to determine all matters related to delegate representation.
- (d) One-half of the district's total allotment of delegates shall be laity from member congregations of the district, and one-half shall be ministers of religion—ordained with membership in the congregations of the district.

3.1.2.1 Elections of voting delegates to the Synod convention shall ordinarily take place as follows:

- (a) The district board of directors shall determine how its electoral clusters will caucus in light of its prescribed number of delegates to the next Synod convention. Such groupings shall take into consideration geographical and other such factors as will provide reasonable and equitable congregational representation in and as a result of the delegate selection process to occur not later than nine months prior to the opening day of the Synod convention.
- (b) Candidates for election as delegates to the Synod convention shall be the delegates attending the district convention, except for those unwilling or unable to serve.
- (c) Time shall be allotted on the district convention agenda to allow the delegates from each electoral cluster to caucus in order to select its delegates to the following Synod convention.
- (d) A circuit counselor appointed by the president of the district shall chair the caucus. Nominations shall be received and delegates elected in the following order: (1) minister religion—ordained delegate; (2) lay delegate; (3) alternate minister religion—ordained delegate; and (4) alternate lay delegate.
- (e) A majority ballot vote is required for the election of each delegate.
- (f) Delegates elected shall come from four different member congregations.
- (g) The circuit counselor selected to chair the caucus shall report the results of the election to the secretary of the district in writing immediately after said election.
- (h) If neither the delegate nor the alternate (minister religion—ordained or lay) is able to serve, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the district president in harmony with Bylaw 3.1.2.1(a).
- (i) Delegates are certified by the submission of their names and addresses to the Secretary of the Synod by the secretary of the district using official registration forms provided by the Secretary of the Synod.

3.1.2.2 Delegates shall serve from the time of election until the next district convention, functioning as resource persons to the congregations they represent and to the district and the Synod, assisting in the dissemination and implementation of reports and resolutions of the Synod convention.

- (a) Delegates are responsible to the congregations they represent and shall attempt to discover the sentiment of the members thereof, but the congregations shall not require them to vote in accordance with specific instructions.
- (b) Delegates shall attend all sessions of the convention and present written excuses to their respective district president for all absences, late arrivals, and early departures.

3.1.3.1 Each district shall select one advisory delegate for every 120 advisory ordained ministers and specific ministry pastors, and one advisory delegate for every 120 commissioned ministers on the roster of the

Synod. Fractional groupings shall be disregarded except that each district shall be entitled to at least one advisory delegate in each category.

Pacific Hills, Omaha, NE; Texas District Board of Directors 7-13

7-15

To Improve Process for Calling Pastors

WHEREAS, All congregations rely on the district offices for important information (Pastor Information Form [PIF] and Self-Evaluation Tool [SET] forms) about pastoral candidates; and

WHEREAS, It is common for calling congregations to wait several weeks for requested information to arrive from the district office because other districts do not always respond in a timely manner to requests for information and because the information provided by the pastor is not always up to date; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Northern Illinois District in convention state that it acknowledges the importance of filling pastoral vacancies in a timely manner; and be it further

Resolved, That the convention direct our district president to take any necessary action so that calling congregations can receive requested call information within one week of their request when possible; and be it further

Resolved, That the convention direct our district president to discuss this matter with the Council of Presidents so that the call process may be improved throughout our Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Northern Illinois District request that the Synod in convention direct the Council of Presidents to develop a more effective and efficient system of providing information about pastoral candidates to calling congregations while still exercising ecclesiastical oversight.

Northern Illinois District

7-16

To Address Accusations Against Pastors Properly

WHEREAS, Pastors are called by God to serve congregations in the preaching of the Gospel, administration of the Sacraments, and spiritual oversight; and

WHEREAS, 2 Timothy 4:2–3 teaches that there are times that a pastor can preach God's Word purely, even though it is "out of season" (*i.e.*, people reject it); and

WHEREAS, Hebrews 13:17 admonishes Christians to be respectful toward their pastors who are called to "watch out for your souls, as those who must give account," in order that their pastors may fulfill their sacred calling "with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you"; and

WHEREAS, 1 Timothy 5:19 says, "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses," with the understanding from the context that an "elder" is a pastor who "labors in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17); and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS gives as an objective for the Synod to provide "a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy" (Art. III 1); and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS gives as another objective for the Synod to provide "evangelical supervision, counsel, and care for pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers of the Synod in the performance of their official duties" (Art. III 8); and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the LCMS gives as another objective for the Synod to provide "protection for congregations, pastors,

teachers, and other church workers in the performance of their official duties and the maintenance of their rights” (Art. III 9); and

WHEREAS, Members of Christian congregations are not to “walk in darkness” (John 8:12) and are to recognize that “he who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now” (1 John 2:9); and

WHEREAS, It is possible for a congregation member to foster a private vendetta against his pastor because the Lutheran doctrine that the pastor teaches is rejected; and

WHEREAS, A congregation member with a private vendetta against a faithful pastor could contact the district president at any time and bring accusations against his pastor; and

WHEREAS, Any such accusations may not be truthful or charitable to the pastor; and

WHEREAS, Any such accusations may still be received by the district president, even without the pastor’s knowledge; and

WHEREAS, The pastor has no way to defend himself from such accusations that are brought against him secretly, even though his reputation is slandered; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention lament all power plays, acts of hostility, and accusations made in secret from members of Christian congregations to the district office (whether from individual laypeople or pastors); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention insist that the district offices hold to 1 Timothy 5:19 by not receiving any accusations against pastors from less than two or three witnesses (*i.e.*, including one-on-one phone calls from an individual congregation member complaining to the district office); and be it further

Resolved, That individuals who bring accusations against his or her pastor to the district office be rebuked for not following 1 Timothy 5:19; and be it further

Resolved, That district presidents should not offer to meet with a member or other members of the congregation without the presence of the pastor; and be it further

Resolved, That any time that members of a pastor’s congregation communicate with the district office, the pastor should be informed as to which member initiated the contact, to whom he or she spoke, the issue at hand, along with any other things that would be helpful for him to know; and be it further

Resolved, That the district office use the pastor’s e-mail and/or a brief telephone call to inform him immediately after one of the district staff is contacted about a congregational issue by one of his congregation’s members; and be it finally

Resolved, That the pastor be supported by the district office if he has to put an erring member under church discipline for not repenting of his sins against his pastor, following the steps of admonition given in Matthew 18:15–20.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Albany, Oregon

7-17

To Provide Process for Placement of Candidates

WHEREAS, The 2013 *Lutheran Annual* lists 217 ordained ministers as holding the status of “Candidate,” indicating that they are “Candidates for the Reverend Ministry” but currently not serving a call; and

WHEREAS, The church has a responsibility to care for all, especially those who have given of their time and talents to full-time service in the church; and

WHEREAS, When graduating from the seminary, candidates have a formal process for placement; and

WHEREAS, There is no similar placement process for those who are candidates at some point after their initial placement; and

Whereas, Candidates may wish to serve a parish, but have no formal process for doing so; and

WHEREAS, Congregations that might wish to call those who are on candidate status have no official mechanism to do so; and

WHEREAS, The district presidents already handle placements for seminary and university candidates and so could administer a formal process for seeking to place those who are currently on candidate status but willing to serve a congregation; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Bylaws of the Synod be amended thusly:

2.11.2.2 A “candidate” member is one who is eligible to perform the duties of any of the offices of ministry specified in Bylaw section 2.11 but who is not currently an active member or an emeritus member.

(a) A candidate may be continued on the roster for a period not to exceed four years by act of the president of the district through which the person holds membership.

(b) The candidate shall, by January 31, make an annual report to the district president, who shall evaluate the member’s eligibility for remaining on candidate status. The candidate’s report shall include current contact information and address the criteria for remaining on candidate status.

(c) Among criteria for determining whether candidate status should be granted or continued are

- (1) The health of the applicant;
- (2) A spirit of cooperation in any efforts to address any unresolved issues involving fitness for ministry;
- (3) The extent of current involvement on a part-time and assisting basis in his/her respective ministry; and
- (4) A demonstrated willingness to consider a call or appointment to any of the offices of ministry specified in Bylaw section 2.11.

(d) To assist candidates in resolving issues involving fitness for ministry, the president of the district through which the person holds membership, or at his request the president of the geographical district in which the candidate resides, shall meet at least annually with the candidate to assess any outstanding issues and to evaluate fitness for ministry.

- (1) The candidate may request a report, in writing, detailing specific steps to be taken to address any unresolved issues.
- (2) The candidate will have the opportunity to report quarterly on steps taken as recommended in the report.
- (3) In the case of disputes regarding fitness for ministry, the candidate may request dispute resolution as outlined in Bylaw 1.10. Such a request can be made no more than once every two years.

(e) Candidates who do not have unresolved issues regarding fitness for ministry may apply for assignment as if they were receiving their first call, as outlined in Bylaw 2.9, with the following changes:

- (1) Any candidate requesting placement under this bylaw will consult with the president of the district through which the person holds membership, or at the request of that president, the president of the geographical district in which the candidate resides. Such consultation shall take the place of consultation with the placement officer of the respective institution.
- (2) Candidates will be informed of their placement by the district office in which they are placed, or of the failure of the Synod to place them by their own district president.
- (3) Candidates may request placement under this bylaw according to the schedule for placements of the institution through which their first placement was made.

- (4) Congregations who are calling a candidate will specify if they wish to call a candidate under this bylaw or under Bylaw 2.9.
- (5) In the event that there are not sufficient calling congregations to place all candidates, those candidates who are seeking placement under Bylaw 2.9 will receive priority.
- (6) The Council of Presidents shall report at least annually in an official periodical of the Synod: the number of candidates who have requested placement under this bylaw, the number of placements made, and the number of candidates who have requested placement but have not yet been placed.
- (7) Congregations are encouraged to request candidates under this bylaw when such candidates are qualified and available.

Trinity
Wheatland, WY

7-18

To Create and Share List of Emeritus Clergy Willing to Serve

WHEREAS, God has given us the Holy Ministry that the Word may be preached and the Sacraments administered rightly; and

WHEREAS, God has also blessed the Northwest District with many varied congregations both large and small, the small becoming an ever increasing factor; and

WHEREAS, Many of the congregations, especially rural and coastal congregations, are not large enough to support a full-time pastor but are still viable and necessary in their communities; and

WHEREAS, There are retired pastors who are willing to serve these congregations on a part-time basis, even relocating to that community, if given the opportunity; and

WHEREAS, There are congregations willing to call such pastors if a list were available; and

WHEREAS, There is now no such formalized list; therefore be it
Resolved, That the offices of the Northwest District, specifically the office of the president, compile such a list, and that he make it known to interested congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That circuit counselors ask pastors about to retire if they are interested in such a ministry to make the information available on their SET; and be it further

Resolved, That retiring pastors make it known to the district office that they are willing to enter into such an arrangement; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Northwest District memorialize the Synod to encourage other districts to also compile such a list and share it across district lines.

Northwest District

7-19

To Address *Handbook* Issues re Expulsion Processes (Bylaw Sections 2.14, 2.15, 2.16, 2.17)

Background

During the triennium, concerns related to Bylaw sections 2.14, 2.15, 2.16, and 2.17 (expulsion from Synod membership) were brought to the attention of the Commission on Handbook. This overture identifies those concerns and proposes the Commission on

Handbook's bylaw amendment solutions to the 2013 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

(A) Requests for CCM/CTCR Opinions (Bylaw 2.14.7.8 [k])

Rationale

It is important that all time requirements provided by bylaw in the Synod's expulsion processes be honored, including the 30-day requirement for the provision of Commission on Constitutional Matters and Commission on Theology and Church Relations opinions requested as part of the process. To underscore the need for these commissions to make such arrangements as are necessary to fulfill this requirement, the Commission on Handbook advocates the following bylaw changes.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.14.7.8 (k) If any part of the dispute involves a specific question of doctrine or doctrinal application, each party shall have the right to an opinion from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). If it involves questions of constitution or bylaw interpretation, each party shall have a right to an interpretation from the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM).

- (1) The request for an opinion must be made through the panel, which shall determine the wording of the question(s).
- (2) The request for an opinion must be made within 30 days of the final formation of the panel. If a party does not request such an opinion within the designated time, such a request may still be made to the panel, which shall, at its discretion, determine whether the request shall be forwarded. The panel shall also have the right, at any time, to request an opinion from the CCM or the CTCR.
- (3) Any opinion so requested shall be rendered within 30 days or such greater time as the panel may allow. The CCM and the CTCR shall have in place procedures for responding within this 30-day time frame to such requests for opinions.
- (4) When an opinion has been requested, the time limitations will not apply until the parties have received the opinion. The panel must follow any opinion received from either the CCM or the CTCR.

(B) Composition of Hearing and Final Hearing Panels (Bylaws 2.14.7.2; 2.15.7.2; 2.17.7.2)

Rationale

In order to broaden district representation and to avoid the appearance of unfairness or the potential for undue influence, the Commission on Handbook proposes the following changes to the bylaws governing the composition of dispute resolution and appeal panels for adoption by the 2013 LCMS convention.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.14.7.2 A Hearing Panel ~~selected as follows~~, consisting of two district presidents ~~(excluding the involved district president(s))~~ and one reconciler who is a layperson, ~~but excluding the involved district president(s) selected as follows~~, shall conduct the hearing:

- (a) One district president shall be selected by the accused.
- (b) One district president shall be selected by the ecclesiastical supervisor who imposed the suspended status (a district president may not choose himself).
- (c) One reconciler who is a layperson shall be chosen by blind draw from the Synod's roster of reconcilers, with the blind draw administered by the Secretary of the Synod and audited by witnesses.
- (d) Each Hearing Panel shall be assisted by a nonvoting hearing facilitator selected according to Bylaw 2.14.2 (j).

- (e) No two members of the panel nor the hearing facilitator shall be from the same district.
- (ef) The hearing facilitator shall administrate the hearing, shall serve as chairman of the panel, and may draw upon persons and resources as that he/she deems necessary for conducting a hearing in a fair and equitable manner.
- (fg) The hearing facilitator shall serve as an advisor to the panel on the form but not the substance of the decision.

2.15.7.2 A Hearing Panel ~~selected as follows~~, consisting of two district presidents (excluding the involved district president[s]) and one reconciler who is a layperson, selected as follows, shall conduct the hearing:

- (a) One district president shall be selected by the accused (a district president, if he is the accused, may not choose himself).
- (b) One district president shall be selected by the President of the Synod.
- (c) One reconciler who is a layperson shall be chosen by blind draw from the Synod's roster of reconcilers, with the blind draw administered by the Secretary of the Synod and audited by witnesses.
- (d) Each Hearing Panel shall be assisted by a nonvoting hearing facilitator selected according to Bylaw 2.14.2 (j).
- (e) No two members of the panel nor the hearing facilitator shall be from the same district.
- (ef) The hearing facilitator shall administrate the hearing and may draw upon persons and resources that he/she deems necessary for conducting a hearing in a fair and equitable manner.
- (fg) The hearing facilitator shall serve as an advisor to the panel on the form but not the substance of the decision.
- (gh) If a Referral Panel was formed, the three district presidents that served in that capacity are not eligible to serve on a Hearing Panel.

2.17.7.2 A Hearing Panel consisting of two district presidents (excluding the involved district president[s]) and one reconciler who is a layperson, selected as follows, shall conduct the hearing:

- (a) One district president shall be selected by the accused.
- (b) One district president shall be selected by the ecclesiastical supervisor who imposed the suspended status (a district president may not choose himself).
- (c) One reconciler who is a layperson shall be chosen by blind draw from the Synod's roster of reconcilers, with the blind draw administered by the Secretary of the Synod and audited by witnesses.
- (d) Each Hearing Panel shall be assisted by a nonvoting hearing facilitator selected according to Bylaw 2.14.2 (j).
- (e) No two members of the panel nor the hearing facilitator shall be from the same district.
- (ef) The hearing facilitator shall administrate the hearing, shall serve as chairman of the panel, and may draw upon persons and resources that he deems necessary for conducting a hearing in a fair and equitable manner.
- (fg) The hearing facilitator shall serve as an advisor to the panel on the form but not the substance of the decision.

(C) Disqualification of Panel Members or Hearing Facilitators (Bylaw 2.14.7.8)

Rationale

Bylaw section 1.10 "Dispute Resolution of the Synod" contains subsection 1.10.16 "Disqualification," which provides guidance regarding the disqualification of reconcilers, panel members, and hearing facilitators from participation in the dispute resolution process due to "actual partiality or the appearance thereof." The absence of such provisions in the Synod's expulsion processes has been remedied in the *Standard Operating Procedures Manuals* accompanying the expulsion processes. Believing, however, that inclusion of such provision in the bylaws governing expulsion from membership in the

Synod is important, the Commission on Handbook proposes the adoption of the following new paragraph (h) for Bylaw 2.14.7.8.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.14.7.8 (h) Any party and/or parties to a dispute shall have the right to request disqualification of a panel member or hearing facilitator. The standard for disqualification shall be actual partiality or the appearance thereof. If that individual does not agree to the disqualification, the decision shall be made by a separate three-member panel of district presidents not involved in the case, selected as follows.

- (1) Nine names shall be selected by blind draw by the Secretary of the Synod or his representative, to be mailed to each party with the opportunity to strike up to three of the names from the list, to be returned to the Secretary of the Synod within one (1) week after receipt.
- (2) The Secretary of the Synod shall correct any problem with the list, using the blind draw process as necessary. No member of the panel shall be from the district in which the dispute arose or any district of any party to the dispute. No two panel members shall be from the same district.
- (3) In the event that additional names are needed, three names shall again be selected in the manner set forth above, which names shall be submitted to each party with the right to strike one name before returning the list to the Secretary of the Synod within one week.
- (4) In the event that a panel member or hearing facilitator is disqualified, another individual shall be selected in the same manner as the disqualified member was selected.

[Current paragraphs (h)–(k) will be re-lettered (i)–(l) or as appropriate.]

(D) Right of Certain Suspended Members to Request Hearing Before Final Hearing Panel (Bylaws 2.14.8; 2.15.8; 2.17.8)

Rationale

At times, suspended members (not unavoidably detained) fail to attend the hearing which they requested in order to appeal their suspension and expulsion from the Synod. According to current bylaws, they may nonetheless request and be granted a second hearing before a Final Hearing Panel. At question is whether such members should be provided opportunity to request a second hearing, given their failure to use their first opportunity to present their case and given the significant expenditures of time and resources required to call together a second panel. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following additions to current Bylaw sections 2.14, 2.15, and 2.17 to remove opportunity to request a second hearing (before a Final Hearing Panel) when the accused, unless unavoidably detained, has failed to appear before the earlier Hearing Panel.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.14.8 Within 15 days after receiving the decision of the Hearing Panel, the accused (if an active participant in the hearing before the Hearing Panel) or the President of the Synod if a question of doctrine or practice is involved (Constitution, Art. XI B 1–3) may request a final hearing.

2.15.8 Within 15 days after receiving the decision of the Hearing Panel, the accused (if an active participant in the hearing before the Hearing Panel), or the President of the Synod if a question of doctrine or practice is involved (Constitution, Art. XI B 1–3) may request a final hearing.

2.17.8 Within 15 days after receiving the decision of the panel, the accused (if an active participant in the hearing before the Hearing Panel) may request a final hearing.

(E) Addition of a Review/Appeal Process between Hearing Panel and Final Hearing Panel (Bylaws 2.14.7.9; 2.15.7.9; 2.17.7.9)

Rationale

The Commission on Handbook proposes the following additions to Bylaw 2.14.7.9 and Bylaw 2.14.7.10 (to be renumbered 2.14.8) to provide for an Appeal Panel for determining whether, when requested by the accused in a case already decided by a Hearing Panel, there will be a need for a second hearing by a Final Hearing Panel (these changes also be applied to the Bylaw sections 2.15 and 2.17 expulsion processes).

At present, following a decision of a Hearing Panel in current Bylaw sections 2.14, 2.15, and 2.17, opportunity for the accused to request a final hearing must be granted in every case. This provision effectually empties the work and the decision of the Hearing Panel of any value, since the decision of the Final Hearing Panel becomes the final and binding decision in the matter.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.14.7.9 Upon completion of the hearing, the Hearing Panel shall deliberate and then issue its written decision within 30 days.

(a) Copies a copy of the decision which shall be mailed to the accused, the district president who imposed the suspension, the accuser and his/her district president, the Secretary of the Synod, and the President of the Synod.

(ab) The decision of the Hearing Panel shall have no precedential value and shall be final and binding; subject to appeal by the accused or the President of the Synod as set forth in Bylaw 2.14.8 below.

(c) The President of the Synod may request an opinion from the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) or Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR).

(1) Any opinion so requested shall be rendered within 30 days or such greater time as the panel may allow.

(2) When an opinion has been requested, the time limitations will not apply until the parties have received the opinion.

(3) CCM and CTCR opinions must be followed if the matter is appealed.

(bd) If not appealed, the decision of the Hearing Panel shall be carried out by the district president or the President of the Synod and shall be publicized as deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the district president or President of the Synod regarded as final and shall

(1) be binding upon the parties and not be subject to further appeal;

(2) have no precedential value;

(3) be carried out by the district president or the President of the Synod; and

(4) shall be publicized as deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the district president or the President of the Synod.

Appeal Panel

2.14.8 Within 15 days after receiving the decision of the Hearing Panel may be appealed by the accused or by the President of the Synod if a question of doctrine or practice is involved. (Art. XI B 1-3) within 15 days after receiving the decision, may request a final hearing. (a) The President of the Synod may also request that an opinion of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) or Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) be obtained. (1) Any opinion so requested shall be rendered within 30 days or such greater time as the panel may allow. (2) When an opinion has been requested, the time limitations will not apply until the parties have received the opinion. The panel must follow any opinion received from either the CCM or the CTCR. (b) Such request for a final hearing shall be submitted to the Secretary of the

Synod with copies ~~provided~~ supplied to the district president(s) of the accuser and the accused, the chairman of the Hearing Panel, the accuser, and the President of the Synod, and shall be accompanied by a written memorandum stating the basis for the request.

(a) Within 30 days after receipt of an appeal from the accused, an Appeal Panel shall be selected by the Secretary of the Synod. The Appeal Panel shall be made up of three district presidents who shall be trained for such service.

(1) One district president shall be selected by the accused, one by the ecclesiastical supervisor of the accused, and the third by the two Appeal Panel members so selected.

(2) If the two Appeal Panel members cannot agree on a third panel member, the Secretary of the Synod shall select the third member by blind draw from the remaining eligible district presidents.

(b) The members of the Appeal Panel shall be provided with copies of the official record of the case, including the full report of the reconciler, the Hearing Panel minutes, the written decision and all documentary evidence considered by the Hearing Panel, and the written memorandum stating the basis for the appeal. The panel shall make its decision solely on the basis of the materials received.

(c) The only decision to be made by the Appeal Panel shall be whether to approve reconsideration of the Hearing Panel decision. The panel shall not approve a request for a new hearing on the basis of newly discovered evidence unless such evidence was clearly not available to the Hearing Panel and was not the fault of the party requesting the reopening of the case, and unless it is clear that the absence of such evidence resulted in a gross miscarriage of justice.

(d) The standards of review that shall define the Appeal Panel's considerations shall be limited to three basic areas:

(1) Factual findings: The Appeal Panel shall review factual findings of the Hearing Panel only to determine if they are supported by evidence. The Appeal Panel shall not ordinarily sit in judgment of the Hearing Panel's conclusions regarding evidence, since the Hearing Panel was in the best position to judge factual issues. The Appeal Panel must be convinced that a mistake has been committed, that is, that the evidence is such that reasonable minds could not agree with the Hearing Panel's decision.

(2) Conclusions on authority: The Appeal Panel may approve an appeal if the Hearing Panel was clearly outside its authority, e.g., a decision was made that the panel had no authority to make under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod, or a decision was made on an issue not related to the sole issue to be decided, or a decision was made on a theological question that the panel had no authority to make.

(3) Discretionary acts: The Appeal Panel may approve an appeal if there was a clear abuse of discretion impacting the decision of the Hearing Panel, resulting in a gross miscarriage of justice, or that involves an obvious and inappropriate bias or prejudice.

(d) If the Appeal Panel denies the request for reconsideration of the decision of the Hearing Panel and upholds the suspension of the ecclesiastical supervisor, the decision of the Hearing Panel shall be regarded as final and shall

(1) be binding upon the parties and not be subject to further appeal;

(2) have no precedential value;

(3) be carried out by the district president or the President of the Synod; and

(4) shall be publicized as deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the district president or the President of the Synod.

(e) If the Appeal Panel grants the request for reconsideration of the decision of the Hearing Panel, a Final Hearing Panel shall be selected by the Secretary of the Synod.

Final Hearing Panel

2.14.98-1 Within 30 days after the receipt of the decision of the Appeal Panel granting the request for reconsideration of the decision of the Hearing Panelthe request, a Final Hearing Panel shall be selected.

- (a) The panel shall be constituted in the same prescribed manner as described in Bylaws 2.14.7.2–2.14.7.6, except that the two district presidents, the reconciler, the hearing facilitator that provided assistance to the Hearing Panel, and the involved district presidents are omitted from consideration for the Final Hearing Panel.
- (b) The procedures for the final hearing shall be the same as prescribed in Bylaws 2.14.7.6–2.14.7.8.
- (c) The chairman of the Hearing Panel shall provide the Final Hearing Panel with a written statement of the matter and the Hearing Panel's report, minutes, records, and proceedings.

2.14.-89.1:2 Upon completion of the hearing by the Final Hearing Panel ... [*same as current wording of 2.14.8.2*]

[*Current Bylaws 2.14.9–2.14.9.3 will be renumbered 2.14.10–2.14.10.3.*]

(F) Additional Synod Expulsion Processes (Bylaw 2.17.3 [b])

Rationale

Bylaw 2.17.3 (b) neglects to mention other expulsion processes that should be given consideration when a district president discusses with an accuser the question of which section of the Synod's Bylaws would be appropriate for use under the circumstances. The Commission on Handbook advocates the following amendment to add reference to other expulsion processes.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING**Consultation**

2.17.3 Prior to any formal written complaint or accusation, when any person is aware of information or facts that could lead to the expulsion of an individual member from the Synod, including a district president, an officer of the Synod, or the President of the Synod, under Art. XIII of the Constitution for alleged sexual misconduct or criminal behavior, the person shall consult with the appropriate ecclesiastical supervisor, which would be a district president of the Synod or the President of the Synod, to seek advice, direction, and spiritual ministry as the needs and circumstances dictate. If the accused is the President of the Synod, the person shall consult with the chairman of the Council of Presidents. In regard to this consultation:

- (a) The appropriate ecclesiastical supervisor may consult with any others as considered appropriate under the circumstances.
- (b) If the accuser is a member of the LCMS or a member of an LCMS congregation, the ecclesiastical supervisor shall discuss with the accuser whether this bylaw provision or Bylaw section 1.10 or Bylaw sections 2.14, 2.15, or 2.16 are appropriate under the circumstances.
- (c) The ecclesiastical supervisor shall provide evangelical supervision, counsel, and care.
- (d) The ecclesiastical supervisor shall advise the accuser that it is understood that he/she shall not be put under risk by requiring the accuser to meet face-to-face with the accused in the manner described in Matthew 18:15. However, the reputation of all parties, the accuser and the accused, is to be protected as commanded in the Eighth Commandment.

(G) Commencing a Bylaw section 2.16 Expulsion Action (Bylaw 2.16.4)

Rationale

Bylaw 2.16.4 is inconsistent in its provisions that the chairman of the Council of Presidents is required to commence action when "he becomes aware of information or allegations" and when, on the other hand, "information or allegations [are] conveyed to him in a formal written complaint or accusation made by a district president of the Synod." The Commission on Handbook proposes the following amendment to the bylaw.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.16.4 Under this bylaw (Bylaw section 2.16), the chairman of the Council of Presidents, acting on behalf of the district presidents, shall commence the following action when he officially receives becomes aware of information or allegations that could lead to expulsion of the President of the Synod from the Synod under the provisions of Art. XIII of the Constitution by such information or allegations being conveyed to him in a formal written complaint or accusation made by a district president of the Synod who has carried out the above provisions (paragraph 2.16.3). ...

(H) Council of Presidents Composition in Bylaw 2.16.5.3 Role (Bylaw 2.16.5.3)

Rationale

Conflict of interest concerns could arise should the Praesidium of the Synod be included in Council of Presidents decision-making as part of the Bylaw section 2.16 expulsion process. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following amendment to Bylaw 2.16.5.3 to avoid such concerns.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.16.5.3 Whether made by the chairman of the Council of Presidents or the Referral Panel, in the recommendation whether or not to initiate formal proceedings, the chairman of the Council of Presidents shall bring the matter to the ~~full~~ Council of Presidents for hearing the recommendation, for discussion, and for vote.

- (a) An affirmative vote to proceed, by written ballot of at least 51 percent of the total number of district presidents (the collective ecclesiastical supervisors elected by the districts), shall be required for the determination to initiate formal proceedings. Any district president that is a party to the matter shall be excluded from voting.
- (b) If the result of the vote is not to initiate formal proceedings, the chairman shall in writing so inform the accuser and the President of the Synod, which shall terminate the matter.
- (c) If the results of the vote require the case to proceed, the chairman shall proceed as hereafter required.

Commission on Handbook

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To Address Handbook Issues re Dispute Resolution Process (Bylaw Section 1.10)

Introduction

During the triennium, concerns related to Bylaw section 1.10 (dispute resolution) were brought to the attention of the Commission on Handbook. This overture identifies those concerns and advocates

bylaw amendment solutions proposed by the commission to the 2013 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for adoption.

(A) Exceptional Use of Synod Dispute Resolution Process (Bylaw 1.10.3)

Rationale

Bylaw 1.10.3 identifies matters for which the Synod's dispute resolution process "does not provide an exclusive remedy." Lost in the current wording of the bylaw is the availability of the dispute resolution process even in the case of those disputes enumerated by paragraphs (a) and (b) of the bylaw if both parties agree to use and honor the outcome of the process. The Commission on Handbook proposes the addition of a final sentence to the paragraph, as follows.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.3 This chapter provides evangelical procedures to remedy disputes only and does not set forth procedures for expulsion from membership (Constitution, Art. XIII and Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17); nor does it set forth procedures for board of regents' supervision of faculty and administration as specified in Bylaws 3.10.4.7.5–3.10.4.7.9 and 3.10.5.6.5–3.10.5.6.9. While Christians are encouraged to seek to resolve all their disputes without resorting to secular courts, this chapter does not provide an exclusive remedy for the following matters, unless such matters involve theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues, including those arising under the divine call of a member of the Synod:

- (a) Disputes concerning property rights (e.g., real estate agreements, mortgages, fraud, or embezzlement)
- (b) Disputes arising under contractual arrangements of all kinds (e.g., contracts for goods, services, or employment benefits)

Even in the case of disputes concerning property rights or disputes arising under contractual arrangements, this dispute resolution process may be used if both parties sign written statements agreeing to use and honor the outcome of the process.

(B) Dispute Cases with Multiple Complainants or Respondents (Bylaw 1.10.5)

Rationale

In some dispute resolution cases, multiple complainants may bring accusations against a single respondent or a single complainant may bring accusations against multiple respondents. The spirit of the Matthew 18 principle requiring a face-to-face meeting "between you and him alone" is best served when disputes are addressed by individuals meeting face-to-face. The Commission on Handbook therefore proposes the addition of a sentence to Bylaw 1.10.5, as follows.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.5 Before any matter is submitted to the formal reconciliation process, the parties involved in a dispute must meet together, face-to-face, in a good-faith attempt to settle their dispute in the manner described in Matthew 18:15 and may involve the informal use of a reconciler. And further, before any matter is submitted to the formal reconciliation process, the complainant(s) must meet and consult with his ~~or~~/her/~~their~~ ecclesiastical supervisor(s) to seek advice and also so that it can be determined whether this is the appropriate bylaw procedure (Bylaw section 1.10) or whether the matter falls under Bylaw sections 1.8, 2.14, 2.15, 2.16, or 2.17, or Bylaws 3.10.4.7.9 ~~and~~or 3.10.5.6.9. In regard to this consultation:

- (a) From this point forward in this process, in the case of multiple complainants or multiple respondents, each complainant and/or respondent shall proceed singly and individually.

(ab) The district president of the complainant shall inform the district president of the respondent that a consultation is underway. He may also seek advice from the vice-presidents of his own district or from the district president of the respondent. The district president may also ask for an opinion of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) and/or the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). The district president must follow any opinion received from either the CCM or the CTCR, which shall be rendered within 30 days or such additional time as the district president may allow.

(bc) The district president shall require the complainant to follow the correct bylaw provision under the circumstance, if any, and shall provide evangelical supervision, counsel, and care to the party or parties.

(ed) If Bylaw section 1.10 applies, the district president shall require the complainant to meet face-to-face with the respondent in the manner described in Matthew 18:15, if the complainant has not already done so ~~as set forth above~~.

(e) The reputation of all parties is to be protected as commanded in the Eighth Commandment. The goal throughout is always one of reconciliation, of repentance and forgiveness, even if the following proceedings are carried out.

Formal Efforts toward Reconciliation

1.10.6 If either any party to the dispute is of the opinion that informal reconciliation efforts have failed, such party, in consultation with his ~~or~~/her/~~its~~ ecclesiastical supervisor, shall submit a request to the administrator of the dispute resolution process, the secretary of the Synod or district, or an appointee, as appropriate, that a reconciler be appointed to assist in seeking reconciliation. ...

(C) Content of Reconcilers' Reports (Bylaw 1.10.6.5)

Rationale

Current Bylaw 1.10.6.5, while it does currently list the components of the report of a reconciler in a dispute case, will benefit from an expansion of its content to clarify expectations regarding the content of a reconciler's report. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following changes to the bylaw.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.6.5 Upon conclusion of the formal reconciliation meeting or meetings, the reconciler shall prepare a written report which contains

- (1) the actions of the reconciler;
- (2) the issues that were resolved;
- (3) the issues that remain unresolved;
- (4) and a statement whether reconciliation was achieved;
- (5) ~~Attached to the report shall be~~ (a) the statement of the complainant as to informal reconciliation efforts;
- (b) the statement of the matter in dispute; and
- (c) any reply by the respondent.

All communication that takes place during the reconciliation process shall be considered strictly confidential, including all oral and written communications of the parties. The report, therefore, shall not contain any such No information, ~~shared in confidence shall be included in the report; nor shall it contain any opinion of the reconciler regarding the dispute.~~ The report and the attachments shall be ~~forwarded~~ provided only to the parties to the dispute and the secretary of the Synod or district as appropriate.

**(D) Clarification of Eligibility of District Reconcilers
(Bylaw 1.10.10)**

Rationale

Regarding the service of district reconcilers, current Bylaw 1.10.10 limits the selection of ministers of religion—ordained to “pastors,” (parish pastors actively serving congregations of the Synod), thereby removing from consideration all other ordained ministers. The same concern exists in Bylaws 1.10.13.1 and 1.10.15.1. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following bylaw changes.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.10 Within three months after conventions of the Synod, each district board of directors shall appoint a district roster of four reconcilers (ministers of religion—ordained, ministers of religion—commissioned, and laypersons), no more than two of whom shall be pastors ordained ministers, from a list supplied by the circuit counselors of the district.

1.10.13.1 Each Dispute Resolution Panel shall consist of three voting members, at least one of whom shall be a pastorminister of religion—ordained and one a layperson.

1.10.15.1 Each Review Panel shall consist of three voting members, at least one of whom shall be a pastorminister of religion—ordained, and at least one a layperson.

**(E) Reappointment of Hearing Facilitators
(Bylaw 1.10.12)**

Rationale

Current Bylaws 1.10.12–1.10.12.3, which speak of the appointment and service of hearing facilitators, do not address the question of reappointment after terms of service of six years. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following addition to Bylaw 1.10.12 to address this issue.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.12 After the training of the reconcilers and in consultation with the appropriate district presidents, the Secretary of the Synod shall identify 25 of the reconcilers who exhibit skills in the proper conduct of a fair and impartial hearing to comprise the Synod’s roster of hearing facilitators, who shall be trained for such purpose.

- (a) The term of service shall be six years, renewable without limit. Within three months after conventions of the Synod, the Secretary of the Synod shall contact those hearing facilitators whose terms have been completed to learn of their availability and willingness to continue for an additional term.
- (b) Any vacancies for an unexpired term or resulting from a decision not to continue at the end of a term of service shall be filled in the same manner as described above as needed and as requested by the Secretary of the Synod.

**(F) Removal of Reconcilers from Office
(New Bylaw 1.10.10.4)**

Rationale

The administrator of the dispute resolution process surfaced the issue of the absence of a provision in the Bylaws for the removal of district-appointed dispute resolution process reconcilers (Bylaw section 1.10). Strict adherence by reconcilers to the instructions provided in the Bylaws and *Standard Operating Procedures Manual* is essential for uniformity and good order as reconcilers do their important work.

Given the absence of any bylaw provision to allow a reconciler to be removed for cause, the Commission on Handbook proposes the following bylaw addition for adoption by the 2013 LCMS convention.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.10.4 A reconciler may be removed for cause from a district’s roster of reconcilers by that district’s board of directors upon report of the administrator of the dispute resolution process after consultation with the president of the district.

**(G) Composition of Dispute Resolution and Appeal Panels
(Bylaws 1.10.13.1, 1.10.13.2, 1.10.15.1, 1.10.15.2)**

Rationale

In order to broaden district representation and to avoid the appearance of unfairness or the potential for undue influence, the Commission on Handbook proposes the following changes to the bylaws governing the composition of dispute resolution and appeal panels, for adoption by the 2013 LCMS convention.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.13.1 Each Dispute Resolution Panel shall consist of three voting members, at least one of whom shall be a pastor and one a layperson.

- (a) Nine names shall be selected by a blind draw from the dispute resolution roster.
- (b) No member of a panel shall be from the district in which the dispute arose or, if it is a Synod question, from any district in which a party holds membership. No two members of a panel shall be from the same district.
- (c) The list. ...

1.10.13.2 The hearing facilitator shall be selected as follows:

- (a) Three names shall be selected by a blind draw according to the *SOPM* from the hearing facilitator roster.
- (b) No hearing facilitator shall be from the district in which the dispute arose or from any district in which a party holds membership or from any of the panel members’ districts.
- (c) The list. ...

1.10.15. Each Review Panel shall consist of three voting members, at least one of whom shall be a pastor, and at least one layperson.

- (a) Nine names shall be selected by a blind draw according to the *SOPM* from the roster of reconcilers of the Synod.
- (b) No member of a panel shall be from the district in which the dispute arose or, if it is a Synod question, from any district in which a party holds membership. No two members of a panel shall be from the same district.
- (c) The list. ...

1.10.15.2 The hearing facilitator shall be selected as follows:

- (a) Three names shall be selected by a blind draw according to the *SOPM* from the hearing facilitator roster.
- (b) No hearing facilitator shall be from the district in which the dispute arose or from any district in which a party holds membership or from any of the panel members’ districts.
- (c) The list. ...

**(H) Responsibilities of an Appeal Panel
(Bylaw 1.10.8.2)**

Rationale

Current Bylaw 1.10.8.2 provides no detail regarding the responsibilities of an Appeal Panel. Such responsibilities and accompanying guidelines are currently provided in detail in the Bylaw section 1.10 *Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM)*. The Commission

on Handbook proposes the following bylaw additions to include these *SOPM* provisions in the *Handbook* of the Synod.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.8.2 Within 30 days after receipt, an Appeal Panel shall be selected in the prescribed manner, and the Secretary of the Synod shall send the appeal to each member.

- (a) Copies of the entire official record of the case, including the full report of the reconciler, the decision and all documentary evidence considered by the Dispute Resolution Panel, and the written appeal request shall be provided to the members of the panel. The panel shall make its decision on the basis of the minutes and written decision of the Dispute Resolution Panel and the documentary evidence received and reviewed.
- (b) The panel shall concern itself only with those issues originally addressed by the Dispute Resolution Panel, unless issues were identified by the Dispute Resolution Panel for which it did not make a decision.
- (c) The panel shall decide only whether to approve reconsideration of the decision of the Dispute Resolution Panel. The panel shall not approve a request for a new hearing on the basis of newly discovered evidence unless such evidence was clearly not available to the Dispute Resolution Panel and was not the fault of the party requesting the reopening of the case, and unless it is clear that the absence of such evidence resulted in a gross miscarriage of justice.
- (d) The standards of review, which define the parameters for the panel's consideration of an appeal, limit the panel's review to three basic areas:

- (1) Factual findings: The Appeal Panel shall review factual findings of the Dispute Resolution Panel only to determine if they are supported by evidence. The Appeal Panel shall not ordinarily sit in judgment of the Dispute Resolution Panel's conclusions regarding evidence, since that panel was in the best position to judge factual issues. The Appeal Panel must be convinced that a mistake has been committed, that is, that the evidence is such that reasonable minds could not disagree.
- (2) Conclusions on authority: The Appeal Panel may approve an appeal if the Dispute Resolution Panel was clearly outside its authority, e.g., a decision that the panel had no authority to make under the Constitution and Bylaws, or a decision on an issue not identified by the Dispute Resolution Panel, or a decision on a theological question that the panel had no authority to make.
- (3) Discretionary acts: The Appeal Panel may approve an appeal if there was a clear abuse of discretion impacting the decision of the Dispute Resolution Panel, resulting in a gross miscarriage of justice, or that involves an obvious and inappropriate bias or prejudice.

(I) Responsibilities of the Review Panel (Bylaw 1.10.8.4)

Rationale

If an Appeal Panel grants a request for reconsideration of the decision of a Dispute Resolution Panel and the matter goes before a Review Panel, current bylaws advocate that the panel “shall generally decide the issue on the record without further formal hearing,” though they also allow the panel to “follow the procedure used by a Dispute Resolution Panel if deemed necessary.” In practice, this bylaw has been found to be less than realistic in its advocacy of deciding disputed matters solely on the record of the Dispute Resolution Panel. In most cases, a serious error by the earlier panel is the reason for granting a request for reconsideration by Review Panel. In addition, the written record cannot convey the oral testimony and conversation

that necessarily takes place during a hearing. For these reasons, the Commission on Handbook advocates the following bylaw changes.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Procedure of a Review Panel

1.10.8.4 If an appeal is granted, the Secretary of the Synod, or his representative, shall, within 21 days, select a Review Panel in the prescribed manner (Bylaws 1.10.15ff.). The Review Panel shall generally decide the issue by following the procedure used by a Dispute Resolution Panel (Bylaws 1.10.7ff.) on the record without further formal hearing but may follow the procedure used by a Dispute Resolution Panel decide the issue on the record without further formal hearing if deemed necessary sufficient and appropriate.

(J) Special Three-Member Panel (Bylaw 1.10.16.1–1.10.16.2)

Rationale

From time to time the need arises for a decision by the “separate three-member panel of reconcilers” referred to in Bylaw 1.10.16.1. The current bylaw offers no instruction regarding this panel other than that it shall be “drawn for that purpose according to the *SOPM*.” Questions have resulted regarding the selection and performance of this panel. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following changes to the bylaw.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.16.1 Any party and/or parties to a dispute shall have the right to request disqualification of a reconciler, panel member, or hearing facilitator. If that individual does not agree to the disqualification, the decision shall be made by a separate three-member panel of reconcilers drawn for that purpose according to the *SOPM*.

- (a) Nine names shall be selected by blind draw from the Synod's roster of reconcilers.
- (b) The list shall be mailed simultaneously to each party, who shall be entitled to strike up to three names. The list shall be returned to the Secretary of the Synod within one week after receipt.
- (c) The Secretary of the Synod shall correct any problem with the list. No member of the panel shall be from the district in which the dispute arose or any district of any party to the dispute. No two panel members shall be from the same district. If more names remain than are needed, the final selection shall be made by blind draw.
- (d) In the event that additional names are needed, three names will be selected in the manner set forth above, which names shall be submitted to each party, who shall have the right to strike one name before returning the list to the Secretary of the Synod within one week.

1.10.16.2 In the event that a reconciler, panel member, or hearing facilitator is disqualified, another individual shall be chosen by blind draw according to the *SOPM*.

- (a) Three names shall be selected by blind draw from the Synod's roster of reconcilers or hearing facilitators as appropriate.
- (b) The list shall be mailed simultaneously to each party, which shall be entitled to strike one of the names. The list shall be returned to the Secretary of the Synod within one week after receipt.
- (c) The Secretary of the Synod shall correct any problem with the list. No member of the panel shall be from the district in which the dispute arose or any district of any party to the dispute. No two panel members shall be from the same district. If more names remain than are needed, the final selection shall be made by blind draw.
- (d) In the event that additional names are needed, three names shall again be selected in the manner set forth above, which names shall be submitted to each party, with the right to strike one name before returning the list to the Secretary of the Synod within one week.

(K) Requests for CCM/CTCR Opinions (Bylaw 1.10.18.1 [h])

Rationale

In order to keep a dispute resolution process moving forward, it is important that time requirements be honored throughout the process, including the 30-day requirement for the provision of Commission on Constitutional Matters and Commission on Theology and Church Relations opinions requested by Dispute Resolution or Review Panels. To underscore the need for these commissions to make such arrangements as are necessary to fulfill this requirement, the Commission on Handbook advocates the following bylaw change.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

1.10.18.1 (h) If any part of the dispute involves a specific question of doctrine or doctrinal application, each party shall have the right to an opinion from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. If it involves questions of constitution or bylaw interpretation, each party shall have the right to an interpretation from the Commission on Constitutional Matters. The request for an opinion must be made through the Dispute Resolution Panel or Review Panel, which shall determine the wording of the question(s).

The request for an opinion must be made within four weeks of the final formation of the Dispute Resolution Panel or Review Panel. If a party does not request such an opinion within the designated time, such a request may still be made to the Dispute Resolution Panel or Review Panel that shall, at its discretion, determine whether the request shall be forwarded. The Dispute Resolution Panel or Review Panel shall also have the right, at any time, to request an opinion from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations or the Commission on Constitutional Matters.

The Commission on Constitutional Matters and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations shall have in place a procedure for responding within this 30-day time frame to such requests for opinions. Any opinion so requested shall be rendered within 30 days or such greater time as the Dispute Resolution Panel may allow. When an opinion has been requested, the time limitations governing the dispute resolution process will not apply until the opinion has been received by the parties. Any opinion received from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and the Commission on Constitutional Matters must be followed by the Dispute Resolution Panel or Review Panel.

Commission on Handbook

7-21

To Address *Handbook* Issues re Bylaws Pertaining to Districts

Background

During the triennium, concerns related to bylaws governing district operations were brought to the attention of the Commission on Handbook. This overture identifies those concerns and advocates bylaw amendment solutions proposed by the commission for adoption by the 2013 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

(A) Circuit Counselor Nominations and Elections (Bylaw 5.2.3.2)

Rationale

The chairman of the Commission on Handbook requested input from the Council of Presidents regarding the current circuit counselor nominations and elections process and reported that the Council apparently is happy with the current bylaw process, including its

provision of an opportunity to select circuit counselors from outside the circuit. After discussion of Bylaw 5.2.3.2 (a) and its reference to “fellow pastors,” the commission advocates a minor change to delete the word “fellow” to make clear that a circuit counselor may be selected from outside the circuit, as follows.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

5.2.3.2 The circuit counselor shall serve the pastors of the circuit as a collegial and brotherly adviser, reminding them of the joy of the ministry and of its great responsibilities.

- (a) He shall encourage the fellow pastors of the circuit in their preaching and teaching, in the exercise of church discipline in an evangelical manner, and in the proper supervision of Christian education and training in the parish.
- (b) He shall encourage, in a brotherly manner, the pastors of the circuit in their spiritual and family life.
- (c) He shall encourage the pastors of the circuit to continue both formal and informal continuing professional education.

(B) Circuit Counselor Selection Process When No Candidate Is Available (Bylaw 5.2.2)

Rationale

A difficulty develops in the Bylaw 5.2.2 circuit counselor selection process when, prior to convention election action, no candidate has been selected by a circuit forum or a properly selected candidate no longer is available to serve. Current bylaws provide no direction for making a selection under these circumstances. The commission proposes the following bylaw amendment to provide such direction.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

5.2.2 The circuit counselor shall hold his position by virtue of his selection by the circuit forum and ratification by the district convention.

- (a) Circuit forums shall meet at the call of their circuit counselors to select their circuit counselors no later than the time established by the district.
- (b) Nominations for candidates for the office of circuit counselor may be submitted by a voting congregation of the circuit and suggested by the district president, in consultation with the praesidium of the district.
- (c) Selection of the circuit counselor shall be by election by written ballot. The privilege of voting shall be exercised by the representatives from each member congregation of the circuit, who shall have been selected in the manner prescribed by the congregation (Bylaw 5.3.2).
- (d) All nominated pastors serving congregations and emeriti pastors shall be eligible for election in accordance with section 4.3 of these Bylaws.
 - (1) Following presentations of pertinent information regarding each pastor as listed in Bylaw 3.12.3.6 (c) and circuit counselor responsibilities as provided hereafter in this bylaw, each voter shall write in the names of two pastors on the initial ballot.
 - (2) The three pastors (or more in case of a tie vote) who receive the highest number of votes in this preliminary ballot shall be placed on the next ballot. Each voter shall vote for only one candidate.
 - (3) Balloting shall continue with the lowest candidate being removed from each succeeding ballot until one pastor shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, who shall be declared the nominee.
- (e) Immediately following the circuit forum, the circuit counselor shall report in writing the results of the selection process to the secretary of the district in preparation for ratification by the district convention.
- (f) In the event that a circuit counselor has not been selected by a circuit

forum or has been selected but is no longer available to serve, thus resulting in no circuit counselor selection being included on the convention slate of circuit counselors for a circuit, the district president shall make the selection, which selection shall then be included on the convention slate of circuit counselors.

(fg) The convention shall have the right to alter the slate by amendment.

(gh) The convention shall then ratify the slate of circuit counselors, which ratification shall constitute election.

(C) District Regional Elections (Bylaw 4.3.1)

Rationale

For its regional elections, the national Synod has provided that nominees for such positions must reside within the region (Bylaw 3.12.2.5 [a]). No such provision exists for regional elections on the district level. Nominees for district offices must only be “from the clergy roster of the Synod” (Bylaw 4.3.1) so long as, if elected, they are members of member congregations of the district “upon assuming office and during the course of their tenure” (Bylaw 4.3.3). Such provisions may be reasonable in the election of district presidents (where service is often full time and change of residence is often necessary), but the Commission on Handbook with the following bylaw changes advocates an approach for district regional positions such as is used by the Synod.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

4.3 District Officers

4.3.1 ~~The following officers~~ A president shall be elected from the clergy roster of the Synod by each district. ~~a president, two or more vice-presidents, a secretary, and a circuit counselor for each circuit established by the district shall be elected from the clergy roster of the district. In the case of regional elections, nominees shall be from the clergy roster of the district with residence in the designated region. (This shall also be the case for all other regional elections.)~~

4.3.2 Each district shall have a treasurer who shall be a layperson and shall be elected or appointed as the bylaws of the district may provide.

4.3.3 All officers and members of boards shall be members of member congregations of the district and, when appropriate, residents of designated regions ~~upon assuming office and during the course of their tenure.~~

(D) Process for Regional District Elections (Bylaws 4.7.1–4.7.3)

Rationale

An increase on the district level in regional representation by district vice-presidents and board of directors members has prompted the question whether such elections, if conducted within regions, should be ratified by district conventions in the same manner as is the case with circuit counselor elections. While Bylaw 4.7.1 allows districts to adopt their own nomination and election regulations, it is silent regarding regional elections. In keeping with the principle that final determinations in elections to all district positions rightly belong to the district convention, the Commission on Handbook proposes the following amendments to Bylaws 4.7.1–4.7.3.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

4.7.1 Each district may adopt regulations for the nomination and election of its president; the nomination, selection, election, ~~and ranking, of its vice-presidents;~~ and the succession in case of vacancies of its

vice-presidents; and the nomination or selection of any regional officers or regional board of directors members, as long as these provisions do not conflict with the Bylaws of the Synod.

4.7.2 A nominating committee of each district shall be elected by the district convention. Nominating committees may not be employed in the election of the president, ~~and vice-presidents,~~ and regional board of director positions.

4.7.3 A majority of all votes cast by a district convention shall be required in every election to all elective offices and elective board positions. ...

(E) Revision of Congregations' Constitutions and Bylaws (Bylaw 2.4.1)

Rationale

Confusion exists regarding the implementation of Bylaw 2.4.1 (d) after congregations have submitted their constitutions and bylaws to district constitution committees for review. Some congregations formally adopt new or revised documents before receiving approval by the district board of directors, while others only do so after receiving approval. Still others adopt new or revised documents with the understanding that they will not be effective until approval is received from the district board of directors. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following bylaw changes to provide clarification and consistency of practice.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.4.1 A congregation desiring to retain membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod shall continue to have a constitution and bylaws approved by the Synod.

- (a) A member congregation which ~~desires to~~ revises its constitution and/or bylaws or adopts a new constitution or bylaws shall, as a condition ~~of~~ of continued eligibility as a member of the Synod, submit ~~such a~~ such a proposed, revised or new constitution and/or revised bylaws to the district president.
- (b) The district president shall refer such to the district's constitution committee for review, to ascertain that the provisions are in harmony with the Holy Scripture, the Confessions, and the teachings and practices of the Synod.
- (c) Upon advice of the constitution committee and recommendation by the district president, the district board of directors shall determine if the changes are acceptable to the Synod.
- (d) Upon favorable action by the district board of directors, the congregation shall be notified that the changes are acceptable to the Synod, and that the congregation may proceed with formal adoption of the revised constitution and/or bylaws, and remain is entitled to continue to function as a member of the Synod in good standing of the Synod under the new or changed constitution or bylaws.
- (e) Upon formal adoption of the revised proposed constitution and/or bylaws, the congregation shall provide to the district a dated copy of the action taken accompanied by a copy of the dated revised constitution and bylaws.
- (f) Until a congregation formally adopts a revised constitution and/or bylaws using this process, the existing constitution and bylaws shall remain in effect for all purposes.

(F) District Stewardship Board/Committee Requirement (Bylaw 4.6.1)

Rationale

As a result of structural changes adopted by the 2010 convention, the Synod Bylaw 4.6 requirement that each district must elect or

appoint a committee or board for stewardship to relate to the Synod's "Department of Stewardship" begs attention, there no longer being such a department on the Synod level and very likely no longer such boards or committees in some districts. At the same time, it is beneficial for the Synod and its districts to continue their interest and cooperation in the development and promotion of stewardship programs on the district level. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following amendments to Synod Bylaw 4.6.1 to advocate the continuance of such a presence on the district level.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

4.6 District Committees or Boards for Stewardship Promotion

4.6.1 Each district shall elect or appoint a committee, board, or individual responsible for stewardship.

- (a) This ~~committee, board, or individual~~ shall cooperate with the Synod's ~~Department of Stewardship~~ electd or appointed person/persons responsible for stewardship and shall assist and advise local congregations in the development and promotion of an adequate stewardship program.
- (b) Districts are advised to provide for the systematic supervision and qualified guidance and promotion of stewardship education; ~~where possible establishing and maintaining the office of a stewardship counselor or secretary, who shall be responsible to the district stewardship board.~~
- (c) Each district may invite a representative of the Synod to meet for mutual assistance in budget planning for mission and ministry.
- (d) Each district shall arrange for adequate time at its convention for a report on the mission and ministry program of the Synod, made by a representative of the Synod assigned by the President of the Synod.

**(G) Formation of Electoral Circuits
(Bylaw 3.1.2)**

Rationale

Current Bylaw 3.1.2 calls upon each district to determine the composition of its electoral circuits prior to each Synod convention. The bylaw is unclear as to how districts are to go about combining adjacent visitation circuits to create electoral circuits when necessary. It is noted that action on this issue may not be needed, depending upon the convention's decision regarding the commission's response to 2010 Res. 8-05B. The commission offers the following proposed action to amend Bylaw 3.1.2 for consideration by the 2013 convention if needed.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.1.2 Voting delegates shall consist of one pastor and one layperson from each electoral circuit.

- (a) An electoral circuit shall consist either of one or two adjacent visitation circuits, as shall be determined by ~~each~~ the district board of directors on the basis of the following requirements: each pair of delegates shall represent from 7 to 20 member congregations, involving an aggregate communicant membership ranging from 1,500 to 10,000.
- (b) Exceptions to these requirements may be made only by the President of the Synod upon request of a district board of directors.

Commission on Handbook

7-22

To Address Handbook Issues re Synod Conventions

Background

During the triennium, concerns related to bylaws governing the Synod's conventions were brought to the attention of the Commission on Handbook. This overture identifies those concerns and advocates bylaw amendment solutions proposed by the commission for adoption by the 2013 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

**(A) Committee for Convention Nominations
(Bylaws 3.12.3.4–3.12.3.6)**

Rationale

The Secretary of the Synod plays an important role in assisting the Committee for Convention Nominations by gathering and presenting to the committee names and biographical information of individuals to be considered for election to office in the Synod. Bylaw 3.12.3.4 sets forth the Secretary's duties in the nomination process, but limits the agencies and individuals with whom he works in carrying out his work. This limitation might inadvertently exclude qualified individuals from nominations for elected office. Greater involvement of the agencies and members of the Synod in the nominations process would increase confidence in it. For these reasons, the Commission on Handbook proposes changes to Bylaw 3.12.3.4.

In addition, experience has demonstrated that the terminology and content of Bylaws 3.12.3.4–3.12.3.6 are less than clear regarding the expectations of and the process to be followed by the Committee for Convention Nominations. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following bylaw changes to clarify the important responsibilities of this committee.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.12.3.4 The Secretary of the Synod shall handle the preliminary work for the Committee for Convention Nominations.

- (a) He shall begin to solicit names of ~~potential~~ nominees from ~~officers, boards, commissions, and agencies of the Synod and its districts~~ the agencies and officers of the Synod at least 24 months prior to the convention.
- (b) Approximately 24 months before a regular meeting of the Synod in convention, he shall solicit from ~~the mission boards and the synodwide corporate entity board~~ those agencies with positions to be filled descriptions of criteria of qualified candidates to serve in ~~those positions on those boards.~~
- (c) With such criteria in view, the Secretary shall issue the first call for nominations through a publication of the Synod and on the Synod's Web site 18 months before the convention, soliciting names from ~~the agencies and officers of the Synod and the congregational and individual members of the Synod~~ mission boards and synodwide corporate entity boards, as well as congregations, district presidents, district boards of directors, circuit counselors, and other likely sources.
- (d) All incumbents eligible for reelection shall be considered to be nominees for nomination.
- (e) ~~Qualifications~~ The qualifications of each nominee shall be submitted together with the names on forms made available on the Synod's Web site.
- (f) All suggested names and information for consideration by the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod no later than nine months prior to the convention of the Synod.
- (g) The Secretary shall present the names and information gathered to the Committee for Convention Nominations at its first meeting.

3.12.3.5 The first meeting of the Committee for Convention Nominations shall be at the call of the Secretary of the Synod at least six months prior to the convention of the Synod.

- (a) The Secretary shall not serve as a member of the committee, but he shall convene the initial meeting of the committee and be available, upon call, for consultation.
- (b) The committee shall elect its own chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary and shall organize its work in whatever way it deems necessary.
- (c) The committee shall inform itself as to the duties and requirements of each position to be filled and thereby be guided in its selection of candidates from the list of nominees gathered by the nominations process nominees.
- (d) In the case of the boards of regents of educational institutions of the Synod, the committee shall consult with the President of the Synod or the Board of Directors of Concordia University System and receive their input for the committee's consideration.

3.12.3.6 The Committee for Convention Nominations shall select ~~nominate~~ candidates for all elective offices, boards, and commissions except President, First Vice-President, and vice-presidents and elective positions requiring regional nominations (Bylaws 3.12.2.5; 3.3.4.1; 3.8.2.2; 3.8.3.2).

- (a) At least two candidates and one alternate shall be selected ~~nominated~~ for each position.
- (b) The committee shall determine its complete list of candidates and alternates, obtain the consent of the persons it proposes to select as candidates ~~nominate~~, and transmit its final report at least five months prior to the convention to the Secretary of the Synod, who shall post the list on the Synod's Web site and provide for its publication in a pre-convention issue of an official periodical of the Synod and in the *Convention Workbook*.
- (c) The committee's report shall list the qualifications of various positions used in the solicitation of nominees ~~candidates~~ and contain pertinent information concerning each candidate, such as occupation or profession; district affiliation; residence; specific experience; number of years as a member of an LCMS congregation; present position; offices previously held in a congregation, district, or the Synod; qualifications for the office in question; and, if the candidate so desires, also a brief personal statement.

(B) Staggered Terms for Members of Certain Boards and Commissions (Bylaws 3.8.2.2; 3.8.3.2; 3.9.4.1–3.9.4.2)

Rationale

The 2010 convention of the Synod created new boards for international and national mission and changed the composition and appointment process of the Commission on Handbook. However, the convention failed to give thought to the advisability of creating staggered terms for these new board and commission positions, resulting in the election or appointment of all members for six-year terms. This failure to create staggered terms has created the possibility of a total turnover of board and commission membership each six years, potentially resulting in a corresponding loss of continuity. In order to enable the 2016 convention to create a staggering of terms by electing one-half of all mission board members and appointing some of the commission members to three-year terms, the Commission on Handbook proposes the following changes to Bylaws 3.8.2.2 and 3.8.3.2.

In addition, the terms of those board and commission members elected or appointed to three-year terms will not be counted as full terms in this case, allowing those who will have served one six-year and one three-year term to be eligible for an additional six-year term at the time of the 2019 convention. In order to accommodate this

change, the Commission on Handbook proposes that Bylaw 3.2.4.2 (b) also be amended, as follows.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.8.2.2 The Board for National Mission shall be comprised of eleven members:

1. Five laypersons and five individual members of the Synod (one of each from each region of the Synod) elected in the same manner as are all other regional elections (Bylaws 3.12.1 and 3.12.2.5)
2. The President of the Synod or his representative

In 2016, the laypersons elected from the Great Plains and East/Southeast regions and the individual members of the Synod elected from the West/Southwest, Central, and Great Lakes regions shall be elected for three-year terms.

3.8.3.2 The Board for International Mission shall be comprised of eleven members:

1. Five laypersons and five individual members of the Synod (one of each from each region of the Synod) elected in the same manner as are all other regional elections (Bylaws 3.12.1 and 3.12.2.5)
2. The President of the Synod or his representative

In 2016, the individual members of the Synod elected from the Great Plains and East/Southeast regions and the laypersons elected from the West/Southwest, Central, and Great Lakes regions shall be elected for three-year terms.

3.9.4.1 The Commission on Handbook shall consist of eight members, five voting and three nonvoting. Of the five appointed members, three shall be individual members of the Synod and two shall be attorneys. In 2016, one of the individual members and one of the attorneys shall be appointed for three-year terms. The remaining individual members and attorney shall be appointed for six-year terms:

1. The Secretary and the Chief Administrative Officer of the Synod and a voting member of the Commission on Constitutional Matters shall serve as advisory members.
2. The five voting members (~~whose terms shall be for six years renewable once~~) shall be appointed in the following manner.

3.2.4.2 All members of all boards and commissions of the Synod shall be ineligible for reelection or reappointment to the same board or commission after serving a total of two successive six-year elected terms or three successive appointed or elected three-year terms, unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws.

- (a) Such persons may become eligible again for election or appointment to the same office, board, or commission after an interval of three or more years.
- (b) ~~One-half or more~~ More than one-half of a term shall be regarded as a full term under limited tenure rules.
- (c) Any member of a board or commission who is ineligible for reelection or reappointment may be elected or appointed to another position.

(C) COH and CTCR Convention Expenses (Bylaw 3.1.9)

Rationale

Although Bylaw 3.1.4.1 (b) requires convention attendance by members of the Commission on Handbook and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, they are not included in the Bylaw 3.1.9 (e) listing of those whose expenses are to be included in the operating cost of the convention. The Commission on Handbook proposes the following bylaw amendment for adoption by the 2013 LCMS convention.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.1.9 (e) All travel and convention expenses of the Synod's Praesidium, Secretary, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Mission Officer, Board of Directors, district presidents, Commission on Constitutional Matters, Commission on Handbook, Commission on Theology and Church Relations, and legal counsel are included in the operating cost of the convention and as such are included in the district levy.

**(D) Appointed Officers as Advisory
Representatives
(Bylaw 3.1.4)**

Rationale

Current Bylaw 3.1.4 speaks only of "elected officers" serving as advisory representatives to conventions of the Synod. As a result of 2010 convention actions, the Synod is now served by three officers who are appointed to their positions: the Chief Administrative Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Chief Mission Officer. In order for Bylaw 3.1.4 to include all officers in attendance at Synod conventions, elected and appointed, the Commission on Handbook proposes the following bylaw amendment for adoption by the 2013 convention.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING***Other Advisory Representatives***

3.1.4 Elected officers Officers of the Synod, including district presidents, and representatives of the Synod's boards, commissions, educational institutions, mission areas, chaplains, and district boards of directors shall also serve as advisory representatives to the conventions of the Synod.

Commission on Handbook

7-23

**To Address District Membership/Ecclesiastical
Supervision Issues (Bylaw 2.12 *et al.*)**

Introduction

Extensive discussions involving the Commission on Handbook, the Council of Presidents, and Synod officers and staff in an effort to address ongoing and newly surfacing district membership and ecclesiastical supervision issues, especially as pertaining to Bylaw section 2.12 "District Membership and Ecclesiastical Supervision," has culminated in the submission of this overture to the 2013 LCMS convention.

The primary goals of these discussions were twofold: (1) the provision of proper ecclesiastical supervision of church workers (missionaries, commissioned ministers, etc.) living outside the United States; and (2) the provision of a means whereby interested international congregations could be received into membership in the Synod.

It was agreed that the solution to (1) above would depend on the involved district presidents (with the assistance of the Office of International Mission) providing more intentional ecclesiastical supervision through regular contact with the foreign workers. It was agreed that the best approach to (2) above, at least for the present, would be to request the Missouri District to create an additional international circuit to admit these congregations into membership in the Synod and to provide ecclesiastical supervision (with the assistance of the Office of International Mission).

To accomplish these objectives, the Commission on Handbook offers the following proposed bylaw amendments and provisions to the 2013 convention for adoption.

Resolved, That in order to accomplish the objectives described above regarding district membership and ecclesiastical supervision of individual members of the Synod, the 2013 LCMS convention adopt the following bylaw changes:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

2.12 District Membership and Ecclesiastical Supervision and District Membership

2.12.1 Except as otherwise provided in this section, a member shall be under the ecclesiastical supervision of the president of the district through which membership in the Synod is held Each individual member of the Synod shall hold membership through a district. ~~2.12.1.1 The district through which an individual holds membership and the district through which a member is ecclesiastically supervised will not be determined in any case on the basis of district membership of the congregation to which the individual belongs.~~

~~2.12.2~~ 2.12.1.2 An individual member of the Synod who is serving a congregation shall hold membership in the Synod through the district ofin which his/her calling body is located or headquartered, except the following: the congregation is a member:

(a) ~~2.12.1.3~~ 2.12.1.3 An individual member of the Synod who is serving a district shall hold membership in the Synod through that district. ~~2.12.1.4A~~ missionary or chaplain serving under a call by a mission board of the Synod shall hold membership in the Synod through the district designated by the missionary or chaplain if approved by the president of that district after consultation with the Office of International Mission and the president of the district through which membership is currently held.

(b) ~~2.12.1.5~~ 2.12.1.5 An individual member of the Synod other than a missionary or chaplain serving under call by a mission board of the Synod and who is serving an agency other than a congregation or district and other than a missionary or chaplain serving under call by the Synod shall hold membership through the district designated by that person if approved by both the president of that district and the president of the district in which the agency is located; ~~but shall be subject to the ecclesiastical supervision of the president of the geographical district in which the agency is located.~~ When all voting members of the agency are members of a non-geographical district, membership shall be held through that district.

(c) ~~2.12.1.6~~ 2.12.1.6 An individual member of the Synod who is an executive or professional staff member called or appointed by an auxiliary or other recognized service organization shall hold membership in the geographical district in which the member resides is employed or the non-geographical district in which he or she holds membership. ~~2.12.1.7~~ 2.12.1.7 An emeritus member shall continue to hold membership through the district through which membership was held at the inception of emeritus status unless a transfer is approved by both the president of that district and the president of the district to which membership would be transferred.

(d) ~~2.12.1.8~~ 2.12.1.8 An inactive member having emeritus, candidate, or non-candidate status shall continue to hold membership in the Synod through the district through which membership was held at the inception of the emeritus, candidate, or non-candidate status except when a transfer is approved by both the president of that district and the president of the district to which membership would be transferred.

(e) ~~2.12.1.9~~ 2.12.1.9 A member having restricted status while not serving a congregation or other eligible agency shall continue to hold membership through the district through which membership was held at the inception of restricted status unless a transfer is approved by both the president of that district and the president of the district to which membership would be transferred. ~~2.12.1.10~~ 2.12.1.10 A member having suspended status shall continue to hold membership through the district through which membership was held at the time of the suspension.

2.12.3 A member shall be under the ecclesiastical supervision of the president of the district through which membership in the Synod is

held. The district through which an individual holds membership and the district through which a member is ecclesiastically supervised will not be determined in any case on the basis of the district membership of the congregation to which that individual belongs.

And be it further

Resolved, That in order to accomplish the objectives described above regarding district membership and ecclesiastical supervision of congregations that are members of the Synod, the 2013 LCMS convention adopt the following bylaw changes:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Rites of Ordination or Commissioning

2.10.3 The president of the district of which the calling congregation is a member or in which the eligible calling agency is located or with which it is otherwise identified shall be responsible for the rites of ordination and commissioning of candidates for the ministry called to that congregation or agency.

- (a) The rite of ordination or commissioning should normally take place in the presence of the congregation or other agency to which the candidate has been called.
- (b) In the case of missionaries called by the Synod, ordained or commissioned ministers called by international congregations, members of a faculty of an institution of the Synod, or institutional chaplains, the rite shall take place in a setting approved by the district president of the calling body.
- (c) If an unusual circumstance warrants it, the ~~appropriate~~ district president may authorize that the rite take place in the home congregation of the candidate, or other appropriate congregation, with the permission of the calling congregation or other agency.
- (d) A service of celebration on the part of the candidate's home congregation is encouraged.
- (e) The district president shall issue a diploma of ordination or commissioning.

Regional Elections

3.12.1 For all elections requiring regional representation, the Board of Directors of the Synod and the Council of Presidents acting jointly shall designate five geographical regions.

- (a) Regions shall be designated 24 months prior to conventions of the Synod and shall take into consideration geographical and number-of-congregations information in the interest of fair representation.
- (b) For the purposes of regional elections, individuals will be considered a part of the geographical region where their congregational membership is held. Canadian congregations will be placed as a whole into the region which the Board of Directors and the Council of Presidents deem appropriate. International congregations will be placed as a whole into the region to which their district has been assigned.
- (c) This information shall be shared immediately with all districts of the Synod.

4.4 District President

4.4.3 The district president shall represent the Synod in connection with all ordinations, commissionings, and installations.

- (a) *First Calls*: Ordinations, commissionings, and initial installations shall be conducted by or at the direction of the ~~district~~ president of the calling body's district when the requirements of Bylaw 2.10.2 (a) have been satisfied.
- (b) *Missionaries and Ministers of International Congregations*: The authorization for the ordination or commissioning and the installation of a missionary called into the foreign fields or an ordained or commissioned minister called by an international congregation, whether as a first or subsequent call, shall be issued ~~upon the request of the Board for International Mission~~ by the president of the district of the calling body in which the missionary resides. ...

And be it further

Resolved, That the Missouri District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod add to its existing circuits an additional circuit consisting solely of international congregations of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 5.1.2 be amended to allow circuits to meet as via electronic means when geographical considerations make face-to-face meetings of congregational representatives impractical, to read as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

5.1.2 Districts shall establish circuits according to geographical criteria. When face-to-face meetings of congregational representatives are deemed impractical, as in the case of a circuit of international congregations, electronic means for communication may be used upon approval of the president of the district.

And be it finally

Resolved, That the Office of International Mission provide assistance as necessary to enable this circuit to function properly and to enable the district president to provide ecclesiastical supervision to its congregations and called church workers.

Commission on Handbook

7-24

To Respond to 2010 Res. 8-05B

The 2010 convention of the Synod referred Res. 8-05B “To Elect Delegates to the Synod Convention” to the Commission on Handbook for further attention. After discussion of the resolution by the commission during earlier meetings, a committee was asked to return with a recommendation for submission to the 2013 convention. After extensive discussion of the committee's recommendation during this August 2012 meeting, it was adopted for submission as two overtures to the 2013 convention, as follows.

(A) To Establish Number of Delegates to Synod Conventions

WHEREAS, The Synod convention is the “... principal legislative assembly, which amends the Constitution and Bylaws, considers and takes action on reports and overtures, and handles appropriate appeals”... “and establishes general positions and policies of the Synod, provides overall program direction and priorities, and evaluates all such positions, programs, policies, directions, and priorities in order to provide responsible service for and on behalf of its members” (Bylaw 3.1.1); and

WHEREAS, Conventions of the Synod “afford an opportunity for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and communication” (Bylaw 3.1.1); and

WHEREAS, Voting membership in the Synod is held by all member congregations of the Synod and exercised through their elected representatives to the Synod and district conventions; and

WHEREAS, The current system for determining the number of delegates to the national convention is based on a process that includes variables which result in electoral circuits that vary widely in their size (Bylaw 3.1.2), including the number of congregations (7 to 20) and the number of communicant members (1,500 to 10,000); and

WHEREAS, A process to determine district representation at the national convention ideally should be based on objective criteria designed to promote fairness and equity across the Synod, eliminating the need to grant approval for exceptional circuits (Bylaw 3.1.2 [b]); and

WHEREAS, The number of delegates to a Synod convention should

- enable greater engagement of the delegates in the discussion and the proceedings of mission and business;
- facilitate opportunity for deep and continuing discourse among delegates as they discuss, debate, worship with, and inspire one another;
- ensure equity in the number of delegates each district is apportioned;
- allow for greater stewardship of the gifts of God's people for the work of mission and ministry by opening up less expensive venues; and
- enable districts to select delegates and not be restricted to the configuration of visitation circuits, fairly representing the district; therefore be it

Resolved, That the number of voting delegates to the Synod convention be fixed based on 10 percent (10%) of the number of member congregations in the Synod six months prior to the first district convention; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.1.2ff. be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.1.2 Voting delegates shall consist of one pastor and one layperson from each electoral circuit:

- (a) An electoral circuit shall consist either of one or two adjacent visitation circuits, as shall be determined by each district on the basis of the following requirements: each pair of delegates shall represent from 7 to 20 member congregations, involving an aggregate communicant membership ranging from 1,500 to 10,000.
- (b) Exceptions to these requirements may be made only by the President of the Synod upon request of a district board of directors.

The Office of the Secretary shall facilitate the election of voting delegates to the next following national convention. These delegates shall be elected for three-year terms during the conventions of the districts of the Synod.

- (a) The total number of voting delegates shall be set at 10 percent (10%) of the number of member congregations of the Synod six months prior to the start of the first district convention. Such number shall be rounded to the higher even number to enable delegate pairs (one layperson and one minister of religion—ordained).
- (b) Two factors shall be averaged to determine the number of delegates from each district:
 - (1) The percentage of the district's member congregations compared to the number of member congregations of the Synod; and
 - (2) The percentage of the number of confirmed members of a district's congregations compared to the number of confirmed members of the member congregations of the Synod.
- (c) The most recent roster statistics available six months prior to the convention shall be used to determine all matters related to delegate representation.
- (d) One-half of the district's total allotment of delegates shall be laity from member congregations of the district and one-half shall be ministers of religion—ordained with membership in the congregations of the district.

(B) To Change Process for Electing Delegates to Synod Conventions

WHEREAS, The Synod convention is the “principal legislative assembly, which amends the Constitution and Bylaws, considers and takes action on reports and overtures, and handles appropriate appeals” ... “and establishes general positions and policies of the Synod, provides overall program direction and priorities, and evaluates all such positions, programs, policies, directions, and priorities in order to provide responsible service for and on behalf of its members” (Bylaw 3.1.1); and

WHEREAS, It is important that representatives of member congregations understand in advance of the election of delegates for Synod conventions that an orderly process will be followed; and

WHEREAS, Such orderly process for the election of delegates to the Synod convention should include

- an apportioning of congregations in light of a district's prescribed number of delegates;
- a selection of delegates in a manner that takes into consideration reasonable and equitable representation;
- a process for creating electoral caucuses; and
- an election by those electoral caucuses at a district convention; therefore be it

Resolved, That voting delegates for Synod conventions be elected by electoral caucuses; and be it further

Resolved, That each district shall select advisory delegates (ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—commissioned) retaining the proportionate representation to voting delegates as is currently followed; and be it finally

Resolved, That Bylaws 3.1.2.1–3.1.3.1 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

3.1.2.1 Elections of voting delegates to the national convention shall take place in accordance with established policy and procedures as follows:

- (a) Each electoral circuit shall meet at the call of the counselor(s) to elect its delegates not later than nine months prior to the opening day of the convention. The district board of directors shall determine how its electoral caucuses will meet in light of its prescribed number of delegates to the next national convention. Such groupings shall take into consideration geographical factors, visitation circuits, and such other factors as will provide reasonable and equitable congregational representation in and as a result of the delegate selection process to occur not later than nine months prior to the opening day of the Synod convention.
- (b) Elections shall be by written ballot. Candidates for election as delegates to the national convention shall be delegates attending the district convention, except for those unwilling or unable to serve.
- (c) The privilege of voting shall be exercised by one pastor and one layperson from each member congregation of the circuit, both of whom shall have been selected in the manner prescribed by the congregation. Multiple parishes shall be entitled to a lay vote from each member congregation. Time shall be allotted on the district convention agenda to allow the delegates from each electoral caucus to select its delegates to the following national convention.
- (d) All pastors who are not advisory members under Article V-B of the Constitution shall be eligible for election. A circuit counselor appointed by the president of the district shall chair the caucus. Nominations shall be received and delegates elected in the following order: (1) minister of religion—ordained delegate; (2) lay delegate; (3) alternate minister of religion—ordained delegate; and (4) alternate lay delegate.
 - (1) Each voter may write in the names of two pastors on the initial ballot. The three pastors (or more, in case of a tie vote) who receive the highest number of votes in this preliminary ballot shall be placed on the next ballot.
 - (2) Each voter shall now vote for only one candidate. Balloting shall continue with the lowest candidate being removed from each succeeding ballot until one pastor shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he shall be declared the pastoral delegate.
 - (3) The congregation or congregations served by the elected pastoral delegate shall be removed from consideration for supplying any other voting delegate or alternate for that particular convention.
- (e) A majority ballot vote shall be required for the election of each delegate. Prior to the meeting of the electoral circuit, each congregation may nominate one layperson, either from its congregation or from

the circuit. These names must be submitted to the circuit counselor prior to the day of the circuit meeting and shall constitute the slate of candidates. All congregational nominees, except those who have been eliminated through the election of the pastoral delegate, shall be eligible for election:

- (1) Each voter may write in the name of two of the remaining lay nominees on the initial ballot. The three laypersons (or more, in case of a tie vote) who received the highest number of votes in this preliminary ballot shall be placed on the next ballot.
 - (2) Each voter shall now vote for only one candidate. Balloting shall continue with the lowest candidate being removed from each succeeding ballot until one layperson shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he or she shall be declared the lay delegate.
 - (3) The congregation from which the lay delegate has been elected shall then be removed from consideration for supplying any alternates to that particular convention.
- (f) All other pastors who received votes in the initial write-in ballot, except those who were eliminated through the election of the lay delegate, shall be eligible for election as the alternate:
- (1) Each voter shall now vote for only one candidate.
 - (2) Balloting shall continue with the lowest candidate being removed from each succeeding ballot until one pastor shall have received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he shall be declared the alternate pastoral delegate.
 - (3) The congregation or congregations served by him shall be removed from consideration for supplying the remaining lay alternate.
- (g) All lay nominees except those who have been disqualified through the procedures listed above shall be eligible for election as the alternate lay delegate. The election of the alternate shall follow the same procedure as in paragraph (f) above.
- (h) All four persons Delegates elected shall come from four different member congregations.
- (i) The circuit counselor(s) selected to chair the caucus shall report the results of the election to the secretary of the district in writing immediately after said election.
- (j) If neither the delegate nor the alternate (pastoral minister of religion—ordained or lay) can serve, the vacancy shall be filled by an appointment made by the district president in consultation with the respective circuit counselor(s).
- 3.1.2.2 Voting delegates Delegates shall serve from the time of election until the next district a three-year term beginning with the convention, shall function as advisory members of the circuit forum, shall serve as resource persons in the circuit to the congregations they represent and to the district and national Synod, and shall assist in the dissemination and implementation of reports and resolutions of the Synod in the circuit national convention.
- (a) Delegates are responsible to the circuits congregations they represent and shall attempt to discover the sentiment of the members thereof, but the congregations (b) Congregations shall not require their delegates them to vote in accordance with specific instructions, but every delegate shall be permitted to vote according to his or her own conviction.
 - (b) Delegates are expected to be faithful in attendance at shall attend all sessions of the convention. All duly elected voting delegates shall attend all sessions regularly until the close of the convention. Delegates who arrive late or leave early or who do not attend at all shall and present a written excuse to their district presidents for all absences, late arrivals, and early departures.
 - (d) Delegates shall report the actions of the Synod to their circuits after each convention, preferably appearing before each of the congregations they represent.

Nonvoting Advisory Delegates

3.1.3 Advisory members of the Synod shall attend district conventions, but they shall not be elected by any congregation or by any group of congregations as lay delegates to a national convention of the Synod.

3.1.3.1 Each district shall select one advisory delegate for every 60120 advisory ordained ministers and specific ministry pastors, and one advisory delegate for every 60120 commissioned ministers on the roster of the Synod. Fractional groupings shall be disregarded except that each district shall be entitled to at least one advisory delegate in each category.

- (a) Selection of district advisory delegates to conventions of the Synod shall be made by the respective groups meeting at the call of the district secretary either during the district convention or at official district conferences of ordained and/or commissioned ministers.
- (b) Such selections must be completed at least nine months prior to the opening day of the convention.
- (c) Individuals who are eligible for selection in any category under Bylaw 3.1.4 shall not be counted in determining the number of advisory delegates from each district, shall not be eligible to be selected as delegates from the groups defined in this bylaw, and shall not participate in the election process.

Commission on Handbook

7-25

To Resolve Bylaw Issues Remaining from 2010 Convention Restructuring Decisions

Background

Following the 2010 LCMS convention, it was recognized that restructuring decisions had resulted in lack of clarity and even contradictions in the *Handbook* of the Synod that would require additional attention by the 2013 convention. These concerns were discussed during a daylong Nov. 2, 2012, joint meeting of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, Commission on Handbook, the Chief Mission Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer, and a member of the president's office staff. The commission offers the following proposed amendments to satisfy a number of these concerns in the 2010 *Handbook* of the Synod.

(A) Board for National Mission

Rationale

The intention and meaning of current wording of Bylaws 3.8.2 and 3.8.2.1 ("directed toward") is vague and unclear. Removing that wording does not affect the overall intention and meaning of these bylaws. In addition, in order for Bylaw 3.8.2.1 to mirror its counterpart for the Board for International Mission (Bylaw 3.8.3.1), the reference to the "supervision" of the President of the Synod is changed to "ecclesiastical supervision," consistent with the President's responsibility under Constitution Art. XI B 1-4 (also Art. XI B 7; Bylaws 3.3.1.1-3.3.1.3).

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Board for National Mission

3.8.2 The Board for National Mission is charged with developing and determining policies for the coordination of and in support of district ministries which support that are directed toward the ministry functions of the national office and district ministries that are directed toward the ministries of congregations and schools (Bylaw 1.2.1 [1]). These policies shall embrace and apply the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention. Under the leadership of the President of the Synod, pursuant to Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1, the board shall as-

sist in identifying the specific goals for the Office of National Mission. Policies determined by the board (implemented by staff) may include but not be limited to:

- strong national mission leadership
- Lutheran school ministries and accreditation
- human care and domestic mercy efforts
- stewardship
- evangelism
- church planting and revitalization
- youth ministry

3.8.2.1 The Board for National Mission shall have oversight of the implementation of policies adopted by the board and implemented by the Office of National Mission for the coordination of and in support of district ministries ~~which support that are directed toward the ministry functions of the national office and district ministries that are directed toward the ministries of congregations and schools.~~ The board shall be under the ecclesiastical supervision of the President of the Synod regarding doctrine and administration consistent with the President's responsibility under Constitution Art. XI B 1–4 (also Art. XI B 7; Bylaws 3.3.1.1–3.3.1.3) between conventions of the Synod and ultimately shall be responsible to the Synod in convention (Art. XI A 1–2).

(B) Office of National Mission

Rationale

The current bylaw terminology (“relates to”) is unclear, as are the roles of the President and Chief Mission Officer of the Synod. Removing unclear terminology and incorporating additional wording regarding the responsibility of the Chief Mission Officer provides necessary clarity.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Office of National Mission

3.8.2.3 The Office of National Mission; implements the policies of which relates to the Board for National Mission ~~and implements its policies under the supervision of the Chief Mission Officer and shall be responsible to the President of the Synod through the Chief Mission Officer shall be responsible~~ for domestic ministries that especially serve congregations and schools through the districts of the Synod. Such district ministries may include but not be limited to:

- Lutheran school ministries and accreditation
- human care and domestic mercy efforts
- stewardship
- evangelism
- church planting and revitalization
- youth ministry

(C) Office of International Mission

Rationale

Here also the current bylaw terminology (“relates to”) is unclear, as are the roles of the President and Chief Mission Officer of the Synod. Removing unclear terminology and incorporating additional wording regarding the responsibility of the Chief Mission Officer provides necessary clarity.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Office of International Mission

3.8.3.3 The Office of International Mission; implements the policies of which relates to the Board for International Mission ~~and implements its policies; under the supervision of the Chief Mission Officer shall be responsible to the President of the Synod through the Chief Mission~~

Officer and shall be responsible for the work of the Synod in foreign countries. Such responsibilities may include but not be limited to:

- placement and support of foreign missionaries
- establishment and maintenance of international schools
- coordination of international relief efforts
- policy recommendations to the Board for International Mission
- support and encouragement of international partner churches in conjunction with the Office of the President

(D) Duties of Chief Mission Officer

Rationale

The current wording of Bylaw 3.4.3.1, which speaks of the Chief Mission Officer along with others serving as staff resources, is confusing regarding his role. Removing the reference to “executive directors (if any) who report to the Chief Mission Officer” will help to clarify his responsibility to the mission boards.

In addition, the current wording of Bylaw 3.4.3.4, which speaks of the Chief Mission Officer meeting with “chief executives” of the commissions and synodwide corporate entities inaccurately suggests the top staff position of a commission is titled a “chief executive.” That person holds the title of “executive director.” The change recommended below will correct this reference.

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Chief Mission Officer

3.4.3.1 The Chief Mission Officer shall provide ~~and executive directors (if any) who report to the Chief Mission Officer shall serve as staff and other~~ resource(s) to the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission.

3.4.3.4 The Chief Mission Officer shall meet regularly with the chief executives executive directors of the commissions (if any) and the chief executives of synodwide corporate entities as the liaison for and at the direction of the President of the Synod. He shall work together closely with the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Administrative Officer in carrying out the programmatic, administrative, and financial functions of the national Synod.

(E) Fund-Raising Activities/Fund Allocation

Rationale

Current bylaws are contradictory regarding supervisory responsibilities for the fund-raising activities of the Synod. Bylaw 3.4.3.6 reads: “The Chief Mission Officer shall, on behalf of the President, supervise fund-raising activity of the national office according to policies established by the Board of Directors of the Synod.” Bylaw 3.3.1.3 (f) (2), on the other hand, currently reads: “[Through the Chief Mission Officer, the President shall] coordinate and supervise all fund-raising and planned giving activity by the national Synod and its agencies.” The following proposed deletion of a major portion of Bylaw 3.3.1.3 (f) will remove the existing contradictions and allow current Bylaws 3.4.3.6, 3.4.3.7, and 3.4.3.8 to govern the role of the Chief Mission Officer in the areas currently addressed by Bylaw 3.3.1.3 (f).

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

President

Responsibilities and Duties—Ecclesiastical and Administrative

3.3.1.3 The President shall have responsibilities and duties that are both ecclesiastical and administrative. ...

- (f) As ecclesiastical supervisor, he shall provide leadership to all officers, agencies, and national office staff of the Synod. ~~Through the Chief Mission Officer, he shall~~
- ~~(1) coordinate the content of communications, public relations, and news and information provided by the Synod;~~
 - ~~(2) oversee and coordinate (consulting with the Board of Directors of the Synod when necessary) and supervise all fund-raising and planned giving activity by the national Synod and its agencies; and~~
 - ~~(3) serve the Synod by providing leadership, coordination, and oversight for pre-seminary education programs, seminary education, and post-seminary continuing education, and by providing advocacy for pastoral education and health within the Synod.~~

(F) Role of Commission on Handbook When Bylaws Are Amended

Rationale

When the 2010 LCMS convention created the Commission on Handbook (Bylaw 3.9.4ff.) and assigned duties to the commission relating to proposed amendments to the Bylaws of the Synod (Bylaw 3.9.4.2 [a]), mention of those duties was not made in Bylaws 7.1.1 and 7.1.2. To eliminate confusion regarding the differing duties of the Commission on Handbook and the Commission on Constitutional Matters with respect to bylaw amendments, the Commission on Handbook proposes that Bylaws 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

7.1 Amendments to the Bylaws may be made using one of two procedures, provided they are not contrary to the Constitution of the Synod.

7.1.1 Amendments may be made by conventions of the Synod.

- (a) They shall be presented in writing to a convention of the Synod.
- (b) They shall be specified as bylaw amendments and considered by a convention floor committee.
- (c) They shall be examined by the Commission on Constitutional Matters prior to presentation to the convention to determine that they are not in conflict as to content with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.
- (d) They shall be examined by the Commission on Handbook prior to the convention to determine that they are in agreement in language (terminology) with the current Handbook.
- (e) They shall be adopted by the affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates present and voting.

7.1.2 In exceptional circumstances and upon the express direction of a convention of the Synod, amendments may be made by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors.

- (a) Such amendments to the Bylaws shall be necessary to implement resolutions adopted by a convention of the Synod.
- (b) Such amendments shall be drafted by the Secretary of the Synod and shall be reviewed by the Commission on Constitutional Matters and the Commission on Handbook.

Commission on Handbook

7-26

To Rescind 2010 Resolution 8-14A re Regional Vice-Presidential Elections

WHEREAS, We can determine no special benefit to God's churches in our Synod by the establishment of regional government; and

WHEREAS, The extra costs of regional government cannot be justified; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Indiana District of the LCMS memorialize the 2013 LCMS convention to rescind 2010 Resolution 8-14A.

Indiana District

7-27

To Amend Regional Vice-President Nominations Process

WHEREAS, The 2010 LCMS convention resolved in Res. 8-14A to create five geographic regions within the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The same resolution also resolved that the congregations of each region "nominate from their regions candidates for the position of Synod vice-president"; and

WHEREAS, The new regions encompass wide swaths of the USA and parts of Canada and involve numerous districts which do not meet in any forum together outside of the Synod convention; and

WHEREAS, These conditions make it very difficult for congregations to nominate pastors from throughout the region, since they know few pastors outside their district; therefore be it

Resolved, That at each district convention, two pastors from its region be nominated by each district to serve on a nomination ballot for the succeeding Synod convention; and be it further

Resolved, That every name that is properly qualified and selected by the various conventions be placed on this nomination ballot; and be it finally

Resolved, That this ballot be submitted to the Synod nomination committee to gather the appropriate biographical information for the delegates to the Synod convention.

Peace Lutheran Church
Hewitt, Texas

7-28

To Amend Synod Bylaws re Nominations for District Officer and Board Positions

WHEREAS, The Mid-South District and many districts have previously adopted regional representation for vice-president and other commissioned or layperson positions on their district boards of directors to foster more localized relations with the congregations; and

WHEREAS, The 2010 Synod convention also adopted regional representation for its vice-presidents and board of directors for similar reasons (Bylaw 3.12.2.5); and

WHEREAS, In reviewing various districts' bylaw revisions prior to the district conventions during this district convention cycle, the Commission on Constitutional Matters has rendered the binding opinion that Synod Bylaws 4.3.1 and 4.3.3 as currently written allow for nominations from the entire clergy roster of the Synod and not only from within each district or its regions for the offices of district president, vice-presidents, secretary, and circuit counselors, rather than allowing a district to restrict nominations for those positions within a district to those on the clergy roster within that district and its own regions; and

WHEREAS, Districts might not find it as expedient for a clergyman, commissioned minister, or layperson outside of their district to have the familiarity of their own district's organization and local conditions when considering nominations for their localized offices such as vice-presidents, as well as district president, secretary, circuit counselors, and commissioned or lay members of boards of directors; and

WHEREAS, A district is “the Synod itself performing the functions of the Synod” (Bylaw 4.1.1.1); and

WHEREAS, “Each district is at liberty to adopt such bylaws and pass such resolutions as it deems expedient for its conditions, provided that such bylaws and resolutions do not conflict with the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Synod” (Art. XII 2); and

WHEREAS, Districts might find it expedient to require that their nominations for officers be from within that district and/or its regions to foster their local connections with the congregations in that district; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Mid-South District, meeting in convention, memorialize the 2013 Synod convention to amend Bylaws 4.3.1 and 4.3.3 to allow districts, if they so desire, to restrict nominations for such district offices as outlined in Bylaw 4.3.1 to the clergy roster from that district and/or its own geographic regions; and be it further

Resolved, That the Mid-South District, meeting in convention, request that the Commission on Handbook, according to Bylaw 3.9.4.2 (e), review Bylaws 4.3.1 and 4.3.3 together with Bylaws 3.12.2.5 and 3.3.4.1 and propose bylaw amendments to the 2013 Synod convention to allow districts, as they find expedient, to restrict nominations for any or all of these clergy positions from the clergy roster or, similarly, commissioned or lay positions on boards of directors, to be from within that particular district and/or its own regions.

Mid-South District

7-29

To Grant Representation at District Conventions to Each Congregation of Multipoint Parishes

WHEREAS, Congregations which form multipoint parishes (dual, tri-point, etc.) do so for the purpose of having a called pastor serving the congregations of the multipoint parish; and

WHEREAS, Congregations of a multipoint parish do not merge together to form one congregation; and

WHEREAS, Each congregation of a multipoint parish is the Church in that location because Christ is there giving His gifts through Word and Sacrament; and

WHEREAS, Each congregation of a multipoint parish operates with its own constitution and bylaws; and

WHEREAS, Each congregation of a multipoint parish elects its own officers; and

WHEREAS, The restructuring of the LCMS now allows each congregation of the Synod through its delegate to the district convention to cast a vote for the election of the Synod President; and

WHEREAS, The CCM has ruled that multipoint parishes are allowed only one delegate and only one alternate delegate to represent the multipoint parish at district conventions; and

WHEREAS, This CCM ruling has disallowed some congregations representation at district conventions; and

WHEREAS, This CCM ruling now denies some congregations the ability to cast a ballot for the election of the Synod President; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS consider granting suffrage to all congregations of the Synod for the purpose of delegate representation at district conventions, which thereby permits all congregations to cast a ballot for the election of the Synod President.

Indiana District

7-30

To Amend Constitution to Grant a Lay Vote to Every Congregation at District Conventions

Preamble

When Jesus directs those attempting to admonish an erring brother, He states that the final attempt of such admonition is to take the matter before the church (Matt. 18:17). To that assembly Jesus predicates the authority to exercise the Office of the Keys saying, “And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 18:17b–18 ESV). This God-given authority is not limited by the size of a congregation, for Jesus goes on to add a clear promise to be with even the smallest assembly or congregation: “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them” (Matt. 18:19–20 ESV).

The Lutheran Church in general and the LCMS in particular have always held the autonomy of the congregation in high esteem. The Confessions of the Lutheran Church testify to the authority given by Christ to the church as recorded in the Scriptures. Particularly, the above-mentioned verses of Matthew 18 are cited in the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* defending the church’s right of calling ministers (Tr. 24, *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*). Later, it is made clear that this authority comes down to each congregation: “Therefore when the regular bishops become unwilling to administer ordination, the churches retain their own right [to ordain ministers]. Wherever the church is, there is the authority to administer the Gospel” (Tr. 66–67).

When the question of church and ministry was raised in the early days of our Synod’s history, Pastor C. F. W. Walther expressed the urgency of clarifying the scriptural position on the matter, in part because of its implications for church polity (cf. Walther’s preface to the first edition of *Church and Ministry*, especially page 10 in J. T. Mueller’s translation published by CPH in 1987). Because of the divine institution of the church and the Office of the Holy Ministry, the LCMS has consistently upheld the temporal right of a congregation to have a say in the business of the Synod, and this say is not limited to pastoral representation but has also included the laity. In recent times, the voice of the congregation has been heard through the voting of two delegates appointed by a congregation to represent her at district conventions as well as at circuit forums, where representatives to Synod conventions are elected.

However, even though we acknowledge the God-given authority of each congregation, our Synod has not allowed certain congregations to be represented equally in the affairs of our Synod. As we walk together we have muted the voices of many congregations by calling a “dual or multiple congregation arrangement served by the same pastor” a parish and limiting each parish in such a context to one pastoral and one lay vote (CCM Opinion 03-2327, “Voting Rights of Congregations”). In one extreme case, four congregations served jointly by two pastors have been allowed a total of two votes at district meetings (CCM Opinion 09-2545, “Voting Rights of Congregations”).

By disenfranchising certain congregations who hold membership in the Synod, we have acted inconsistently on a number of levels.

- Though we confess no divinely appointed form of church polity, denying some congregations the right to the same representation that other

congregations have in matters of the Synod is at best at a disconnect with our theological understanding of a congregation's embodiment of the catholicity of the Church.

- In some matters of the Synod that are dealt with on a congregational level, every congregation is allowed to speak for herself. For example, ballots for the ratification of amendments to the Synod's constitution are sent to *every* congregation. However, in other matters, multiple congregations served jointly by one or more pastors are required to come together and speak with one voice thereby reducing the value of each congregation's voice, such as in the election of the Synod President as described in Bylaw 3.12.2.3.
- In regard to voting at district conventions, the term parish has come to mean a "dual or multiple congregation arrangement served by the same pastor;" but the majority of times it is used in the *Handbook* it is used synonymously with the term congregation, for example in the following titles: "director of parish music" and "parish assistant." Such servants of the church are certainly not limited to settings where two or more congregations have come together to call a pastor.
- Furthermore, if the term parish is used consistently, we must also reevaluate whom we elect to the CTCR, seeing as Bylaw 3.9.5.1 requires "Two ordained ministers who are *parish pastors*" (emphasis added). Likewise, Bylaw 3.7.1.3 directs the Board of Directors of the Synod to appoint "Two parish pastors" to serve on the board of directors of Concordia Plan Services.

The problems created by such a situation are only intensified when the congregations making up a multiple congregation parish lie in different circuits or even districts.

WHEREAS, The basic meaning of parish is more geographical than the basic meaning of congregation, (congregation membership is not limited by geography, and a parish would, strictly speaking, include many people [even members of other denominations, as well as unbelievers] who are not members of an LCMS congregation); and

WHEREAS, The presence of a pastor is not what determines the presence of a congregation. According to C. F. W. Walther's *Church and Ministry* (tr. J. T. Mueller) concerning the Church, Article VII, "As visible congregations that still have the Word and the sacraments essentially according to God's Word bear the name 'church' because of the true invisible church of sincere believers that is found in them, so also they possess the authority that Christ has given to His whole church, on account of the true visible church hidden in them, even if there were only two or three [believers]" (emphasis added); and

WHEREAS, The polity of the LCMS is based on congregations and not on parishes; and

WHEREAS, The emphasis of our polity on the representation of congregations is intrinsically connected to the scriptural and confessional understanding of a congregation bearing all of the characteristics of the church; and

WHEREAS, The restructuring of the LCMS passed by the delegates at the 2010 convention included the provision that the congregations of the Synod would directly vote for the Synod President; and

WHEREAS, Requiring that a congregation's two votes for the Synod President be cast by those individuals who represented the congregation at the previous district convention disenfranchises most congregations in so-called multiple parishes who are forced to share representation at district conventions; and

WHEREAS, The idea of congregations electing the Synod President enhances the representative nature of this election; and

WHEREAS, The use of the term parish has led to confusion and the denial of voting rights to certain congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That all organized congregations that hold membership in the Synod be granted the opportunity to be represented by a lay delegate and a pastoral delegate at district conventions, circuit forums, and regional caucuses; and be it further

Resolved, That one pastor may represent more than one congregation with a single vote; and be it finally

Resolved, That Article V A of the Synod Constitution be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

All organized congregations that have joined the Synod hold voting membership. At the meetings of the districts of the Synod, every congregation ~~or parish~~ is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate. In the case of a single pastor representing two or more congregations, no individual shall cast more than one vote. At the meetings of the Synod, a number of congregations shall form a group which shall be represented by two voting delegates, one a pastor and one a lay delegate.

Oklahoma District

7-31

To Amend Art. VIII ("Synod Meetings") and Bylaw 3.2.4 ("Terms of Office")

WHEREAS, A four-year cycle that begins with the grassroots of the Synod will encourage a convention culture characterized by an intentional focus on the church's common mission and confession, on contemporary issues faced by the church, and on theology, nurture, edification, inspiration, and worship; and

WHEREAS, A change to a four-year cycle allows for the central role of congregations in all four years of the cycle; and

WHEREAS, It is desirable to be the best stewards of both the time and the money of the members of the congregations of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Significant economic savings will be realized by the congregations of the Synod being assessed for a district and a national convention every four years rather than every three years; and

WHEREAS, The importance of matters coming from a congregation, a circuit forum, or a district convention to a convention of the Synod is well served by a four-year cycle; and

WHEREAS, The terminology of Constitution Art. VIII A and B needs to be updated; therefore be it

Resolved, That in the four-year cycle, circuits may hold theological convocations in year one; districts shall hold theological convocations in year two; district conventions shall be held in year three; and the Synod convention shall be held in year four; and be it further

Resolved, That Constitution Art. VIII A and B be amended accordingly:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Article VIII Synodical Meetings Conventions of the Synod

A. Time and Legality of Meetings

1. The Synod convenes every ~~three~~four years for its regular ~~meeting~~convention.
2. For a legal convention a constitutional ~~convocation~~calling of the ~~meeting~~convention and the presence of at least one-fourth of the constitutionally elected voting ~~representatives~~delegates are necessary.

B. Special Sessions Conventions of the Synod

1. The Synod may ~~under circumstances~~ call a special ~~session~~convention if two-thirds of the voting ~~representatives~~delegates present so decide.

2. In cases of urgent necessity, a special session/convention may be called by the President with the consent of two-thirds of the district presidents or by three-fourths of the district presidents without the consent of the President; however, all congregations and other members of the Synod must be notified 30 days in advance and told for what purpose this extra ~~meeting~~convention is being convened;

And be it finally

Resolved, That Synod Bylaw 3.2.4 be amended accordingly:

3.2.4 The term of office of all elected officers of the Synod (Bylaw 3.2.1) shall be threefour years; of the elected members of the Board of Directors and all other boards and commissions of the Synod, sixeight years; of all members of college and university boards, commissions, and standing committees, threefour years, and of all appointed members of boards, commissions, and standing committees, threefour years, unless these Bylaws specifically provide otherwise.

Pacific Hills, Omaha, NE; Nebraska District

7-32

To Adopt Four-Year Convention Cycle

Rationale

At the 2010 LCMS convention, the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance proposed a change in the cycle of district and national conventions (Res. 8-18). Its purpose was to accomplish three objectives:

1. Provide a structure that creates a convention culture in the church that uses the Word of God as an instrument of the Holy Spirit and His power in conversation, discussion, and convincing [*“...We have merely the power to advise one another, that we only have the power of the Word and of convincing”* (C. F. W. Walther, first Presidential address)];
2. Provide economic savings; and
3. Provide adequate time for church representatives to implement the work of the church at each level of governance.

The 2010 LCMS convention floor committee recommended amending the cycle of district and national conventions from three years to four years. The resolution failed to receive the required two-thirds vote for constitutional amendments (Yes, 680; No, 495; 2010 Proceedings, pp. 167–169).

The above three objectives are deemed important, urgent, and desirable for the life of the Synod.

WHEREAS, The Synod is so convinced of the power and authority of the Word that it believes it can accomplish its mission primarily through mutual encouragement and support based on that Word, rather than by organizational authority and control; and

WHEREAS, The provisions or arrangements to influence one another by the power of the Word, including mutual encouragement and support based on the Word, includes forums, convocations, conventions, and conferences; and

WHEREAS, A four-year cycle that begins with the grassroots of the Synod will encourage a convention culture characterized by an intentional focus on the church’s common mission and confession; on contemporary issues faced by the church; and on theology, nurture, edification, inspiration, and worship; and

WHEREAS, A change to a four-year cycle allows for the central role of congregations to be enhanced in all four years of the cycle; and

WHEREAS, Districts and circuits are component parts of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Congregations, which historically are the basic unit of the Synod, influence and convince one another by the power of the

Word through the structural channels of the circuits, districts, and national Synod, which structure is intended to broaden and amplify the participation and voice of the congregations as well as provide support to each congregation by the Synod as a whole; and

WHEREAS, 2010 Res. 8-02A resolved to restore circuits to their primary purpose of walking together “for mutual care, support, advice, study [in-depth discussion of theological and missiological issues], ecclesiastical encouragement, service, coordination, resources, and counsel—all for the sake of greater congregational participation in God’s mission” (Bylaw 5.1.1); and

WHEREAS, The importance of generative leadership and matters coming from a congregation, a circuit forum (influenced by the circuit theological convocations), or a district convention (influenced by the district and circuit theological convocations) to a convention of the national Synod is well served by a four-year cycle; and

WHEREAS, A process is in place for the grassroots engagement of congregations, circuits, and districts in identifying and developing Synod-wide mission and ministry emphases (Synod priorities and goals) on a cycle consistent with the convention schedule and which will provide a common focus for the entire LCMS as we engage in ministry together; and

WHEREAS, It is desirable to be the best stewards of both the time and the money of the congregations, districts, and national Synod; and

WHEREAS, The potential for significant economic savings would be realized through congregations of Synod being assessed for a district and national convention every four years rather than every three years; and

WHEREAS, Once decisions are made at each level of governance, a four-year cycle gives elected officials sufficient time to implement the work of the church at each level; and

WHEREAS, This recommendation of changing to a four-year cycle received 69 percent agreement at the 2009 district conventions; and

WHEREAS, A change in the convention cycle requires amendment of the Synod’s Constitution (Art. VIII A and B); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS adopt a four-year cycle for district and national conventions; and be it further

Resolved, That in the four-year cycle, circuits are encouraged to hold theological convocations in year one; districts shall hold theological convocations in year two; district conventions shall be held in year three; and the national Synod convention shall be held in year four; and be it further

Resolved, That Constitution Art. VIII A and B be amended to read as follows:

Article VIII Synodical Meetings Conventions of the National Synod

A. Time and Legality of Meetings

1. The Synod convenes every ~~three~~ four years for its regular convention.
2. For a legal convention a constitutional ~~convocation~~ calling of the meeting convention and the presence of at least one-fourth of the constitutionally elected voting representatives delegates are necessary.

B. Special Conventions of the Synod

1. The Synod may ~~under circumstances~~ call a special session convention if two-thirds of the voting representatives delegates present so decide.
2. In cases of urgent necessity, a special session convention may be called by the President with the consent of two-thirds of the district presidents or by three-fourths of the district presidents without the consent of the President; however, all congregations and other members of the Synod must be notified 30 days in advance and told for what purpose this extra

meeting convention is being convened.

and be it further

Resolved, That current Bylaw 4.9.1 also be amended as follows and in effect only if and when amended Article VIII is ratified by the congregations of the Synod (effective immediately):

4.9 Other District Meetings

4.9.1 ~~Other meetings~~ Meetings other than official district conferences, such as district theological convocations, also may consider matters of doctrine, exegesis, and practical theology, and may be used for promotion of the basieto promote the activities of the Synodchurch. Such meetings, including circuit conferences, shall not be regarded as official conferences.

4.9.1.1 During the second year of the quadrennium following a national convention, districts shall hold district theological convocations, gatherings of all member congregations of the districts.

(a) They shall provide a setting under the power and authority of God's Word for in-depth study and discussion (mutual conversation and consolation) of theological, missiological, and contemporary issues before the Synod.

(b) They shall also provide encouragement and resources for congregations and circuit forums to generate helpful, effective, and responsible overtures to district and national conventions of the Synod.

(c) The district president as the district ecclesiastical supervisor serves as chairman of the convocation and has the primary responsibility for setting the agenda, in consultation with the district praesidium and the circuit counselors of the district. He may consult with and utilize the resources of the President of the Synod, the Council of Presidents, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, and the faculties of the seminaries and universities of the Synod.

4.9.1.2 (a) ~~Pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, certified lay ministers, and parish assistants are encouraged to meet also jointly for the purpose of discussing doctrinal, professional, and practical matters.~~

4.9.1.3 ~~Ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—commissioned~~ ordained ministers are also encouraged to organize smaller meetings in addition to their official conferences.

4.9.1.4 (c) ~~Intersynodical conferences~~ Conferences with other church bodies for the study of theology are desirable and are encouraged to be held on a regular basis. ~~They also are not official conferences.~~

and be it further

Resolved, That if and when amended Article VIII is ratified by the congregations of the Synod, all district and national officers, as well as all board and commission members (all elected or appointed to positions in districts or the Synod) shall serve an additional year (effective immediately); and be it finally

Resolved, That the Commission on Handbook recommend any necessary or suggested bylaw changes for terms of office and term limits at the 2016 LCMS convention.

Texas District Board of Directors

7-33

To Adopt Four-Year Convention Cycle

Preamble

When dealing with the issue of frequency of district and national conventions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance in 2010 proposed a change in the convention cycle that aims to accomplish three important objectives:

1. Provide a structure that creates a convention culture in the church

that uses the Word of God as an instrument of the Holy Spirit and His power in conversation, discussion, and convincing, rather than simply serving as a culture of voting power or legislation.

2. Provide economic savings.
3. Provide adequate time for church representatives to implement the work of the church at each level of governance.

For those reasons, there is value in reconsidering a four-year convention cycle.

WHEREAS, A four-year cycle that begins with the grassroots of the Synod will create a convention culture characterized by an intentional focus on the church's common mission and confession, on contemporary issues faced by the church, and on theology, nurture, edification, inspiration, and worship; and

WHEREAS, A change to a four-year cycle allows for the central role of congregations in all four years; and

WHEREAS, It is desirable to be the best stewards of both the time and the money of the members of the congregations of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Significant economic savings will be realized by the congregations of the Synod being assessed for a district and a national convention every four years rather than every three years; and

WHEREAS, The importance of matters coming from a congregation, a circuit forum, or a district convention to a convention of the national Synod is well served by a four-year cycle; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod adopt a four-year cycle for district and national conventions; and be it further

Resolved, That in the four-year cycle, circuits may hold theological convocations in year one; districts shall hold theological convocations in year two; district conventions shall be held in year three; and the national Synod convention shall be held in year four; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws be amended to reflect a four-year convention cycle and terms of office.

Pacific Southwest District; Southeastern District

7-34

To Restore Former Adjudication Process

WHEREAS, Prior to 1992, the Synod was blessed with a system of dispute resolution that was deemed to be biblical and fair and that safeguarded the rights of individual members of the Synod, in spite of the fact that the Synod did not always prevail in disputes against individual members; and

WHEREAS, Prior to 1992, the Commission of Adjudication and the Commission of Appeals were elected by the Synod convention in a process deemed to be biblical and impartial; and

WHEREAS, Now "reconcilers" are appointed; and

WHEREAS, There is no guarantee that the dispute resolution panels will include pastors, in spite of Augsburg Confession XXVIII 21, which says that the jurisdiction to judge doctrine and to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel belongs to the office of the ministry by divine right; and

WHEREAS, Some officials, clergy, and others strenuously oppose going back to the former adjudication procedure lest they be subject to scriptural rebuke for their sinful actions, *i.e.*, worshiping with non-Christians, engaging in unionistic activities with heterodox church bodies, allowing women to preach at worship services, etc.; and

WHEREAS, Recent events and the subsequent division and lawsuits which continue to tear apart our Synod and cost thousands of dollars all bear testimony to the need to restore the former adjudication

process with its checks and balances, which will facilitate bringing about peace to our Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention restore the former adjudication process as found in the 1989 *Handbook*.

Salem Lutheran Church
Taylorsville, NC

7-35

To Provide Congregational Record of Dispute Resolution Panel Decisions

WHEREAS, The Synod *Handbook* does not require the decisions of a Synod dispute resolution as described in the Rules of Procedure 1.10.18.1 to be published in the official minutes of the congregations involved in the dispute; therefore be it

Resolved, That all decisions of a Dispute Resolution Panel be recorded in the official minutes of each party's congregation during a regularly called council or voters assembly with both parties present.

Zion Lutheran Church
Aniwa, Wisconsin

7-36

To Provide Instruction to Convention Floor Committees

WHEREAS, The floor committees for LCMS conventions ("floor committees" or "committee") serve an essential function in preparing usable resolutions for consideration at LCMS conventions ("convention"); and

WHEREAS, Several overtures may be submitted to a convention on the same or a closely related subject, and those overtures may conflict or be in direct opposition with each other; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the floor committee should be primarily to clarify and organize multiple and potentially conflicting overtures into usable resolutions for action; and

WHEREAS, Floor committees have not always been true to the spirit or intent of the overtures, at times submitting resolutions to the convention floor that are in direct opposition to the overtures or significantly changing wording to the point that the intent or spirit of the overture is lost; and

WHEREAS, Congregations and circuits and districts should have the right to be heard, with their ideas or concerns discussed and decided on the convention floor; therefore be it

Resolved, That the right of all congregations and circuits and districts to have their ideas and concerns heard and decided in convention be affirmed, without undue alteration by floor committees; and be it further

Resolved, That floor committees submit all resolutions in a manner which complies with the spirit and intent of an overture unless that overture is outright sinful or openly offensive; and be it further

Resolved, That floor committees not be allowed to decline overtures in which they find disagreement; rather, the committee should submit those overtures in total to the convention without committee comment, for the convention to either approve or decline; and be it further

Resolved, That where multiple overtures are to be combined into a single resolution for the convention, that the predominance of the majority of the overtures set the spirit and intention for the resolution presented; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2013 LCMS convention thank and encourage those who work diligently on floor committees for their very essential work.

Prince of Peace
Anaheim, CA

7-37

To Include Past Presidents in Synod Conventions

WHEREAS, Psalm 133:1–3 encourages the people of God in saying, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows His blessing, even life forevermore"; and

WHEREAS, The current emphasis of Synod is Witness, Mercy, Life Together; and

WHEREAS, Witness is internal to the Synod and external to the world and Life Together encourages us, in the words of Christ, to "love one another" (John 13:34–35); and

WHEREAS, We understand that transitions in leadership must occur as in the case of Moses and Joshua, as well as in Elijah and Elisha, and in those biblical accounts the mantle is passed from the senior to the junior; and

WHEREAS, Leaders by their example as they follow Christ (1 Cor. 11:1) are worthy of double honor (1 Tim. 5:17), are the model of godly living, and motivate followers to do the same; therefore be it

Resolved, That at Synod expense the living past presidents of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be invited and encouraged to attend the Synod in convention and to bring words of welcome and blessing to the Synod in convention, current president, and administration; and be it further

Resolved, That past presidents of the Synod be invited to participate in the installation of the newly elected President of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for all their leaders, especially the presidents in attendance, with the singing of the Doxology.

Florida-Georgia District

7-38

To Provide Alternative Voting on Memorials, Commendations, or Expressions of Sentiment

WHEREAS, In the 21st century, God has blessed our land and church with amazing communication technology; and

WHEREAS, Gathering in convention is extremely expensive and requires expenditure of increasingly scarce financial resources; and

WHEREAS, Reducing the time spent at convention would reduce the cost of convention and preserve resources for other uses; and

WHEREAS, More deliberate transitions allowing congregations to adapt to alternate means of conducting church business might be prudent; and

WHEREAS, Congregations are generally unaware of overtures that commend, memorialize, or express sentiment; therefore be it

Resolved, That overtures that commend, memorialize, or express sentiment should not be actions taken by the church in convention; and be it further

Resolved, That overtures that commend, memorialize, or express sentiment be presented to individual congregations for their information and action; and be it further

Resolved, That a statement of purpose and a fiscal impact statement and a rebuttal/support statement from church officials accompany the overtures to the congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That such overtures be submitted to the district for distribution no less than nine months prior to the convention; and be it further

Resolved, That district officials develop a clear and simple process with timelines for amending overtures; and be it further

Resolved, That district officials establish the timeline, the process, and the method for congregations to individually submit their final vote on all such overtures; and be it finally

Resolved, That a final disposition report of such overtures be disseminated to congregations and be reported upon at the convention.

Circuit 10 Forum
Northwest District

7-39

To Provide Alternative Voting Procedures for Congregations

WHEREAS, In the 21st century, God has blessed our land and church with amazing communication technology; and

WHEREAS, Gathering in convention is extremely expensive and requires the expenditure of increasingly scarce financial resources; and

WHEREAS, Current Synod Bylaws provide for the election of the Synod president at the congregational level; and

WHEREAS, Most congregations already have the ability to participate fully and vote by electronic or digital means; and

WHEREAS, Congregations are required to establish a procedure for complying with Synod Bylaw voting requirements; and

WHEREAS, Our growing church and shrinking resources place continuing pressure to expand our representative governance and thereby reduce rather than expand personal involvement in the affairs of the church; therefore be it

Resolved, That district officials explore or develop processes for congregational voting on issues in conjunction with convention; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations prepare for and develop individual transition and resource plans for future voting procedures.

Circuit 10
Northwest District

7-40

To Allow E-Meetings for Voting by Circuits, Districts, and Synod Agencies

WHEREAS, The Synod requires specific meetings of circuits and various other entities for the purposes of voting; and

WHEREAS, There are instances where circuits are geographically quite large and driving to a meeting for voting can require extensive travel in order to attend a meeting that may be quite brief; and

Whereas, We are called to be good stewards of our time and resources; and

WHEREAS, There are electronic means to ensure secure, private, and confidential voting by teleconference or e-meetings that utilize the Internet and other technologies; and

WHEREAS, There is a place, time, and need for face-to-face meetings among us, but the currently understood requirement for all circuit forum meetings to be face-to-face imposes an unnecessary and burdensome requirement on our geographically large circuits and likely other entities as well; therefore be it

Resolved, That circuits, districts, the Synod, and Synod agencies be encouraged to consider e-meeting technologies when their use may save substantial resources.

Florida-Georgia District

7-41

To Establish Clarity in Voting for Synod President

WHEREAS, Each congregation or parish now has two votes for the election of the Synod President; and

WHEREAS, One of those votes is the ordained minister, *i.e.*, the pastor of the congregations; and

WHEREAS, Pastors may accept calls and congregations enter vacancy at any given time; and

WHEREAS, The majority of congregations or parishes have only one pastor and would then naturally have no ability for an alternate pastoral delegate; therefore be it

Resolved, That congregations should not be disenfranchised a pastoral vote simply because they are on vacancy; and be it further

Resolved, That the man in the position of senior or sole pastor at the time of the election shall be the voting pastor for the congregation or parish; and be it finally

Resolved, That the following section in the Synod *Handbook* be revised as follows:

3.12.2.3 Four weeks prior to the national convention, the Secretary of the Synod, ~~using lists of delegates in attendance at the prior year's district conventions as submitted by the secretaries of the districts,~~ shall provide, via a secure and verifiable method, opportunity for two voting delegates from each congregation. The pastoral delegate shall be the pastor of the congregation or parish at that time of the Synod election, or a designated pastor from among a multipastoral staff. The lay delegate shall be the person who was in attendance at the his or her previous district convention and who remains a member of the congregation(s) they he or she represented. These delegates are to vote for one of the candidates for President. If one or both delegates are unavailable, congregations or parishes shall be provided opportunities to select substitute voters. The Secretary shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors of the Synod, obtain the assistance necessary to accomplish this task.

Board of Directors
New Jersey District

7-42

To Strengthen District Boards of Directors

WHEREAS, The boards of directors of districts are to be commended for their fine work within each district; and

WHEREAS, The districts of the LCMS find that new challenges and opportunities are facing them as they seek to sustain their service to the Synod in an increasingly challenging and exciting time of theological and missional opportunities; and

WHEREAS, District boards of directors are blessed when they include members with a specific set of skills, including knowledge in the areas of theology, mission, finance, law, investments, human

resources, facilities, fund development, and the administration of complex organizations; and

WHEREAS, The districts manage significant operational budgets and provide significant support to the operations and mission of the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Effective governance of the Synod's districts requires competent leadership in all skill sets, and boards of directors need authority to appoint additional directors to complement the skills of the directors elected by district conventions; and

WHEREAS, Currently, item 5 of Synod Bylaw 3.3.4.1 authorizes the elected members of the Synod Board of Directors to appoint up to three (3) at-large laypersons to obtain needed additional skill sets (legal, finance, investment, administration, etc.); and

WHEREAS, Currently, all elected and appointed board of directors members hold membership in the LCMS, and LCMS membership will continue to be required for all elected and appointed district board members; therefore be it

Resolved, That Synod Bylaw 4.5.1 be amended to read as follows:

4.5.1 Each district shall elect a board of directors, the size and composition of which shall be determined by the Bylaws of the district. The district board of directors shall also have the authority to choose to appoint up to three (3) voting lay members to the board to obtain additional skill sets (legal, finance, investment, administration, etc.) It shall have such powers and duties as are accorded to it by the Constitution, Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, resolutions, and policies of the Synod, as well as those of the district.

Nebraska District

7-43

To Establish Term Limits for District Presidents

WHEREAS, All LCMS district presidents serve in a deliberative body known as the Council of Presidents; and

WHEREAS, The standard governing the number of possible years a district president may serve as a member of the Council of Presidents varies from district to district; and

WHEREAS, The existence of varying possible lengths of service institutionalizes a system of inequality within the Council of Presidents; and

WHEREAS, A spirit of equality and fundamental fairness should permeate all our actions, especially those of our district and Synod leadership; and

WHEREAS, Leadership development is encouraged by regular leadership changes; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod establish a maximum number of years of service for all district presidents; and be it further

Resolved, That the maximum number of years for all district presidents be limited to twelve (12); and be it finally

Resolved, That this overture go into immediate effect, requiring all districts of the LCMS to make the necessary changes to their bylaws prior to the 2015 conventions of the Synod's districts.

Board of Directors
English District

7-44

To Apply Conditions of Synod Membership to Certain Congregations

WHEREAS, Congregations of the Synod occasionally—for example, after years of decline in their number of members—wish to continue existing formally even though they have ceased to have church services; and

WHEREAS, The Synod's Constitution lists as a condition both for "acquiring and holding membership in the Synod," among others, "[e]xclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school" (Art. VI 4), which involves *using* the items listed for worship and instruction in the faith within congregations; and

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 1.3.1 notes that "Individual Christians are joined together in a worshiping and serving community, the congregation," further indicating the Synod's anticipation that corporate worship actually takes place in congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Missouri District Board of Directors memorialize the Synod to

1. Declare of its congregations where church services are not conducted: these congregations are acting contrary to the conditions of membership in the Synod (see Bylaw 2.14.1); and
2. Encourage any such member congregation to consult with its district president to assess whether
 - a. It likely will again become "a worshiping and serving community" where Word and Sacrament are regularly proclaimed and administered; or
 - b. Circumstances require bringing the congregation's history to a thankful and peaceful close.

Missouri District Board of Directors

7-45

To Move 2016 Convention to 2017 in Honor of 500th Anniversary of Lutheran Reformation

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod national convention is scheduled to meet in 2016; and

WHEREAS, The Year of our Lord 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS would save substantial resources that could be used to fund various missions and outreach by moving the convention back one year; therefore be it

Resolved, That the date for the national convention of the LCMS be changed to 2017; and be it further

Resolved, That a national thank offering be gathered for the 2017 LCMS convention that will be designated to support seminary education.

Board of Directors
South Wisconsin District

7-46

To Reject Blue Ribbon Task Force Recommended Wording Change to Article VII

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture does not establish a worldly authoritative structure for the Church on earth: "One is your Master, even Christ and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:8–10); "The

princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you” (Matt. 20:25–26); and

WHEREAS, Article VII of the Constitution of the LCMS has provided solid evangelical freedom to our congregations since 1847; and

WHEREAS, The heart of confessional Lutheranism is encompassed within the Holy Scriptures and confessional documents of the Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, A congregation’s responsibilities to honor and uphold the Synod’s resolutions regarding matters of doctrinal importance are already addressed in Article II of the LCMS Constitution; and

WHEREAS, It is noted that the 2010 Blue Ribbon Task Force Report on Synod Structure and Governance (BRTFSSG) Report (R8-32), calls for a Synod-wide study of the wording in Article VII and recommended additions to Article VII, opening the possibility for conflict with Article II, maybe even restricting or imposing authorized adaphora through convention resolutions; and

WHEREAS, The proposed BRTFSSG amendment offered in R8-32 introduces wording such as “All members of the Synod ... make a ... mutual covenant of love,” which is ambiguous and reminiscent of Reformed covenant theology, since our churches are not constrained to walk together should irreconcilable differences arise; and

WHEREAS, The BRTFSSG recommendation also introduces such wording as “abide by” in relation to “convention resolutions,” which are given the status of “the collective will of the Synod,” thereby conflicting with or diametrically opposing the intent of section A, which

guarantees that Synod “is but an advisory body. Accordingly, no resolution ... is of binding force ...”; and

WHEREAS, The BRTFSSG proposed amendment offered in R8-32 also introduces the wording “Pledge ... support of the Synod’s efforts to carry out its mission and purpose,” which seems to suggest a shift in the current “from the heart” stewardship practices; and

WHEREAS, The BRTFSSG proposed amendment offered in R8-32 imposes on Synod members a “promise” that congregations or pastors who “find themselves to be in disagreement with Synod’s actions or positions” will “follow the Synod’s authorized procedures,” this wording appearing to shift authority over accountability from the congregation, gathered around Word and Sacrament ministry, to the Synod, which is to be only an advisory body; and

WHEREAS, There is significant work to be done to fine tune the structural changes made during the 2010 convention, and any attempted changes to Article VII will only distract and divide at this time; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS Oklahoma District convention in 2012 adopt the following overture to the 2013 LCMS convention, that the Synod

reject the proposed wording of the BRTFSSG amendment offered in R8-32;

resolve that only the current word “inexpedient” be amended to read “unsuitable,” and that otherwise no changes be made to Article VII at this time; and

reaffirm the congregational polity of LCMS congregations.

Oklahoma District

APPENDIX I

OPINIONS OF COMMISSION ON CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Questions Submitted by Review Panel (10-2579)

In a letter received via e-mail on May 5, 2010, the hearing facilitator of a dispute resolution Review Panel submitted on behalf of the panel (Bylaw 1.10.18 [h]) two questions for response by the commission.

Question 1: Is it mandated that an LCMS congregation go through the reconciliation process of the Synod before the removal of a servant from his divine call?

Opinion: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod do not require a congregation to go through the “reconciliation process” before the removal of a called worker (“servant”) from a divine call. This subject is not addressed in either the Constitution or the Bylaws. Bylaw 1.10.9 states in part: “The congregation’s right of self-government shall be recognized. However, when a decision of a congregation is at issue [*i.e.*, already made], a Dispute Resolution Panel may review the decision of the congregation according to the Holy Scriptures and shall either uphold the action of the congregation or advise the congregation to review and revise its decision.” The purpose of the dispute resolution process is not to give advice prior to the making of a decision but rather to assist in resolving or reviewing disputes involving decisions or actions of parties after decisions have been made and/or actions taken.

Question 2: Does the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, or procedures provide guidelines for the removal of a called worker while he/she is on medical disability?

Opinion: The Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and *Standard Operating Procedures Manual* for Bylaw section 1.10 do not provide guidelines (requirements) for a process of removal of a called worker on medical disability.

(Adopted May 17, 2010)

Circuit Representation at National Conventions (10-2580)

In a June 1, 2010, e-mailed letter to the chairman of the commission, a district president submitted two questions regarding circuit representation at national conventions:

Question 1: Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (a) states, “Each electoral circuit shall meet at the call of the counselor(s) to elect its delegates not later than nine months prior to the opening day of the convention.”

If a circuit meets and elects its delegates after the deadline (in this specific instance, about one week after the deadline) and immediately reports its election to the district secretary according to Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (i), and if the provisions in Bylaw 3.1.3.2 were met, and if the reporting deadline set by the Secretary of the Synod to report delegates to his office is met, are the elected delegates eligible to serve?

Opinion: Bylaw 3.1.2.1 contains a series of requirements for the valid election of delegates to a national convention of the Synod. Prior opinions of the CCM have affirmed that an election failing to follow any of the requirements, including the time restrictions, is ineffective in the election of a delegate. One of the requirements for election of a delegate is that such election take place not later than nine (9) months prior to the opening day of the convention. An attempted election after the time deadline is therefore ineffective to elect a delegate.

As noted in the question, Bylaw 3.1.2.1(i) directs the circuit counselor to report the results of the election to the secretary of the district in writing immediately after the election, and Bylaw 3.1.3.2 then requires the secretary of the district to certify those elected to the Secretary of the Synod before the announced registration deadline, which deadline is not specified in the Bylaws. As such, the fact that the certification went to the secretary of the Synod by the arbitrary deadline set by him does not affect the validity or invalidity of the circuit’s election. Rather, the validity of the election is dependent on compliance with the provisions of Bylaw 3.1.2.1.

Bylaw 3.1.2.1(j) allows appointment by a district president in some instances of defective elections. However, in each of those prior instances considered by the CCM where that right was recognized, an election was held in a timely manner, but was defective in some other respect. In those instances where an election was not even held before the deadline, no “vacancy” has been previously recognized, and in fact a number of prior opinions reflect an express recognition that forfeiture of representation would be the natural result of failure to hold the timely election.

The failure to call the circuit meeting necessary to elect delegates is the responsibility of the circuit counselor and may be beyond the control of an individual congregation. However, each congregation should also be aware of the time deadlines set forth in the Bylaws, and, in order to assure its representation through the circuit, it is incumbent upon a congregation to encourage and cooperate with its circuit counselor to act in a timely fashion. While the Synod has covenanted with each congregation to allow representation through the process as set forth in the Bylaws, it is expected that member congregations will fulfill their obligations in order to preserve that representation.

Question 2: Bylaw 3.1.2.1(j) states, “If neither the delegate nor the alternate (pastoral or lay) can serve, the vacancy shall be filled by the district president in consultation with the respective circuit counselor(s).”

If the delegates mentioned above are not able to serve due to the late election (the failure of the counselor to carry out the provision of Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [a] in a timely fashion), does the district president have the right to appoint (fill the vacancy) under Bylaw 3.1.2.1(j)? If not, what alternative does the circuit have for representation?

Opinion: As discussed above, the Bylaws provide no direct remedy, and representation may be forfeit. The Synod in convention operates under accepted parliamentary rules, and the Committee for Registration, Credentials, and Elections is charged to review the credentials of delegates. Should a circuit not have properly credentialed delegates, any remedy is under the rules of parliamentary procedure, not the Bylaws themselves. In 1971, for example, when the SELC joined the LCMS after the deadline for selecting convention delegates, the issue of representation of the newly joined congregations was addressed by special resolution at the start of the convention.

(Adopted June 18, 2010)

Nominations Issues

During the Wednesday afternoon session (Session 8), questions arose regarding the appropriateness of floor nominations of individuals to positions for which the Synod in convention does not now have information with which to confirm the nominees’ qualifications to

serve. The issue was further complicated by the fact that the qualifications at issue were matters of civil law and not the Synod's bylaws.

At the time the issue surfaced, upon assertion by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) that it is required by regulations of the 50 states to do formal criminal and other regulatory related background checks on all members of its board of directors, Bylaw 1.2.1 (d) was read by a member of the commission, which states in part: "(4) The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in referencing the laws of the State of Missouri in these Bylaws and in the Synod's Articles of Incorporation, intends to acknowledge its responsibility to be subject to civil authority. In all such references, however, the Synod intends to retain all authority and autonomy allowed a church under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the State of Missouri."

Bylaw 3.12.3.6 (2007 *Handbook*, pp. 183f.) requires that the Committee for Convention Nominations publish a list of qualifications for each office. On page 45 of the committee's report, "Biographical Synopses and Statements of Nominees," the qualifications for the LCEF Board of Directors were provided. The background checks required for board positions were not included. Furthermore, the need for such checks was not communicated to the Secretary of the Synod or to the Committee for Convention Nominations. In fact, none of the names submitted by the committee for convention consideration underwent the required examination.

While it is the opinion of the Commission on Constitutional Matters that no candidacy for any office is proper unless the information provided to the convention confirms that the candidate in fact meets all qualifications for office, it is now clear that all qualifications for LCEF Board of Directors members were not disclosed in advance to the convention, and even those placed on the slate for board positions were not fully vetted (they were not submitted to a background check). Accordingly, should any candidate ultimately elected by the convention fail to pass the required regulatory checks, that person will not be allowed to assume office, and the Synod's process for filling vacancies will necessarily be used to fill that position.

The commission has met with LCEF representatives, the Committee for Convention Nominations, and the two delegates who placed two names in nomination from the floor to discuss this situation. The nominations committee and the LCEF will need to update the description of the qualifications for this and any other such positions for use by future conventions, as required by Bylaw 3.12.3.8 (*Handbook*, p. 184).

Based on these circumstances as described, the Commission on Constitutional Matters suggests that the assembly revisit the two nominations from the floor in question from Session 8.

(Adopted July 10–17, 2010)

Convention Issue re Bylaw Amendments

An issue was raised during the course of the convention as to the appropriateness of amendments from the floor. During Session 12, the commission provided the following statement to the convention:

Reverend Chairman, a member of the Commission on Constitutional Matters earlier read to the convention the provisions of Bylaw 7.1.1, found on page 201 of the *Handbook*, regarding the process for amending our Bylaws. After consultation between the President, the parliamentarian, and the commission, it is clear that a number of amendments to resolutions of the floor committees have been allowed without written submission to the convention, without prior review by the affected floor committee, and without prior review by the Commission on Constitutional Matters to determine that such amendment is not in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod. The most recent opinion of the commission regarding these requirements may be found in Opinion 07-2505, found on page 263 of the *Convention Workbook*.

The commission and the floor committees have been asked to review all such amendments previously made, and the commission has found them not to be in conflict with our Constitution and Bylaws. The convention is therefore now asked to acknowledge the earlier violations of this process, to reaffirm all existing work of the convention, and to recognize that any such issues will be dealt with under Res. 8-12A adopted earlier this morning.

The commission notes that by a vote of 973 to 60, the assembly agreed to the commission's conclusions, thereby acknowledging the earlier violations of the bylaw amendment process, reaffirming all existing work of the convention, and recognizing that any remaining issues will be dealt with under Res. 8-12A adopted during Session 11 of the convention.

(Adopted July 10–17, 2010)

Convention Arrangements and Participation

During the course of the convention, the President, the members of the commission, delegates, and others expressed concern and areas of concern or possible suggested improvements for future conventions be communicated to the appropriate person or entity for consideration before the next convention. Such areas of concern included:

- The election process as it relates to nominations from the floor.
- Allowing an individual stand for election to two positions which cannot be held at the same time without requiring the individual to make a choice between the positions in such timely fashion as will allow the convention to consider another person and thereby avoid a possible immediate vacancy.
- As reflected in the commission's minutes following the 2007 convention, the absence of a requirement in Bylaw 3.9.2.2.1 for the commission to examine floor amendments to the Constitution.
- A question whether Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) allows amendments from the floor.
- Bylaw 7.1.1 requirements for presentation of proposed bylaw amendments in writing for consideration by floor committees and examination by the commission prior to presentation to the convention resulted in confusion on several occasions during the 2007 convention. A motion was introduced and carried "to direct the Secretary to write a letter to the President suggesting that a rule be added to the Standing Rules for future conventions requiring that proposed bylaw amendments be printed in *Today's Business* prior to presentation to the convention." It was also suggested that a procedure be developed to inform the commission of all such proposals at each day's deadline for submission of business to *Today's Business*.
- Near the end of the convention and at the suggestion of the First Vice-President, the commission was seated at the front of the section set aside for district presidents and special advisory delegates so that the commission could more readily be found by delegates as needed and so that the commission could more readily be available to respond to inquiries from the floor.
- Whether motions, nominations, or proposed amendments by advisory delegates are matters of bylaw or solely matters of parliamentary interpretation.

(Adopted July 10–17, 2010)

Ecclesiastical Supervisory Responsibilities of a District President (10-2581)

In a September 4, 2010, e-mail, a district president submitted the following questions to the commission, also providing a brief background.

Question 1: The Synod's Bylaws state that I [as a district president] "shall supervise the doctrine, the life, and the official administration" of the ordained or commissioned ministers in my district (Bylaw 4.4.5). What ecclesiastical supervisory responsibilities do I hold regarding a congregation's doctrine and practice?

Opinion: Regarding the authority and responsibility of a district president, Article XII 7 of the Synod’s Constitution directs:

The district presidents shall, moreover, especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their district and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the congregations of their district. To this end they shall visit and, according as they deem it necessary, hold investigations in the congregations. Their assistants in this work are the circuit counselors, who therefore shall regularly make their reports to the district president.

Ecclesiastical supervision within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is defined in Bylaw 1.2.1 (g) as follows:

(g) *Ecclesiastical Supervision:* The responsibility, primarily of the President of the Synod and district presidents, to supervise on behalf of the Synod the doctrine, life, and administration of its members, officers, and agencies. Such supervision, subject to the provisions of the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, includes visitation, evangelical encouragement and support, care, protection, counsel, advice, admonition, and, when necessary, appropriate disciplinary measures to assure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are followed and implemented. Thus, ecclesiastical supervision is also the presenting, interpreting, and applying of the collective will of the Synod’s congregations. Ecclesiastical supervision does not include the responsibility to observe, monitor, control, or direct the day-to-day activities of individual members of the Synod, whether in the conduct of their work or in their private lives [cf. Bylaw 2.14.1 (a)]. Further, those constitutional articles and bylaws pertaining to ecclesiastical supervision shall determine the full definition of ecclesiastical supervision.

As the ecclesiastical supervisor of all members within his district—both individual and congregational members (see Constitution Art. V and Bylaw sections 2.3 and 2.6)—not only does a district president have supervision over the doctrine, life, and official administration of the ordained or commissioned ministers in his district under Bylaw 4.4.5, he has similar responsibilities with respect to member congregations. Bylaw 4.4.4 includes the following duties and authority:

The district president shall, in accordance with the Constitution of the Synod, in his ministry of ecclesiastical supervision visit the congregations of the district.

(a) He shall arrange in advance for an official visit to each congregation of his district.

...

(e) In his visits he shall include fraternal discussion in regard to worship and Communion attendance; participation by the congregation in missions and the work of the church at large; the congregation’s evangelism and education endeavors; its cultivation of sound stewardship principles; all aspects of compensation for professional church workers; the need for maintenance of purity of doctrine; the strengthening of the bond of Christian fellowship; and the provision of resources, opportunities, and assistance so God’s people can grow in their faith, hope, and love.

When a controversy exists within a congregation, Bylaw 4.4.6 grants further authority:

The district president, even without formal request therefor, may through the proper channels arrange for an official visit or investigation when a controversy arises in a congregation or between two or more congregations of the district or when there is evidence of a continuing unresolved problem in doctrine and practice.

(a) He shall ask for a full report on the case in order that he may have a clear understanding of the situation.

(b) If he authorizes anyone to represent him in such matters, his representative shall be accorded the same rights as the district president.

Further discussion of the authority and role of the district president in such internal disputes is discussed under question 2 below.

Beyond these specifically enumerated responsibilities of a district president, it should be noted that the Constitution of the Synod is also the constitution of each district. As set forth in Bylaw 4.1.1.2, “The Constitution of the Synod is also the constitution of each district. The Bylaws of the Synod shall be primarily the bylaws of the district.” In that regard, the ecclesiastical supervision duties of the President of the Synod as regards the Synod as a whole are also the ecclesiastical supervision duties of a district president in his district. Article XI B of the Constitution includes these duties and authority:

B. Duties of the President

...

3. The President has and always shall have the power to advise, admonish, and reprove. He shall conscientiously use all means at his command to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of the Synod.

4. The President shall see to it that the resolutions of the Synod are carried out.

A district president has primary responsibility to supervise the doctrine and practice of the congregations in his district, to advise and admonish, and, if necessary, to take action to discipline up to and including expulsion of a member under his supervision, whether individual or a congregation.

Question 2: Article VII 1 of the Synod’s Constitution notes that “the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers” and with respect to the right of self-government of the individual congregation “it is but an advisory body.” Does the Synod, then, have an ecclesiastical authority with which to oversee the doctrine and practice of its member congregations? If so, what is that authority and how is it exercised?

Opinion: Yes, for such authority see the answer to question 1. Regarding the relationship of the congregation and the Synod, Article VII 1 provides:

1. In its relation to its members the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation’s right of self-government it is but an advisory body. Accordingly, no resolution of the Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears to be inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned.

The following demonstrates how it is exercised with respect to the congregation’s right of self-government. While a congregation is not required to do so as a condition of membership, it may place other restrictions on its own internal governance and may relinquish further authority to the Synod voluntarily. While no congregation is required as a condition of membership to do so, a congregation even has the right and power in forming and governing itself to prohibit its own future voluntary withdrawal from the Synod. It would be contrary to the spirit of its polity for the Synod even to suggest that such a provision should be considered by congregations, but it would be similarly improper to reject such a provision.

While retaining the right to dissent and even to withdraw from membership in the Synod, each congregation until such withdrawal covenants and agrees to act in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod. As the Bylaws of the Synod state:

Congregations together establish the requirements of membership in the Synod (Constitution, Art. VI). In joining the Synod, congregations and other members obligate themselves to fulfill such requirements and to diligently and earnestly promote the purposes of the Synod by word

and deed. Members agree to uphold the confessional position of the Synod (Art. II) and to assist in carrying out the objectives of the Synod (Art. III), which are the objectives of the members themselves. Thus, while congregations of the Synod are self-governing (Art. VII), they, and also individual members, commit themselves as members of the Synod to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod under which they have agreed to live and work together and which the congregations alone have the authority to adopt or amend through conventions. (Bylaw 1.3.4)

The Constitution, Bylaws, and all other rules and regulations of the Synod apply to all congregation and individual members of the Synod. (Bylaw 1.7.1)

The Synod expects every member congregation of the Synod to respect its resolutions and to consider them of binding force if they are in accordance with the Word of God and if they appear applicable as far as the condition of the congregation is concerned. The Synod, being an advisory body, recognizes the right of a congregation to be the judge of the applicability of the resolution to its local condition. However, in exercising such judgment, a congregation must not act arbitrarily, but in accordance with the principles of Christian love and charity. (Bylaw 1.7.2)

The Synod and its congregations recognize that disagreements exist. The Synod (and thereby also its congregations) honors the right of all members to dissent, but requires as part of the mutual covenants of love that such dissent occur as provided in Bylaw section 1.8, “Dissent”:

While retaining the right of brotherly dissent, members of the Synod are expected as part of the life together within the fellowship of the Synod to honor and uphold the resolutions of the Synod. (Bylaw 1.8.1)

Dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers and then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescission. While the conscience of the dissenter shall be respected, the consciences of others, as well as the collective will of the Synod, shall also be respected. (Bylaw 1.8.2)

One fundamental aspect of these covenants, reaffirmed repeatedly in resolutions of the Synod, is the requirement that a congregation be served only by a pastor who is a ministry of religion—ordained of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as required by Bylaws 2.5.2 and 2.5.4:

Congregations that are members of the Synod shall call and be served only by ordained ministers who have been admitted to their respective ministries in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in these Bylaws and have thereby become members of the Synod. (Bylaw 2.5.2)

Congregations that violate these requirements and persist in such violation shall, after due admonition, forfeit their membership in the Synod. (Bylaw 2.5.4)

The employment of a person to serve the congregation as pastor when the individual does not meet these qualifications is a clear violation of the covenants made by members of the Synod. The district president has a duty to admonish and reprove and, if not corrected, take appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Although a congregation is not required as a condition of membership in the Synod to do so, a congregation may in its own governing documents, deeds, agreements, or other writings establish for itself how its future disputes—including theological disputes—will be resolved. It may even restrict or prohibit the right of the congregation to disaffiliate from the LCMS. When a congregation has failed to provide an alternate mechanism, by joining and remaining a member of the Synod it has chosen to relinquish aspects of its rights of self-governance and to use the Synod’s dispute resolution processes to

avoid the need to resort to the civil courts. As indicated in Opinion 09-2573 of this Commission on Constitutional Matters of the Synod:

It should also be noted that it is an act of congregational self-governance when a congregation elects to join the Synod. In exercising its self-government, a congregation which voluntarily joins the Synod and subscribes to its Constitution thereby agrees to be bound by all the provisions of the Synod’s Constitution as long as it retains its membership in the Synod. The congregation thereby limits or subordinates the subsequent exercise of its intrinsic right of self-government, if necessary, in all matters explicitly addressed by the Synod’s Constitution.

The specific issue of internal disputes in a congregation is an area expressly dealt with in the Synod’s covenants of walking together. The Synod and its individual congregations have recognized that the civil courts, using “neutral principles of law” analyses, are unable to resolve internal disputes on doctrinal grounds, and that neither a pure “congregational” nor pure “hierarchical” Synod structure exists. The Synod and its member congregations have attempted over the years to provide mechanisms to resolve such internal disputes in a God-pleasing manner. Attached to this opinion is a copy of 1983 convention Resolution 5-10A and the commentary published by action of the convention regarding the resolution. The two provisions of that resolution most applicable here are as follows:

Resolved, That the Synod acknowledges that under the definition and application of the word “hierarchical” in civil law there are aspects in the relationships within the Synod between and among congregations (e.g., Article II, Confession; the calling of certified and endorsed pastors only; agreements to abide by adjudicatory procedures and their final determinations) which under civil law may imply, express, or evidence what the courts regard as hierarchical dimensions; And be it further

Resolved, That, believing that Scripture (1 Cor. 6) requires that we make every effort to avoid disputes or to resolve them internally when they do arise, of the two constitutional methods for resolving church disputes by the civil courts, the Synod favors the “neutral principles of law” method whenever it can be applied, and that when neutral principles cannot be applied to resolve a particular controversy, the Synod declares that it is able and willing to resolve disputes internally.

It is in this context that the authority of a district president to investigate internal congregational disputes under Bylaw 4.4.6 quoted above must be understood. A congregation may in advance provide its own chosen method of resolving internal disputes, thereby limiting the authority of the district president to that of advice, admonishment, and, if necessary, discipline. But where it has chosen not to do so, its agreement as a member of the Synod is that such dispute will be resolved using the Synod’s own processes, especially as to disputes in the areas of Article II Confession, the calling of certified and endorsed pastors only, and agreements to abide by adjudicatory procedures and their final determinations. The dispute resolution processes of the Synod include that described in Bylaw 4.4.6 and the involvement of the district president as provided in this bylaw. As part of his ecclesiastical supervision, he may study, counsel, and advise how a dispute should be settled consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, thereby settling the dispute or conflict by presenting, interpreting, and applying the collective will of the Synod’s congregations.

In becoming a member of the Synod, a congregation also has a right to disagree with the advice and even direction of its ecclesiastical supervisor and invoke the dispute resolution protections of Bylaw section 1.10. Insofar as the dispute resolution processes of the Synod are concerned, the highest adjudicatory body in the Synod as to specific questions of doctrine and practice (short of the Synod itself in convention) is the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. The highest adjudicatory body in the Synod as to specific questions of interpretation of the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolu-

tions (short of the Synod itself in convention) is the Commission on Constitutional Matters, whose opinions are binding on the question unless and until overturned by a convention of the Synod, as indicated by Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c): “An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod.” In challenging the actions of a district president through the dispute resolution process under Bylaw 1.10, participants are given the right to request and obtain from either or both of these bodies binding opinions on issues within their areas of responsibility. Because of the importance of the church’s witness to the world by the way it resolves its disputes, the results of this process are final and binding.

The Synod has not made the Commission on Constitutional Matters a trier of facts. Instead, the Synod has provided alternative methods for addressing factual investigations necessary for the resolution of disputes in the Synod or within congregations. Depending on the nature of the dispute, alternatives may include dispute resolution and fact-finding under Bylaw sections 1.10 and 2.14–2.17, Bylaws 3.8.2.7.5–3.8.2.7.9 and 3.8.3.8.5–3.8.3.8.9, as well as those circumstances where the President of the Synod or a district president, as in Bylaw 4.4.6, may have that responsibility and authority.

Question 3: Bylaw 4.4.6 states that in the exercise of ecclesiastical supervision of congregations I may arrange for an official visit or investigation when a controversy arises in a congregation. What authority or powers within my responsibility to investigate such matters (particularly when they involve doctrinal issues) do I have to adjudicate doctrinal issues or disputes within the congregation?

Opinion: Please refer to the answer to question 2 above. Of necessity, a district president must be able to determine who, on behalf of the congregation, properly speaks for the congregation in the congregation’s relationship to the Synod. When internal disputes arise and the congregation has provided an internal method for dispute resolution, the authority of the president is limited to visitation, investigation, obtaining reports and information, and then advising, admonishing, and conveying the collective will of the Synod and, if necessary, bringing appropriate disciplinary measures to assure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are followed and implemented. When, however, the congregation has not provided in advance another mechanism for the resolution of such internal disputes, his authority is more extensive. He has the authority to investigate and review such information as may be necessary to settle the dispute, as covenanted in 1983 Res. 5-10A. He has the authority to study, counsel, and advise how the dispute should be settled consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, thereby settling the dispute by presenting, interpreting, and applying the collective will of the Synod’s congregations. The authority of a district president does not include the right to excommunicate members of a congregation, to “call” a pastor to serve a congregation, or to generally control the internal governance of a congregation, and, as discussed above, his actions are subject to appeal by the congregation pursuant to the Bylaw section 1.10 processes.

(Adopted Sept. 7, 2010)

Constitutional Amendment Ratification Process **(10-2583)**

In a letter dated October 19, 2010, a pastor of the Synod questioned whether the requirement for submission of constitutional amendments to the congregations of the Synod “by means of three announcements in the official periodical within three months after

the close of the convention” (Constitution, Art. XIV 3) was followed in the ratification process of 2010 convention constitutional amendments. He questioned the interpretation of the Secretary of the Synod that *Reporter* and *Reporter Online* may be used to satisfy the constitutional requirement, not only because such interpretation may be wrong but also because it may “be robbing our members of a good opportunity for informed decision making.”

Question 1: Is Constitution Art. XIV, which at the time of its adoption according to Secretary Hartwig’s September 23, 2010, letter referred solely to *The Lutheran Witness*, now to be interpreted by Bylaw 3.8.5.2.3 (2007 *Handbook*) to include also *Reporter*, even though the Constitution speaks of a singular publication?

Opinion: For many years *Der Lutheraner* and its English counterpart *The Lutheran Witness* were considered the “official organs” or “official synodical organs” or “official publications” of the Synod. The 1966 *Handbook* (Bylaw 11.81) added for the first time: “Official reports and notices shall be published in *The Lutheran Witness Reporter*.”

Additional changes were made in the 1971 *Handbook*, as described in its “Foreword” by Secretary Herbert Mueller:

The convention authorized certain language changes in the Constitution with the stated provision that these changes are not to be regarded as constitutional amendments. The singular verb in Article VIII A 2 was therefore changed to plural; “official organs” and “official publications” were changed to “official periodicals in Article XI B 9 and Article XIV, 3 and 4; and the definite article “the” was uniformly inserted before the word “Synod” in 82 instances. [emphasis added]

The 1971 *Handbook* then lists as the “Official Periodicals” of the Synod “*The Lutheran Witness*, the *Lutheran Witness Reporter*, and *Der Lutheraner*” (Bylaw 11.81). The bylaw also repeats the statement: “Official reports and notices shall be published in the *Lutheran Witness Reporter*.”

In the “Foreword” to the 1975 *Handbook*, Secretary Mueller, after noting the many changes made by the 1975 convention, states: “Perhaps it should be stated that the Commission on Constitutional Matters felt obligated, in view of the convention action with reference to the official periodicals, to change the plural to the singular in Constitution Article XIV, paragraphs 3 and 4.” This was prompted by one of the changes made by the 1975 convention, naming only *The Lutheran Witness* as “the official periodical of the Synod.” *The Lutheran Witness* was now to “include official reports and notices” (Bylaw 11.81). When, however, the 1977 (and subsequent) handbooks again named *The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter* as the Synod’s official periodicals, paragraphs 3 and 4 of Constitution Art. XIV were not updated and continue to read in the singular to this day: “in the official periodical.” Article XIV should have been updated to the plural at that time like all of the other mentions of the periodicals of the Synod in the *Handbook*, which included Constitution Art. XI 8.

It is clear, therefore, that Constitution Art. XIV, while it speaks of “the official periodical” in the singular, is to be interpreted to speak in the plural, given the listing of periodicals in 2007 Bylaw 3.8.5.2.3 (2010 *Handbook* Bylaw 3.4.3.7) where *The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter* are both named.

Question 2: Is *Reporter Online* to be considered from this time forth to be the equivalent of *Reporter* for constitutional and bylaw purposes?

Opinion: *Reporter Online* is now and has been since its implementation an official periodical of the Synod. As early as 1966, *Reporter* was considered such an official periodical, to be used to publish official reports and notices. This has been and continues to be the case, except for a brief period of time following actions taken by the 1975 convention of the Synod, as already noted in

#1 above. *Reporter Online* is *Reporter* using current technology to expedite carrying out its purposes, one of which is to publish official reports and notices. Therefore, yes, *Reporter Online* is to be considered the equivalent of *Reporter* for constitutional and bylaw purposes. Rather than robbing the members of the Synod of an opportunity for informed decision-making, its use broadens the circulation of official notices of the Synod, reaching a new and significant audience and thereby enhancing the opportunity for informed decision-making.

Question 3: If the announcements required by the Constitution of the Synod have not been made according to the requirements plainly listed there (the deadline, October 17, is now past), then what becomes of the proposed constitutional amendments?

Opinion: This question is moot. The use of *The Lutheran Witness*, *Reporter*, and *Reporter Online* was appropriate (see #s 1 and 2 above), and the three notices required by Constitution Art. XIV were thereby published and distributed in advance of the October 17 deadline.

(Adopted 11/6/10)

Dispute Resolution Process Advisors (10-2584)

In an e-mail dated October 23, 2010, a hearing facilitator in a dispute resolution process, pursuant to Bylaw section 1.10, asked the commission the following question regarding the submission of a written statement of evidence by an advisor to a party to the dispute:

Question: Parties involved in a Dispute Resolution Panel hearing have the privilege of choosing and having an advisor with them during the hearing. The *Standard Operation Procedures Manual* states that the advisor shall not address the panel or directly participate in the discussions during the hearing. When a party to a dispute resolution process chooses an advisor, may that advisor, at the request of the party, submit a written statement of evidence, transmitted to the panel members through the Secretary of the Synod prior to the hearing, to be considered alongside all of the other witness given?

Opinion: The question submitted is unclear to the commission. If “a written statement of evidence” means an affidavit in lieu of live testimony as a witness, the affidavit cannot be submitted as evidence unless the other party does not object (a waiver to object), as the witness would then not be available for questioning by the other party to the matter, as is required by Bylaw 1.10.18.1 (f) and Bylaws section 1.10 *SOPM* General Regulation F (b).

If “a written statement of evidence,” means a written summary of all the expected evidence presented in the matter, then the summary is being submitted to the panel by the party to the matter, aided and assisted by his/her advisor. If the advisor prepares this kind of summary, it is still being submitted by the party and not the advisor.

Bylaw 1.10.4 (q) defines a “witness” as follows: “A person called to give testimony regarding facts to a dispute before a Dispute Resolution Panel...” [emphasis added].

Bylaws section 1.10 *SOPM* General Regulation F (b) also indicates: “Witnesses who can substantiate the facts relevant to the matter in dispute may be called before and address the panel. Unless otherwise determined by the panel for good cause, witnesses shall attend hearings only during the time that they are giving their own testimony” [emphasis added].

A witness may also be an advisor to a party, but since “witnesses shall attend hearings only during the time that they are giving their own testimony,” then that person is not permitted to be present at

the hearing other than during the time he/she is giving his/her own testimony, absent agreement of the parties and concurrence of the panel or a finding by the panel of good cause to allow such presence.

(Adopted 11/7/10)

Testimony by Secretary of the Synod in Dispute Resolution Process (10-2585)

The Secretary of the Synod, as administrator of the dispute resolution process under Bylaw 1.10, submitted a series of questions regarding a pending matter, as follows:

Question: As administrator of a dispute resolution process under Bylaw section 1.10, I regularly receive and distribute on behalf of the parties various documents submitted in advance of a hearing. In a case that has been pending for more than a year, I have recently received and forwarded pre-hearing information that indicates that a party to the dispute intends to offer testimony regarding his recollection of a telephone conversation between himself and myself that took place prior to the beginning of the dispute resolution process, a conversation that briefly alluded to a matter that the party believes important to the matter in dispute.

Although the Bylaws allow for the appointment of an alternate administrator when the Secretary of the Synod “is a party to the matter in dispute, has a conflict of interest, or serves as a witness” (Bylaw 1.10.6), there was no indication until receipt of the recent information that I would need to recuse myself and ask for the appointment of another administrator. This was true throughout the reconciliation and panel selection processes until now, only days before a scheduled Dispute Resolution Panel hearing.

My concern is that if this recollection of a conversation involving me as administrator of the dispute resolution process is allowed to be submitted, I will not have opportunity to clarify the content of that conversation nor will the opposing party be able to question me in its regard. My questions therefore are these: “Do I continue to serve as administrator of this dispute resolution process? Is the testimony that has been proffered proper testimony? May I be called as a witness in the hearing?”

Opinion: The Bylaws provide that when the Secretary of the Synod is involved personally in a dispute, whether as a party, a witness, or someone who has a direct interest in the outcome, an alternate administrator should be appointed. Bylaw 1.10.6 reads in part,

If the secretary of the Synod or a district is a party to the matter in dispute, has a conflict of interest, or serves as a witness, then the President of the Synod or the district president, as appropriate, shall appoint an administrator of the process in the matter.

In order to protect the neutrality of the process, Bylaw 1.10.7.4 also provides in part,

The administrator of the process shall not attend the hearing or serve as a witness.

These provisions of the Bylaws are intended to maintain the integrity of the dispute resolution process. Should there be any suggestion that a dispute resolution process administrator might be subject to such disqualification, an alternate administrator should be selected. In order to allow such alternate to be appointed in a timely fashion early in the process, parties are provided with information regarding the applicable bylaws and *Standard Operating Procedures Manual*, including those provisions which prevent an administrator of the dispute

resolution process from participating as a witness. If a party intends to present testimony or evidence which would necessarily suggest the potential need for a dispute resolution process administrator to become a witness, such issue must be raised in a timely manner so that the administrator can recuse himself and a replacement administrator can be appointed in a manner that will not interfere with the process or unduly delay resolution of the matter in dispute. It would be a perversion of the process and inappropriate to raise such an issue immediately prior to a hearing.

While a Dispute Resolution Panel is not bound by “hearsay,” and other strict rules of evidence are not applicable to a dispute resolution process hearing, evidence proffered at the last minute which would require the disqualification of an administrator in order to allow his testimony on an issue known by the party to be likely to be contested should be ruled out of order and inadmissible and disregarded by the hearing facilitator and/or hearing panel. Even should the administrator desire at such a late point in the process to offer testimony, the failure to seek his early disqualification exposes him to information as administrator which could impermissibly impact his testimony.

Therefore, absent agreement by the parties, the hearing panel, and its administrator, a party may not subvert the process by interjecting such evidence in an untimely manner. The administrator in such circumstances should complete his responsibilities in the case and not be replaced. He should not be allowed to be called as a witness in the matter, and the controverted evidence or testimony which would necessarily require that the administrator be called in order to rebut such evidence or testimony should be ruled out of order and inadmissible and be disregarded by the hearing panel to the extent seen or heard by the members of the panel.

(Adopted 11/7/10)

CUS Course Syllabus Approval Process (10-2587)

In a December 16, 2010, e-mailed letter, a member of a faculty of one of the Synod’s universities described a proposal before his faculty, as follows:

Currently there is a proposal in front of the plenary faculty which will change the oversight and process for the approval of individual course syllabi. [Currently, the process for review and approval includes the individual departments (from which the syllabus originated), the school dean, the Faculty Curriculum Committee, and the plenary faculty.] The proposal calls for the review and approval process to be limited to the departments, school deans, and academic office. Furthermore, the proposal allows for school deans to create curriculum review committees within the individual schools and the proposed syllabus be posted for review and comment by the entire faculty.

The proposal for change of the syllabus approval process arose from the concern of the Faculty Curriculum Committee that most members of the committee could no longer evaluate the individual course syllabi as most syllabi content fell out of the committee members’ areas of expertise. Additionally, the schools which have external professional accrediting agencies, e.g. School of Pharmacy, School of Health Sciences, School of Education require additional elements not currently required by the faculty handbook. Thus, the Faculty Curriculum Committee recommended limiting the review and approval process to the schools.

During preliminary discussion, one issue of concern which was raised was whether the proposal to change the course syllabi approval process violated the Synod’s *Handbook* which bestowed curricula development and implementation onto the faculty, e.g. the plenary faculty (see 3.8.3.8.10).

Having provided that background, the writer inquired as follows;

Question 1: Would the proposal to change the course syllabus approval process, limiting it to the individual schools while allowing for plenary faculty review and comment but no plenary faculty approval, violate the Synod’s *Handbook*?

Opinion: No. Synod Bylaw 3.10.5.6.10 (d) [formerly 2007 Bylaw 3.8.3.8.10 (d)] does require that each faculty develop and construct curricula implementing the recognized and established purposes of the institution and designed to obtain the objectives of preparation for professional church workers and other Christian leaders approved by the Synod. This requirement places responsibility on the entire faculty for the development and construction of curricula to meet the goals and objectives established by the Synod in founding these educational institutions.

With respect to approval of an individual course syllabus, however, the Bylaws do not require the entire faculty’s involvement. A syllabus provides an outline and timeline for a particular course. It may give a brief overview of the course objectives, expectations, reading assignments, and exam dates. Curriculum, on the other hand, describes a general focus of study, consisting of multiple individual courses all designed to reach particular competency or qualification. The Bylaws prescribed that in Synod schools, the faculty is responsible to develop and construct this focus of study consistent with the goals and objectives established by the Synod. Nothing in the Bylaws of the Synod requires that entire faculties review and approve each individual course syllabus.

Question 2: More generally, in matters of curriculum, how much flexibility does the Synod’s *Handbook* provide the faculty in constructing review and approval processes in matters pertaining to curriculum? In short, do all curriculum matters require the review and approval of the plenary faculty or can the plenary faculty delegate review and approval oversight to duly constituted faculty subgroups, e.g. the faculty of a particular school?

Opinion: As described above, the faculty of each Synod school is responsible to assure that its curriculum is designed to “obtain the objectives of preparation for professional church workers and other Christian leaders as approved by the Synod” (Bylaw 3.10.5.6.10 [d]). While the plenary faculty may delegate review, approval, and oversight of portions of the overall curriculum of an institution to a duly constituted faculty subgroup, such as faculty of a particular school, the plenary faculty must retain such review and control as is necessary to be able to fulfill its responsibility to see to it that the institution as a whole develops and constructs a curriculum consistent with the bylaw.

(Adopted February 20, 2011)

Notes

1. Article III 9 of the Constitution identifies as one of the “Objectives” of the Synod to “[p]rovide protection for congregations, pastors, teachers, and other church workers in the performance of their official duties and the maintenance of their rights.” Among the district president’s responsibilities in carrying out ecclesiastical supervision with congregations is to allow lay members of LCMS congregations to be assured that actions of their congregation will not jeopardize the congregation’s membership in the Synod and to give counsel and advice as necessary so as not to have that unintended result and unintended forfeiture of rights.

Ecclesiastical Supervision and Right to Dissent
(11-2589)

In a letter dated April 4, 2011, a pastor of the Synod submitted background information and questions pertaining to organizations of members within the Synod as well as individual members and congregation members of the Synod; the ecclesiastical supervisory duties of the President, vice-presidents, and district presidents of the Synod; and several formal related opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters. After inviting and receiving input from involved officers and agencies of the Synod in accordance with Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (b), the commission responded to the questioner as follows.

Among the questions and concerns expressed by the questioner were issues and concerns outside the authority and responsibility of the commission to address, because they did not involve interpretation of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions. The questioner is urged to submit such concerns to his ecclesiastical supervisor and, as necessary, through the Synod's processes of ecclesiastical supervision and dispute resolution.

The questioner provided background to the commission regarding an organization of pastors and lay people called the "Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Churches" (ACELC), which has sent out the document "A Fraternal Admonition to Correct Errors of our Beloved Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, July 15, 2010" and other documents. It was this organization's published documents that resulted in the concerns of the questioner.

The member asked questions surrounding four primary issues associated with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, as follows:

- Issue 1:** Under the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, must individual members or congregational members of the Synod follow the dissent procedures of the Synod if they disagree with or dissent from any of the Synod's stated doctrinal resolutions or statements?
- Issue 2:** Under the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, must individual members or congregational members of the Synod follow the dispute resolution processes of the Synod if they have a dispute with another member of the Synod involving theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues?
- Issue 3:** Under the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, what authority does an individual or congregational member of the Synod have in regard to ecclesiastical supervision in the LCMS?
- Issue 4:** Under the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, what consequences are there if an individual member or a congregational member of the Synod disagrees with or dissents from any of the Synod's doctrinal resolutions or statements and does not follow the dissent processes of the Synod; and what consequences are there if an individual member or a congregational member of the Synod publicizes that another member of the Synod is not upholding the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, doing so in a manner that does not honor the dispute resolution process of the Synod; and what consequences are there if an individual or a congregational member of the Synod attempt themselves or become a part of an organization which attempts to usurp the ecclesiastical supervision given

to those persons authorized by the Synod to exercise ecclesiastical supervision?

The commission responded to each of these issues as follows.

Issue 1: Under the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, must individual members or congregational members of the Synod follow the dissent procedures of the Synod if they disagree with or dissent from any of the Synod's stated doctrinal resolutions or statements?

Opinion: A member of the Synod, individual or congregation, and any organization of members of the Synod must follow the dissent procedures of the Synod. All members of the Synod commit to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod. Article XIV of the Constitution states:

The Synod in convention may adopt bylaws that are consistent with and do not contradict the Constitution of the Synod, which controls and supersedes such bylaws and all other rules and regulations of the Synod. Bylaws, which may be adopted, revised, or eliminated by a simple majority vote of a national convention, are binding regulations for the Synod and its conduct and governance.

Bylaw 1.3.4.1 states:

Members agree to uphold the confessional position of the Synod (Art. II) and to assist in carrying out the objectives of the Synod (Art. III), which are the objectives of the members themselves. Thus, while congregations of the Synod are self-governing (Art. VII), they, and also individual members, commit themselves as members of the Synod to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod under which they have agreed to live and work together and which the congregations alone have the authority to adopt or amend through conventions.

Bylaw section 1.8 indicates how brotherly dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements by members of the Synod must be carried out. Bylaw 1.8.1 states:

While retaining the right of brotherly dissent, members of the Synod are expected as part of the life together within the fellowship of the Synod to honor and uphold the resolutions of the Synod.

Bylaw 1.8.2 states:

Dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers and then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescission. While the conscience of the dissenter shall be respected, the consciences of others, as well as the collective will of the Synod, shall also be respected.

The 1973 report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, "Guiding Principles for the Use of 'A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles, with Special Reference to the Expression of Dissent,'" was developed to support this procedure.¹

The Commission on Constitutional Matters has opined on "Proper Dissent and Dispute by Members of the Synod" (05-2444) and refers the questioner and the Synod to that opinion.² The Synod has given the responsibility for determining under which bylaw to proceed to be that of the ecclesiastical supervision of the district president and Synod President. The responsibility to determine whether or not members of the Synod or any organization of members have indeed done what the questioner indicates in his question is that of ecclesiastical supervision.

The questioner and the Synod are referred also to Question 3 of Opinion 05-2443:

Question 3: Is it in harmony with the Constitution and above bylaws of the Synod for any member of the Synod or any groups within the Synod to teach publicly, publicly advocate,

or promote any position contrary to the position of the Synod?

Opinion: Again, the above-referenced 1969 opinion (dated October 16, 1969, entitled “Dissenting Groups and Activities Within the Synod”) speaks to this issue:

In this opinion the Commission is not attempting to limit the right of individuals to speak their own minds. Before and after the passage or rejection of synodical resolutions individuals must be free to express their concerns, especially to their peers. Frank and open discussion, carried on in a spirit of Christian love and forbearance, must be part of our life together in the Synod. It can be proper and salutary. However, in this opinion the Commission is addressing itself to the organizing of groups, to the calling of meetings, secret or open, to attempted manipulation of existing groups, to circularizing activities, and to a wide scale of joint actions, all of which by their very nature tend to polarize or fragment the constituency of the Synod, and thus have the effect of disrupting the synodical unity.

All members of the Synod and its congregations are to beware of the danger of groups and activities which divide and splinter the Synod. Synodical and district officers and board and commission members have a special responsibility to identify divisive and subversive movements and to avoid them. By their example and advice they are to conserve and promote the unity of the true faith and the oneness of the Synod.

Accordingly, it is not in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod for any member of the Synod or any groups within the Synod to teach publicly, publicly advocate, or promote any position contrary to the position of the Synod. Dissent activities are to be governed by section 1.8 of the Bylaws of the Synod to which members have “commit[ted] themselves to act in accordance with” and “under which they have agreed to live and work together” (Bylaw 1.3.4).

Issue 2: Under the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, must individual members or congregational members of the Synod follow the dispute resolution processes of the Synod if they have a dispute with another member of the Synod involving theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues?

Opinion: Yes. Any Synod member, whether acting individually or as a member of an organization of members, must follow the dispute resolution processes of the Synod, just as he or she must follow the dissent processes of the Synod (Issue 1 above).

The dispute resolution processes of the Synod are under the following: Bylaw section 1.10 (procedures for disputes between members of the Synod), Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17 (procedures which could lead to expulsion from membership), Bylaw 3.10.4.7.9 (procedures for addressing complaints regarding faculty members of seminaries), and Bylaw 3.10.5.6.9 (procedures for addressing complaints regarding faculty members of colleges and universities).

All members of the Synod commit to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod (see Issue 1 above and its citation of Constitution Article XIV and Bylaw 1.3.4.1). That of course includes the bylaws governing the various dispute resolution processes of the Synod.

Issue 3: Under the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, what authority does an individual or congregational member of the Synod have in regard to ecclesiastical supervision in the LCMS?

Opinion: No individual or congregational member or organization of members of the Synod has any authority to provide ecclesiastical

supervision in the Synod. The Synod has “identified those responsible for ecclesiastical supervision of its members, including such matters as advice and counsel, as well as suspension of membership and forfeiture of it for failure to continue to meet membership requirements” (Bylaw 2.1.2).

Bylaw 1.2.1 (g) defines ecclesiastical supervision in the Synod:

(g) *Ecclesiastical supervision:* The responsibility, primarily of the President of the Synod and district presidents, to supervise on behalf of the Synod the doctrine, life, and administration of its members, officers, and agencies. Such supervision, subject to the provisions of the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, includes visitation, evangelical encouragement and support, care, protection, counsel, advice, admonition, and, when necessary, appropriate disciplinary measures to assure that the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod are followed and implemented. Thus, ecclesiastical supervision is also the presenting, interpreting, and applying of the collective will of the Synod’s congregations. Ecclesiastical supervision does not include the responsibility to observe, monitor, control, or direct the day-to-day activities of individual members of the Synod, whether in the conduct of their work or in their private lives (cf. Bylaw 2.14.1 [a]). Further, those constitutional articles and bylaws pertaining to ecclesiastical supervision shall determine the full definition of ecclesiastical supervision.

The permissibility under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod of establishing organizations whose purpose might usurp responsibilities which the Synod has reserved to itself has been previously raised on numerous occasions. A similar question was raised and answered in Opinion 05-2443, “Activity of Small Groups Within the Synod”:

On October 16, 1969, the Commission on Constitutional Matters issued a landmark opinion on the subject of “Dissenting Groups and Activities Within the Synod.” A portion of that opinion speaks directly to the question above:

The very nature and purpose of a synodical fellowship need to be restated once again. A synod is a “walking together.” The choice of the word “synod,” derived from the Greek, is significant because it emphasizes the idea of unity. For good reason our church body has chosen for itself the name: “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.” We are congregations, pastors, and teachers who have decided to join hands and to walk together.

The Preamble of the Constitution has the sub-heading: “Reason for the Forming of a Synodical Union.” Union was the major concern in effecting the organization of the Synod. The concepts of fellowship, togetherness, brotherhood, and “walking together” express the basic purpose of the Synod’s existence.

The reasons given in the Preamble for forming the union are “1. The example of the apostolic church, Acts:15:1–31,” and “2. Our Lord’s will that the diversities of gifts should be for the common profit, 1 Cor. 12:4–31.” Once again the emphasis falls upon the unity.

In Article III, Objects, the fundamental thrust of the Synod is not only clearly stated but is given preeminence. The first purpose of the Synod is listed as: “The conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10) and a united defense against schism and sectarianism (Rom. 16:17).” The Scripture references include the admonitions to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to avoid all divisions, and to beware of division makers.

Objects 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 continue with this theme. All of these imply the quest for oneness, its preservation and extension.

Objects 7 and 8 need special emphasis in view of the questions which have been raised regarding the formation and continuation of groups which attempt to carry out the purposes which the Synod reserves for itself:

7. The supervision of the ministers and teachers of Synod with regard to the performance of their official duties;

8. The protection of pastors, teachers, and congregations in the performance of their duties and the maintenance of their rights.

The Synod was organized and is maintained to carry out these objects. The congregations, pastors, and teachers who by their own free decision have joined the Synod have done so with the determination that the important functions described in Article III (and we would stress especially Objects 1, 7, and 8 in view of the questions which have been raised) should be carried out by the Synod. Any assumption of these responsibilities by secret or open, voluntary or auxiliary, new or established groups is disruptive of the synodical purpose and cannot be tolerated.

Christians as well as non-Christians expect differences of opinion and judgment to arise when people walk together. The Synod has provided for forums in which such differences can be discussed and evaluated beyond the confines of the local congregation. The pastors and teachers conferences; the circuit meetings; the synodical and District board, commission, and committee meetings; the doctrinal supervision and appeals procedures; and above all the conventions of the Districts and of the Synod provide the proper channels through which the issues of opinion and judgment are to be discussed and decided. In the absence of a clear word of God issues must be decided by the majority principle, applied in Christian love and with Christian restraint (Article VIII C). When the majority will has been determined, it must be respected. Otherwise life together (synod) becomes all but impossible. Discussion may indeed continue; but it needs to be carried on with full respect for the majority will and within the forums established by the Synod for the preservation of the synodical unity. If additional channels for discussion are needed the Synod can provide for the same in its Bylaws through appropriate convention action.

It is incongruous for separate groups to organize for the purpose of policing the members of the Synod; it is equally incongruous for groups to organize for the purpose of either shaping or nullifying a decision in an area of concern in which the Synod has reserved to itself the right of making decisions. Where the Synod has not reserved this right to itself (e.g., the decision to establish orphanages, high schools, old folks homes, hospitals), congregations and individuals have the right to effect an organization so long as its objectives and operations do not interfere with the purposes and functions of the Synod. However, where the Synod has reserved this right to itself (e.g., the administration of its colleges and seminaries; the supervision of doctrine; the declaration of fellowship with other church bodies), congregations and individuals have no right under the Constitution of the Synod without the express approval of the Synod to effect organizations to achieve purposes for which the Synod itself exists or to carry on activities which rightfully belong to the duly elected or appointed officials of the Synod. Under these circumstances such organizations become divisive and schismatic and therefore subversive of the very purposes of the Synod.

Accordingly, and in response to the question submitted to the Commission, it is not in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod for a member of the Synod or an unofficial group within the Synod to assume such responsibilities as the Synod has reserved for itself in its stated objectives, “which are the objectives of the members themselves” (Bylaw 1.3.4).

The Synod, an “association of self-governing Lutheran congregations” (Bylaw 1.2.1 [v]), established its church polity under the Scripture and Lutheran Confessions in order to subscribe (accept without reservation) collectively to and apply the Scripture and Lutheran Confessions together in unity. Although *de jure humano*, the Constitution, Bylaws, and other rules and regulations of the Synod are not to be regarded as opposed to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. The Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod are not an antithesis to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. These are agreements under Holy Scripture by Christian brothers and sisters

to carry out the Synod’s very scriptural purposes. Even though polity falls under adiaphora, the Synod’s polity has a definite biblical character to it. The Synod’s policy is based on various theological principles.³ One such principle is ecclesiastical supervision. The Synod’s polity is also a covenant of love based on another principle, the law of Christian love.

As a covenant of love under the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and with a subscription without reservation to the common confessional position (Constitution, Articles II and VI), the association of self-governing congregations (Bylaw 1.2.1 [v]), which expresses its interpretation and understanding of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions through its collective will in the adopted resolutions in convention assembled (Bylaws 1.8.1 and 1.8.2), which establishes and evaluates all of the Synod positions, policies, programs, directions, and priorities (Bylaw 3.1.1), and which determines whether or not any action or decision of officers, boards, and commissions are in conformity with the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions (cf. Bylaw 1.4.1), established ecclesiastical supervision as an integral part of the “business of the Synod,”⁴ “the execution of synodical business”⁵ and for the benefit of its members “to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice” (Articles III, XI, and XII; Bylaws 3.3, 4.4.1–4.4.6, emphases added), and which supervision inherently is to be exercised on the basis of that same collective will and understanding.

Ecclesiastical supervision and to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice are therefore responsibilities that the Synod has reserved for itself. Attempts by a member or a group of members to exercise ecclesiastical supervision when it has not been given to them by the Synod through the Synod’s agreed-upon procedures and/or to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in a manner not within the covenants of the procedures established in the Synod’s Constitution and Bylaws are violations of members’ covenants together.

See also the reference to CCM Opinion 05-2443 in the response to Issue 1 above.

Issue 4: Under the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, what consequences are there if an individual member or a congregational member of the Synod disagrees with or dissents from any of the Synod’s doctrinal resolutions or statements and does not follow the dissent processes of the Synod; and what consequences are there if an individual member or a congregational member of the Synod publicizes that another member of the Synod is not upholding the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions, doing so in a manner that does not honor the dispute resolution process of the Synod; and what consequences are there if an individual or a congregational member of the Synod attempt themselves or become a part of an organization which attempts to usurp the ecclesiastical supervision given to those persons authorized by the Synod to exercise ecclesiastical supervision?

Opinion: The Synod has reserved for its members processes for dissent (Bylaw section 1.8), resolving disputes (Bylaw sections 1.10, 2.14–2.17; Bylaws 3.10.4.7.9 and 3.10.5.6.9), and ecclesiastical supervision (Bylaws 1.2.1 [g]; 2.1.2).⁶ For any member or organization of members to advocate disagreement with and unwillingness to use the Synod’s Bylaws without following the approved dissent procedures or dispute resolution procedures invites the member’s/

members' ecclesiastical supervisor(s) to use those same Synod-established procedures to discipline them.

The permissibility under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod for a member or any association or organization of members to advocate not following a bylaw of the Synod has been previously raised. During a time when the Synod was dealing with a controversy within the Synod with regard to the certifying, placing, calling, ordaining, and installing graduates of Seminex, the Commission on Constitutional Matters issued its October 11, 1974 landmark opinion, "An Analysis of Assertions in Present Controversy."⁷ A portion of that opinion, in answer to a common objection raised at that time, namely, "Christians are ruled not by laws but by the Gospel," speaks to this issue:

There are several ways in which this theme has been stated in denigrating the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod and thus finally making them of no effect...

So much can be said for the law of God. It has a place in the life of the Christian. But is there room for human, man-made laws in the life of Christians together? We submit that there is. Whenever two individuals, even Christian people, enter into a relationship with each other—whether it be in marriage or in a business partnership or in whatever relationship it may be—certain agreements, rules, contracts, covenants—"laws," if you will—become necessary. The same is true when Christians join together as a worshipping and serving community of God in the world. It is customary for Lutheran congregations to use not only the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions but also unwritten traditions and especially written Constitutions and Bylaws as instruments under which they agree to govern themselves. This is true also of larger federations of Christians, such as agencies, councils, and synods.

In our Synod we make certain commitments to one another. We agree what we shall do and how we shall do it and why we shall do it. These agreements are spelled out in a Constitution, in Bylaws, and in resolutions. We promise to walk together according to the agreements that we have made. We pledge one another our word.

Since Christians recognize the law of Christian love as the highest law of human conduct, it governs also our life together within the Synod. In Christ we love those with whom we have joined hands and to whom we have given our pledge, and so we keep our word to them. We carry out our solemn covenants and agreements. To set aside any article of the Constitution, a bylaw, or even a resolution of the Synod, simply because in our personal estimation it is not acceptable, means to exalt our own will above the will of the Synod stated especially in its Constitution and Bylaws. That would be self-seeking, self-righteousness, judgmental, and loveless. This is not the way of Christians with one another.

To be sure, there are genuine instances when conscience is involved. It may be a conscience instructed by the Word of God or it may be an erring one. Lutherans are sensitive to the plea of conscience. Lutherans sometimes forget, however, that Martin Luther placed his great emphasis on the conscience which is informed and instructed by the Word of God. We need to guard against using conscience as a misnomer for personal desire and opinion. The Synod has always made provision to respect the genuine demands of conscience. However, the individual who is troubled in his conscience must also respect the conscience of those who do not agree with him and be prepared to support his position from the Word of God. As our teachers have so long pointed out, one must distinguish carefully between the giving of offense and the taking of offense. If the Synod were to halt its operations whenever someone takes offense at its action, the Synod would be paralyzed. To be sure, the Synod must be on its guard never to give offense. But the individual, over against the Synod, must also exercise great care that he is truly governed by love and not by self-interest or self-will.

To bring all this down to the issue with which we are dealing: It is a breach of Christian love to place self-will above the mutually agreed upon will of the Synod as it has stated it in its Constitution and Bylaws.

That 1974 opinion of the commission, while in regard to certifying, placing, calling, ordaining, and installing graduates of Seminex, applies to any other area of our life together which the Synod has reserved to itself alone.

On August 29–30, 2009, in answer to a question in reference to the commission's earlier Opinion 08-2524 regarding 2004 convention Resolution 3-05A, "Binding Force Resolutions" (whether other Synod resolutions were equally binding with similar attending disciplinary action), the commission opined:

Opinion 08-2524 is not only applicable to the matter of 2004 convention Resolution 3-05A but to all resolutions, as already stated in the bylaw quotations included in the opinion:

Under the assumption that 2004 Res. 3-05A is in accordance with the Word of God, the Synod expects every member congregation of the Synod to respect the resolution and consider it of binding force (cf. Bylaw 1.7.2). Bylaw 1.6.2 states, "Such resolutions come into being in the same manner as any other resolutions of a convention of the Synod and are to be honored and upheld until such time as the Synod amends or repeals them" (emphasis added; cf. also Bylaw 1.8.1). Bylaw 1.7.1 further states, "The Constitution, Bylaws, and all other rules and regulations of the Synod apply to all congregational and individual members of the Synod."

Opinion 08-2524 also referenced 1971 Res. 2-21 which confirmed the binding nature of such resolutions. In addition to the pertinent quotes from the 1971 resolution in the above opinion, the convention resolution also stated, "Meanwhile every member of the Synod is held to abide by, act, and teach in accordance with the Synod's resolutions...the Synod has repeatedly declared that all members should 'honor and uphold' its resolutions (cf.: 1962, 3-17; 1965, 2-08; 1967, 2-04; 1969, 2-27)...To 'honor and uphold' means not merely to examine and study them, but to support, act, and teach in accordance with them until they have been shown to be contrary to God's Word" (1971 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 119).

In summary, all Synod members, including organizations of Synod members, must follow the Synod's bylaws regarding dissent, dispute resolution, and ecclesiastical supervision. To do otherwise invites the member's/members' ecclesiastical supervisor(s) to use those same Synod-established procedures to discipline them.

(Adopted Sept. 3–4, 2011)

Notes

1. 8. The Synod's established procedures for registering dissent with its doctrinal statements include the following:

- a. "That we call upon those who teach publicly in the church (pastors, teachers, and professors) to test their findings and opinions with their peer groups before presenting them to the church at large and to refrain in brotherly love from disseminating doctrinal opinions in such manner and in such situations as will cause confusion and offense in the church" (1965 Resolution 2-08, *Proceedings*, p. 96).

It is expected that pastors and teachers will discuss their objections and concerns with their conferences, that professors will discuss such matters with their teaching and administrative colleagues, and that staff members will discuss their objections with their boards and other staff persons.

- b. With reference to statements of belief, the Synod has requested "that those who disagree with these formulations in part or in whole be held to present their objections to them formally to those officials whom the Synod has given the immediate supervision of their doctrine (1971 Resolution 5-24, *Proceedings*, p. 165). This means that pastors

and teachers are to present their objections to their District president; professors at synodical institutions, to the president and board of control of their institution, as well as to the District president of the geographical District in which the institution is located (cf. Bylaw 1.09 d, adopted in 1973 Resolution 3-02, *Proceedings*, p. 128); and staff members to their boards or commissions and any appropriate supervisory staff members.

- c. The Synod has further provided that dissent is to be brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (cf. Bylaw 1.09 e; 1962 Resolution 3-17, *Proceedings*, p. 106; 1965 Resolution 2-08, *Proceedings*, p. 96; Council of Presidents Statement incorporated in 1971 Resolution 2-21, *Proceedings*, p. 119). The Commission on Theology and Church Relations should make every effort to express its opinion on the matter in question in ample time to permit further appeal on the part of the dissenter.

The commission's biennial report to the Synod should also indicate the opinions it has rendered on all such expressions of dissent, and should include any recommendation deemed advisable to clarify or correct possible inadequacies in the document under question.

- d. Members of the Synod may submit overtures to the synodical convention in an effort to have the Synod change its position or recognize the viability of the dissenting opinion. Bylaw 1.09 e asks that dissent "be expressed first within the fellowship of peers, then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescission" (adopted in 1973 Resolution 3-02, *Proceedings*, p. 128).
9. From the fact that the Synod has established the aforementioned procedures for expressing and dealing with dissent, it is clear that the Synod does not intend to impede the fraternal discussion of doctrinal issues, and that the Synod recognizes that such discussion may even lead to the revision or correction of its official doctrinal statements. But it is equally clear that the Synod, in the interest of doing things decently and in order, has established the aforementioned procedures for expressing and dealing with dissent so that the church is not disturbed by its members engaging in loveless public criticism or disparagement of its official position.
10. In evaluating and dealing with dissent or disagreement which has been expressed in accordance with the aforementioned procedures, all supervisory officials and boards, as well as the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and any peer groups that may be involved, should always endeavor to distinguish carefully between formal and substantive dissent, and to deal with the latter in terms of the Synod's confessional base, namely Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (cf. Constitution, Article II)...
12. It must be recognized that the process of expressing and dealing with dissent may reveal that the dissenter actually disagrees with the confessional position of the Synod, and not merely with a formation in a synodical statement of belief. It is imperative that all members of the Synod be dealt with fraternally, evangelically, pastorally, and in keeping with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod for the exercise of doctrinal discipline.
13. While it must be recognized that a separation may regretfully be called for when neither the dissenter nor the Synod is per-

sueded to alter their position, all members of the Synod should earnestly and frequently invoke the blessing of the Holy Spirit "that as a result of joint study of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will lead the Synod into all truth" and "that the Synod can speak with a voice that is Scriptural, Gospel oriented, truly Lutheran, and that will continue to 'walk together' as a true Synod" (1971 Resolution 5-24, *Proceedings*, p. 165).

2. Proper Dissent and Dispute by Members of the Synod (05-2444)

In a letter dated September 9, 2005, a series of questions were addressed to the Commission by five district presidents and two vice-presidents of the Synod regarding whether or not the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws provide actions available to persons who have conflict with various actions taken by the Synod in convention or by duly elected officers of the Synod other than by filing a lawsuit against the Synod and/or by the use of other avenues that are in violation of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.

Question 1: Is it in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws (1.3, 1.4.1, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10, 3.1.1, and 3.1.6.2) of the Synod for any member of the Synod or any group within the Synod as an avenue or form of dissent or dispute to engage in promoting non-compliance with the resolutions of the Synod and making charges against the Synod, the President, and others of the Synod by use of lawsuits, publications, letters, or meetings and conferences that are not in keeping with the polity of the Synod as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws?

Opinion: No, every member of the Synod (individual and congregation) joins the Synod voluntarily and in doing so agrees to relate to, live, and serve together with one another ("walk together") in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws:

In joining the Synod, congregations and other members obligate themselves to fulfill such requirements and to diligently and earnestly promote the purposes of the Synod by word and deed. Members agree to uphold the confessional position of the Synod (Art. II) and to assist in carrying out the objectives of the Synod (Art. III), which are objectives of the members themselves. Thus, while congregations of the Synod are self-governing (Art. VII), they, and also individual members, commit themselves as members of the Synod to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod under which they have agreed to live and work together and which the congregations alone have the authority to adopt or amend through conventions. (Bylaw 1.3.4) (Emphasis added)

DISSENT

I. "While retaining the right of brotherly dissent, members of the Synod are expected as part of the life together within the fellowship of the Synod to honor and uphold the resolutions of the Synod" (Bylaw 1.8.1).

In their agreement to live and work together in harmony (in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws) the members of the Synod, when and where dissent exists, have agreed to and encourage the right of brotherly dissent. Dissent that is "brotherly" will always regard another as a brother or being in a "brotherhood" (Cf. reference to "brotherhood" in Bylaw 1.10.1.1) and will treat and relate to others in the "fellowship" as brothers.

1971 convention Resolution 2-21 explains: "To honor and uphold (emphasis added) means not merely to examine and study them, but to support, act, and teach in accordance with them until they have

been shown to be contrary to God's Word." Honoring and upholding the resolutions of the Synod means that the dissenter is not to preach, teach, disseminate, or promote any position contrary to the position of the Synod nor engage in loveless public criticism nor to degrade, belittle, or depreciate the position of the Synod while dissenting." In regard to violation of then-Bylaw 2.39 c (current Bylaw 1.8.1), a 1993 Commission on Constitutional Matters opinion (Ag. 1956) regarding doctrinal dissent stated: "Doctrinal discipline must be exercised in the case of the pastor who teaches contrary to the position of the Synod..." And in a Commission opinion of October 23, 1996 (Ag. 2048):

...the dissenter is not free to teach the dissenting view...to so teach publicly that the position of the Synod is contrary to the Scriptures would be to elevate a matter of human opinion to the level of Scriptural doctrine—which from the viewpoint of the Synod would be contrary to the Scriptures...If permitted to do so, every member of the Synod would have the right to determine which of the positions of the Synod in similar matters it wished to accept and which to reject.

II. "Dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers and then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescision. While the conscience of the dissenter shall be respected, the consciences of others, as well as the collective will of the Synod, shall also be respected" (Bylaw 1.8.2).

The "dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements" is first of all expressed within the "fellowship of peers." A 1969 commission opinion on "dissenting groups" is helpful in understanding a partial background of the current bylaw:

The Synod has provided for forums in which such differences can be discussed and evaluated beyond the confines of the local congregation. The pastors and teachers conferences; the circuit meetings; the synodical and district board, commission, and committee meetings; the doctrinal supervision and appeals procedures; and above all the conventions of the districts and of the Synod provide the proper channels through which the issues of opinion and judgment are to be discussed and decided...If additional channels for discussion are needed the Synod can provide for the same in its Bylaws through appropriate convention action.

In a report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, November, 1973, "Guiding Principles for the Use of 'A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles' with Special Reference to the Expression of Dissent," the "fellowship of peers" is explained this way:

The Synod's established procedures for registering dissent with its doctrinal statements include the following: a. "That we call upon those who teach publicly in the church (pastors, teachers, and professors) to test their findings and opinions with their peer groups before presenting them to the church at large and to refrain in brotherly love from disseminating doctrinal positions in such manner and in such situations as will cause confusion and offense in the church" (1965 Resolution 2-08, *Proceedings*, p. 96). It is expected that pastors and teachers will discuss their objections and concerns in their conferences, that professors will discuss such matters with their teaching and administrative colleagues, and that staff members will discuss their objections with their boards and other staff persons.

Then the dissent is brought to the attention of "the Commission on Theology and Church Relations" before finding expression as "an overture to the convention." This, together with the expression of dissent within the fellowship of peers, gives the dissenter the privilege and responsibility to advise and persuade or convince the "fellowship of the Synod" on the basis of the power of the Word of God and in an orderly harmonious way.

Brotherly and formal dissent should not be confused with the wholesome need to discuss differing viewpoints, to have frank and open discussions, and to always examine and review all positions and resolutions of the Synod. A 1969 Commission opinion ("Dissenting Groups") stated:

In this opinion the Commission is not attempting to limit the right of individuals to speak their own minds. Before and after the passage or rejection of synodical resolutions individuals must be free to express their concerns, especially for their peers. Frank and open discussion, carried on in a spirit of Christian love and forbearance, must be part of our life together in the Synod. It can be proper and salutary...It is within the context of the Synod—the forums, channels, and procedures which the Synod itself establishes—that differing viewpoints need to be discussed and an issue finally decided. Continuing dialogue beyond the point of decision must also be carried on within the same synodically agreed upon framework and in deference to the majority will. (Emphasis added)

More recently, the Commission's Opinion 03-2328 also addressed the subject:

As a part of life together in the Synod, members have the responsibility to continually examine and reexamine their confession (symbols, doctrinal statements, and resolutions) to determine if they are faithful to the Holy Scriptures. Members have a never-ending task of testing everything that the Synod believes, teaches, and practices to see if they are in accordance with the Word of God. If there are issues that need to be readdressed or issues that are considered by the members of the Synod that have not yet been addressed, any action is to be governed by the procedures set forth in the Bylaws, particularly Bylaws 1.09 and 2.39 [now Bylaws 1.6, 1.7, and 1.8].

"The collective will of the Synod" (Bylaw 1.8.2) is established and expressed through the Synod in convention and not by individuals or groups within or outside of the Synod, nor through the courts or unofficial publications, letters, meetings, and conferences:

The delegate convention of the Synod is the legislative assembly that ultimately legislates policy, program, and financial direction to carry on the Synod's work on behalf of and in support of the member congregations. (Bylaw 1.4.1)

[The convention] is the principal legislative assembly, which amends the Constitution and Bylaws, considers and takes action on reports and overtures, and handles appropriate appeals. It establishes general positions and policies of the Synod, provides overall program direction and priorities, and evaluates all such positions, programs, policies, directions, and priorities in order to provide responsible service for and on behalf of its members. (Bylaw 3.1.1)

Bylaw 3.1.6.2 sets forth how overtures may be submitted to the convention so that the collective will of the Synod can be established and expressed.

DISPUTE

In their agreement to live and work together in harmony (in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws) the members of the Synod, when and where disputes exist, are required, subject to limited exceptions, to use the avenue provided by the Synod to settle disputes, as set forth in Bylaw section 1.10, "Dispute Resolution of the Synod," which in part states:

The Holy Scriptures (1 Cor. 6:1-7) urge Christians to settle their differences by laying them before the "members of the brotherhood." Therefore, the Synod in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 6 calls upon all parties to a disagreement, accusation, controversy, or disciplinary action to rely exclusively and fully on the Synod's system of reconciliation and conflict resolution. The use of the Synod's conflict resolution

procedures shall be the exclusive and final remedy for those who are in dispute. Fitness for ministry and other theological matters must be determined within the church. Parties are urged, in matters of a doctrinal nature, to follow the procedures as outlined in Bylaw section 1.8. (Bylaw 1.10.1.1) (Emphasis added)

The procedure set forth in the Synod's dispute resolution process can involve or include as parties any member of the Synod, the Synod itself, a district or an organization owned and controlled by the Synod, persons involved in excommunication or lay members of congregations of the Synod holding positions with the Synod itself or with districts or other organizations owned and controlled by the Synod (Bylaw 1.10.2). Procedures for expulsion of membership under Article XIII of the Constitution are set forth in Bylaws 2.14–2.17.

Therefore, all members of the Synod are required to resolve all matters of dissent or all disputes by the avenues and structures available to them as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod without resorting to secular courts and without resorting to avenues, means, structures, or communications that are foreign or contrary to the synodical agreements and which are not in harmony with the polity of the Synod. "We appeal once again to all members of the Synod to use the channels which the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod provide for resolving our differences without resorting to the organization and continuation of separate groups" (Opinion Ag. 484, 484A; November, 1973).

Question 2: Does the dissent process set forth in Bylaw 1.8 (Cf. Bylaw 1.6.2) and/or the dispute resolution process set forth in Bylaw 1.10 allow dissent or disputes regarding "syncretism and unionism," "the role and authority of women in the church," synodical governance issues (such as the use of Matthew 18:15 in Bylaws 1.10 and 2.14, the selection of floor committee members, the dispute process set forth in Bylaw 1.10, "close communion issues and practices," and the "lay minister issue"?)

Opinion: Members of the Synod in all those issues identified and in all areas of disagreement and dissent are bound by the provisions of Bylaw section 1.8. Similarly, members of the Synod in disputing such issues are bound by the provisions of Bylaw section 1.10.

The dispute resolution procedure as set forth in Bylaw section 1.10 may precisely be used in such disputes:

This procedure is established to resolve, in a God-pleasing manner, disputes that involve as parties, (1) members of the Synod, (2) the Synod itself, (3) a district or an organization owned and controlled by the Synod, (4) persons involved in excommunication, or (5) lay members of congregations of the Synod holding positions with the Synod itself or with districts or other organizations owned and controlled by the Synod. It shall be the exclusive remedy to resolve such disputes that involve theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues except those covered under Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17 and except as provided in Bylaw 1.10.3. It is applicable whether the dispute involves only a difference of opinion without personal animosity or is one that involves ill will and sin that requires repentance and forgiveness. (Bylaw 1.10.2)

Bylaw 1.10.3 does set forth some exceptions, none of which are applicable to the question asked, as follows:

This chapter provides evangelical procedures to remedy disputes only and does not set forth procedures for expulsion from membership (Constitution Art. XIII and Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17) nor does it set forth procedures for board of regents' supervision of faculty and administration as specified in Bylaws 3.8.2.7.5–3.8.2.7.9 and 3.8.3.8.5–3.8.3.8.9...this chapter does not provide an exclusive remedy for the following matters, unless such matters involve theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues, including those arising under the divine call of a member of the Synod:

- (a) Disputes concerning property rights (e.g., real estate agreements, mortgages, fraud, or embezzlement); and
- (b) Disputes arising under contractual arrangements of all kinds (e.g., contracts for goods, services, or employment benefits).

It must be noted in regard to dissent and disputes in the Synod that the procedures set forth for brotherly dissent (Bylaw section 1.8) and dispute (Bylaw section 1.10) are for the purpose of carrying out the objectives of the Synod (Constitution Art. III), especially objectives 1 and 6:

1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10), work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17) and heresy;

6. Aid congregations by providing a variety of resources and opportunities for recognizing, promoting, expressing, conserving, and defending their confessional unity in the true faith.

Question 3: Does the dispute resolution process set forth in Bylaw 1.10 allow disputes regarding any alleged wrongdoings by any officer, board, or commission of the Synod or allow disputes regarding an[y] alleged violations of the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws by any officer, board, or commission?

Opinion: Bylaw 1.10 not only allows but requires all members to use the avenue provided by the Synod to settle disputes as set forth in Bylaw section 1.10, with the exceptions as set forth in Bylaw 1.10.3. See the answers to both questions one and two above.

Question 4: Do the provisions set forth in Bylaw 3.1 (National Conventions) allow for correction of any alleged irregularities or violations of the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws by the Synod in convention itself, the convention floor committees, or by any officer, board, or commission?

Opinion: Any and all alleged irregularities or violations of the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws committed by the Synod in convention itself, the convention floor committees, or by any officer, board, or commission can be addressed for correction by the Synod in convention. Bylaw 3.1.1 states:

The national convention of the Synod shall afford an opportunity for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the communication of vital information. It is the principal legislative assembly, which amends the Constitution and Bylaws, considers and takes action on reports and overtures, and handles appropriate appeals. It establishes general positions and policies of the Synod, provides overall program direction and priorities, and evaluates all such positions, programs, policies, directions, and priorities in order to provide responsible service for and on behalf of its members...

The broader context of the Constitution and Bylaws also provides the foundation for the answer to the question asked. Example:

1. The officers of the Synod must assume only such rights as have been expressly conferred upon them by the Synod, and in everything pertaining to their rights and the performance of their duties they are responsible to the Synod.

2. The Synod at all times has the right to call its officers to account and, if circumstances require it, to remove them from office in accordance with Christian procedure.

3. The Synod reserves the right to abolish any office it has established. (Art. XI A) (Emphasis added)

2. It is the President's duty to see to it that all the aforementioned act in accordance with the Synod's Constitution, to admonish all who in any way depart from it, and, if such admonition is not heeded, to report such cases to the Synod. (Art. XI B) (Emphasis added)

The delegate convention of the Synod is the legislative assembly that ultimately legislates policy, program, and financial direction to carry on the Synod's work on behalf of and in support of the member congregations. It reserves to itself the right to give direction to all officers and agencies of the Synod. Consequently, all officers and agencies, unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws, shall be accountable to the Synod for all their actions, and any concerns regarding the decisions of such officers or agencies may be brought to the attention of the Synod in convention for appropriate action. (Bylaw 1.4.1) (Emphasis added)

Dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers and then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescission... (Bylaw 1.8.2) (Emphasis added)

(c) He shall call up for review any action by an individual officer, executive, or agency that, in his view, may be in violation of the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.

(1) If he deems appropriate, he shall request that such action be altered or reversed.

(2) If the matter cannot be resolved, he shall refer it to the Board of Directors, the Commission on Constitutional Matters, and/or the Synod in convention as he deems appropriate for the issues and party/parties involved.

(3) This provision in no way alters the President's constitutional duty to report to the Synod those who do not act in accordance with the Constitution and do not heed his admonition, as prescribed in Art. XI B 2 of the Constitution. (paragraph (c) of Bylaw 3.3.1.2) (Emphasis added)

Question 5: Is it in harmony with the Constitution and above Bylaws of the Synod for any member of the Synod to engage in dissenting (or promoting non-compliance) against the Synod by use of a lawsuit, when such members have not used the avenues of dissent as set forth in Bylaw 1.8 of the Synod?

Opinion: No. A lawsuit is not a legitimate avenue of dissent. In the agreement to live and work together, a member of the Synod is required to follow the avenue of dissent as set forth in Bylaw section 1.8, including honoring and upholding the resolutions of the Synod. While a lawsuit may be an appropriate process in which to resolve a dispute in the secular world, members of the Synod are governed by Bylaw section 1.8 as the required, exclusive, and agreed-to avenue of dissent and Bylaw section 1.10 as the required, exclusive, and agreed-to method of dispute resolution. See the answers to questions 1 and 2 above.

Question 6: Is it in harmony with the Constitution and above Bylaws of the Synod for any member of the Synod to engage in dispute against the President of the Synod or the Synod itself by use of a lawsuit, when such members have not used the avenue of dispute as set forth in Bylaw 1.10 of the Synod?

Opinion: No. In the agreement to live and work together, a member of the Synod is required to rely exclusively and fully on the Synod's system of reconciliation and conflict resolution. Unless the dispute is one concerning property rights or contract arrangements under Bylaw 1.10.3 (a) or (b), such suit would be a gross violation of the process of Bylaw section 1.10 and the covenants which bind members together in the Synod. The use of the Synod's conflict resolution procedures is the exclusive and final remedy for those who are in dispute (Bylaw section 1.10). See the answers to questions 1, 2, and 5 above.

Question 7: If any of the above is not in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod, what remedy does the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod provide?

Opinion: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod provide disciplinary measures against any member who violates the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod. Such provisions include Bylaw section 1.10, "Dispute Resolution of the Synod": "The use of the Synod's conflict resolution procedures shall be the exclusive and final remedy for those who are in dispute" (Bylaw 1.10.1) and Article XIII of the Constitution, "Expulsion from the Synod," and its procedures as set forth in Bylaw sections 2.13–2.16:

The only remedy available to the Synod in response to improper activities in the life of such a member of the Synod is, as is true with respect to violations of other conditions of membership or is otherwise appropriate under the Constitution or these Bylaws, and following the procedures set forth in these Bylaws, to take such action as may lead to termination of that membership and the attendant rights and privileges. (Bylaw 2.13.2)

The ecclesiastical supervisors (the President of the Synod and the district presidents) have disciplinary responsibilities such as stated in Articles XI B and XII of the Constitution:

2. It is the President's duty to see to it that all the aforementioned act in accordance with the Synod's Constitution, to admonish all who in any way depart from it, and, if such admonition is not heeded, to report such cases to the Synod.

3. The President has and always shall have the power to advise, admonish, and reprove. He shall conscientiously use all means at his command to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of the Synod. (Art. XI B)

7. The district presidents shall, moreover, especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their district and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the congregations of their district. To this end they shall visit and, according as they deem it necessary, hold investigations in the congregations. Their assistants in this work are the circuit counselors, who therefore shall regularly make their reports to the district president.

8. District presidents are empowered to suspend from membership ordained and commissioned ministers for persistently adhering to false doctrine or for having given offense by an ungodly life, in accordance with such procedure as shall be set forth in the Bylaws of the Synod. (Art. XII)

The ecclesiastical and administrative powers and duties of the President of the Synod provide remedy for the matter as set forth in Bylaws 3.3.1.1, 3.3.1.2, and 3.3.1.3, as do the duties of the district president as set forth especially in Bylaws 4.4.4–4.4.6.

3. Such principles include (but are not limited to):

- The priesthood of believers
- The proper understanding of and distinction between the Holy Christian Church, "church," and Synod
- The unity and fellowship with Christ and with one another
- Congregational self-governance ("supremacy," "sovereignty," "autonomy")
- The proper understanding and distinction between church and ministry
- The theology of the divine call and the dignity of the holy ministry
- The joint extension of the kingdom of God (extending the Gospel witness in the world)
- Unity and purity of doctrine
- Doctrinal and ecclesiastical supervision

4. After stating the reasons for forming a Synod, listing the conditions for membership, and outlining its external organization, the 1847 Constitution of the Synod in Article IV set forth the "Business

of Synod.” This included “To stand guard over (*Ueberwachung*—“watch over”) the purity and unity of doctrine within the synodical circle” (Article IV 1), “Supervision (*Aufsicht*) over the performance of the official duties on the part of the pastors and teachers of Synod” (Article IV 2), and “To give theological opinions, also settle disputes between single persons or between parties in the congregations. But the latter is to take place only in cases where all persons involved have applied for arbitration” (Article IV 9).

5. Under Article V of the 1847 Constitution, “Execution of Synodical Business,” the Synod required the President to report on the visitations he had made by the instruction of the Synod in the foregoing year, and to supervise (*beaufsichtigen*—“oversee, direct, superintend”) the pastors and teachers in respect to their doctrine, life, and performance of their duties. In this same article “supervision language is used such as “visit,” “investigate,” “supervise,” and “examine.” Under the same article it was recognized that the Synod as a whole was to supervise how each individual pastor cares for the souls under his care and that the Synod has the right of inquiry and judgment (Article V 15). Among the various duties of the President in Article VI a, it was expected of him in his supervisory capacity to follow strictly the written instructions that he had received from the Synod (Article VI A 13).

6. “...For this reason, the Synod establishes procedures for such action, including the identification of those who are responsible for ecclesiastical supervision of its members. Such supervision includes not only suspension or termination of membership but also advice, counsel, encouragement, and, when necessary, admonition regarding teaching and/or practice...” (Bylaw 2.14.1); “...Furthermore, it has identified those responsible for ecclesiastical supervision of its members, including such matters as advice and counsel, as well as suspension of membership and forfeiture of it for failure to continue to meet membership requirements...” (Bylaw 2.1.2).

7. Landmark October 11, 1974 Opinion by the CCM:

An analysis of Assertions in Present Controversy

In dealing with the many requests that have been placed before the Commission on Constitutional Matters during this time of controversy within the Synod, the Commission has heard recurring expressions of certain propositions. It feels constrained to comment on some of these assertions which in the estimation of the Commission are either invalid or are at least misleading and in that way tend to becloud the issues before the Synod and to vitiate the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.

I. “Christians are ruled not by laws but by the Gospel.”

There are several ways in which this theme has been stated in denigrating the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod and thus finally making them of no effect.

Among Missouri Synod Lutherans there should be no need to state once again that we believe and confess that we are saved not by the works of the law but by God’s grace for Christ’s sake through faith. We exult in our freedom from the demands of the law as children of a gracious heavenly Father. We remember with gratitude that Christ our Savior has fulfilled these demands for us and that through His blood we have forgiveness for all our sins. And so we can rejoice in the promise of life everlasting already here and now. This is the wellspring of our life and we will permit no legalism in whatever form to deprive us of the joy which is ours thru the unmerited grace of our God.

Do we then renounce, repudiate, set aside the law of God? By no means. As Lutherans learn in their Catechism instruction, the law of God has three great purposes:

1. To hold in check the coarse outbursts of sin on the part of unbelievers and also on the part of the old Adam of the Christian;

2. To show us our sins so that we may truly find our joy and salvation in Christ, the Savior from sin;
3. To serve the child of God as a guide for his doxological life of service to the God of all love as that life is lived out among other men. There are some who deny the third use of the law but the Commission affirms what the Scriptures and our Lutheran Confessions teach regarding it.

So much can be said for the law of God. It has a place in the life of the Christian. But is there room for human, man-made laws in the life of Christians together? We submit that there is. Whenever two individuals, even Christian people, enter into a relationship with each other—whether it be in marriage or in a business partnership or in whatever relationship it may be—certain agreements, rules, contracts, covenants—“laws,” if you will—become necessary. The same is true when Christians join together as a worshiping and serving community of God in the world. It is customary for Lutheran congregations to use not only the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions but also unwritten traditions and especially written Constitutions and Bylaws as instruments under which they agree to govern themselves.

This is true also of larger federations of Christians, such as agencies, councils, and synods. In our Synod we make certain commitments to one another. We agree what we shall do and how we shall do it and why we shall do it. These agreements are spelled out in a Constitution, in Bylaws, and in resolutions. We promise to walk together according to the agreements that we have made. We pledge one another our word.

Since Christians recognize the law of Christian love as the highest law of human conduct, it governs also our life together within the Synod. In Christ, we love those with whom we have joined hands and to whom we have given our pledge, and so we keep our word to them.

We carry out our solemn covenants and agreements. To set aside any article of the Constitution, a bylaw, or even a resolution of the Synod, simply because in our personal estimation it is not acceptable, means to exalt our own will above the will of the Synod stated especially in its Constitution and Bylaws. That would be self-seeking, self-righteous, judgmental, and loveless. This is not the way of Christians with one another.

To be sure, there are genuine instances when conscience is involved. It may be a conscience instructed by the Word of God or it may be an erring one. Lutherans are sensitive to the plea of conscience. Lutherans sometimes forget, however, that Martin Luther placed his great emphasis on the conscience which is informed and instructed by the Word of God. We need to guard against using conscience as a misnomer for personal desire and opinion.

The Synod has always made provision to respect the genuine demands of conscience. However, the individual who is troubled in his conscience must also respect the conscience of those who do not agree with him and be prepared to support his position from the Word of God.

As our teachers have so long pointed out, one must distinguish carefully between the giving of offense and the taking of offense. If the Synod were to halt its operations whenever someone takes offense at its action, the Synod would be paralyzed. To be sure, the Synod must be on its guard never to give offense. But the individual, over against the Synod, must also exercise great care that he is truly governed by love and not by self-interest or self-will.

To bring all this down to the issue with which we are dealing: It is a breach of Christian love to place self-will above the mutually agreed upon will of the Synod as it has stated it in its Constitution and Bylaws.

II. “People are more important than rules.”

Of course. Our Lord’s death on the cross has made that clear for all time. And yet, we need to guard against wrong conclusions. Even in the matter of our redemption God, in spite of His love for sinners, did not simply set His Law aside. The Law needed to be fulfilled and the penalty for its transgression needed to be paid. God’s grace did not come cheap. It cost Him the best that He had. It cost Him the lifeblood of His Son. All too often “people are more important than rules” becomes a rationalistic slogan.

Rules seem to be fine as long as they operate in our favor; but when we find ourselves in disagreement with the rules we easily resort to the role of “justifying ourselves.” Furthermore, the slogan is fallacious if it is meant to imply that any person is exempt from or above commonly agreed upon rules or laws. In our own nation we have established once again that not even the highest officials are above the law.

We have already indicated above the place of law, rule, covenant, contract in our life together in the Synod. These rules which we have adopted are not in opposition to the welfare of people; on the contrary, they are designed to protect and to foster the welfare of people. When a few rebel against the “rules” and resort to arguments such as “people are more important than rules” to justify their action, one needs to ask which is the more important: the self-will of the few or the welfare of the many? If certain “rules” are really injurious to the many, then the many—not just the few—have the right and the means to change the rules. But until the many have reached that decision, the few are obligated to respect the “rules” as well as are the “many” who, too, are “people.” The “rules” which the Synod has adopted for its self-government are primarily its Constitution and its Bylaws.

III. “But the Bylaws are not applicable to our present situation.”

This assertion is made especially with reference to the establishment of Seminex and to the certification, placement, calling, ordination, and installation of Seminex graduates. The Commission holds that the argument is invalid. To say that “no one ever anticipated such a situation” does not mean that the Constitution and Bylaws do not apply. On the contrary, the bylaws do indeed speak directly and clearly to the issue confronting us today.

The question is not: “How may Seminex students be qualified for the ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?” The question rather is: “How has the Synod decided that it wishes to have pastors trained, qualified, called, ordained, and installed in its congregations?”

In answer to that question the Synod has spoken again and again. Perhaps no other subject receives as much attention in the bylaws. The Synod has stated in great detail that it will train its own pastors, set its own requirements, do its own certifying, etc. In short, the Synod has made it plain that it will not permit a small group within the Synod to usurp these functions which the Synod has reserved to itself.

Furthermore, it is not correct to say that bylaws apply only to ordinary but not to extraordinary situations. Such an assertion forgets that one of the principal reasons that an organization drafts a Constitution and Bylaws is to set forth already in advance the guidelines for its conduct in the future, so that it will not find it necessary to make basic decisions in an ad hoc and emotionally charged situation.

IV. “Under Article VII congregations are completely autonomous.”

Especially the Apology to the Augsburg Confession is quoted in this connection. A few familiar quotations from Walther are also usually

ushered in support of this thesis. (It may be noted in passing that Dr. Walther also had some pointed things to say about the responsibilities of congregations toward the other members of the Synod). The difficulty lies in the word “completely,” whether it is stated or, as more often, merely implied.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod does place great stress on the autonomy of the local congregation. Let that be emphasized. At the same time, however, it should be stated that autonomy must be regarded in relative terms. There is no absolute freedom this side of heaven. Every freedom that men claim for themselves is only relative and is circumscribed by one or more considerations. In various church polities some forms of church government grant congregations more autonomy than do others. Among the Baptists, for example, there is a high degree of congregational autonomy.

Also among us, however, it is more exact to speak of Missouri Synod polity as synodical polity rather than congregational polity. We are primarily a federation or association of self-governing congregations. But the very word “federation” or “association” indicates that the “self-governing” aspect has some modifications. When a congregation joins the Synod it does give up certain rights and privileges. For example, it may no longer call in a completely unrestricted way whomever it wishes as its pastor; it may no longer live only for itself and its own local concerns; it may no longer use textbooks which are doctrinally unsound for the instruction of its children; it may no longer enter unilaterally into fellowship with other church bodies; etc. As a congregation surrenders such “rights” it gains in reality great benefits.

One of these benefits is the assurance that it will have assistance in finding a pastor who will preach and teach the Word of God in all its purity and administer the Sacraments according to Christ’s institution. Indeed, this was one of the major concerns when the Synod was organized, a concern which was felt very keenly on the congregational level among the lay people of that day. Consequently, even though there were Lutheran colleges and seminaries available for the training of its pastors, the Synod from the very beginning decided that it would train its own pastors. In fact, even before the Synod was organized some of the forefathers established a log cabin in Perry County, Missouri, for this purpose.

Those rights which a congregation still retains are zealously guarded. The Commission on Constitutional Matters has ruled more than once in favor of the maintenance of the rights of a self-governing congregation. It has held, for instance, that even though the Synod may suspend a pastor from membership in the Synod, only the congregation can decide whether it will depose its pastor and retain its membership in the Synod or whether it will retain its pastor and give up its synodical membership. This is a right which continues to belong to the congregation. It must be admitted that sometimes the line of distinction between the rights of a congregation and the rights of the Synod is somewhat blurred. Consequently, it is wholesome for the Synod to be constantly concerned about respecting and preserving whatever autonomy is guaranteed to its member congregations. In the process, however, the case in behalf of the autonomy of a local congregation must not be overstated. That congregation, too, has made a solemn covenant with its fellow member congregations of the Synod. Christians have the right to expect that fellow Christians are persons of honor and integrity who keep their word.

The Commission on Constitutional Matters submits these comments in the hope that they will help to clarify some of the issues confronting our church, to the end that we may walk together in love as children of God who have assumed common commitments in the service of our gracious Lord and Savior.

District Church Extension Fund Use of Dispute Resolution Process (11-2591)

A congregation of the Synod has been in dispute with one of the seven district church extension funds that operate separate from and independent of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod. The Lutheran Church Extension Fund—Missouri Synod exists pursuant to Bylaws 3.6.4ff and is operated by its members and board of directors. The separate district church extension funds are subject to the supervision of the Board for Church Extension which exists under Bylaws 3.10.6 and 3.10.6.1.

The congregation has requested that its district's separately incorporated district church extension fund enter into a Bylaw section 1.10 dispute resolution process, which the church extension fund has declined to do. As a result, the congregation submitted to the commission an extensive letter with multiple questions and sub-questions.

Among the questions and concerns expressed by the congregation are some issues and concerns outside the authority and responsibility of the commission to address, because they do not involve interpretation of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions. These issues may more appropriately be raised with ecclesiastical supervisors. The congregation is urged to submit such concerns to its ecclesiastical supervisor, and as necessary through the Synod's process of ecclesiastical supervision.

Question 1: What are the meanings of the terms “exclusive” and “exclusively” in the context of the preamble, purposes, and exception clauses to the dispute resolution process found in Bylaws 1.10.1–1.10.3?

Opinion: The terms “exclusive” or “exclusively” appear four times in Bylaws 1.10.1–1.10.3 and are highlighted in the quotations below. Bylaw 1.10.1.1 reads:

The Holy Scriptures (1 Cor. 6:1–7) urge Christians to settle their differences by laying them before the “members of the brotherhood.” Therefore, the Synod in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 6 calls upon all parties to a disagreement, accusation, controversy, or disciplinary action to rely exclusively and fully on the Synod's system of reconciliation and conflict resolution. The use of the Synod's conflict resolution procedures shall be the exclusive and final remedy for those who are in dispute. Fitness for ministry and other theological matters must be determined within the church. Parties are urged, in matters of a doctrinal nature, to follow the procedures as outline in Bylaw section 1.8 [emphasis added].

Bylaw 1.10.2, after listing those parties who are to participate in the Synod's dispute resolution process, continues as follows:

...It shall be the exclusive remedy to resolve such disputes that involve theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues except those covered under Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17 and except as provided in Bylaw 1.10.3. It is applicable whether the dispute involves only a difference of opinion without personal animosity or is one that involves ill will and sin that requires repentance and forgiveness. No person or agency to whom or to which the provisions of this dispute resolution process are applicable because such person or agency is a member of the Synod may render these provisions inapplicable by terminating that membership [emphasis added].

Finally, the term appears in the exceptions paragraph, Bylaw 1.10.3, as follows:

This chapter provides evangelical procedures to remedy disputes only and does not set forth procedures for expulsion from membership (Constitution, Art. XIII and Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17); nor does it set forth procedures for board of regents' supervision of faculty and administration as specified in Bylaws 3.10.4.7.5–3.10.4.7.9 and 3.10.5.6.5–3.10.5.6.9. While Christians are encouraged to seek to resolve all their disputes without resorting to secular courts, this chapter does not provide an exclusive remedy for the following matters, unless such matters involve theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues, including

those arising under the divine call of a member of the Synod [emphasis added]:

- (a) Disputes concerning property rights (e.g., real estate agreements, mortgages, fraud, or embezzlement)
- (b) Disputes arising under contractual arrangements of all kinds (e.g., contracts for goods, services, or employment benefits)

As a public expression to all Christians, the Synod recognizes that the biblical reconciliation of persons in conflict begins with God's truth that all Christians are sinners, that all Christians have been reconciled to God through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, and that Christ's ministry of reconciliation is one of the church's foremost priorities.

The first sentence of Bylaw 1.10.1 is based on the understanding of Scripture that all members of the body of Christ who are parties to a disagreement should rely on a God-pleasing system of reconciliation and conflict resolution without resort to the secular courts. The first use of the word “exclusively” is a call by the Synod upon all of its members to do so. The Synod implores its members, as well as the lay members of member congregations of the Synod, to recognize their responsibilities for conflict resolution as set forth in the Preamble, urging them to settle their differences by laying them before the “members of the brotherhood,” using the guidance of Matthew chapter 18 and recognizing that at the heart and center of Christian conflict resolution is the grace of Jesus Christ. The next use of that term in Bylaw 1.10.1 specifically declares the Synod's process to be the exclusive, which is to say the only, remedy for those members of the Synod who are in dispute.

In Bylaw 1.10.2, the explanation of the purpose of the Synod's dispute resolution process, the Synod has declared with respect to the specific participants named in that bylaw that the Synod's process will be the one and only remedy to resolve disputes among those named where the issues involve theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues, and except for those covered by Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17 and Bylaws 3.10.4.7.9, 3.10.5.6.9, and 1.10.3. The binding nature of this exclusive remedy as to such issues is honored and recognized even in the secular courts of the United States. At the same time, the Synod is acknowledging that in areas other than theological, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical, its authority can be limited by civil authority.

Finally, the exceptions paragraph (Bylaw 1.10.3) makes clear that disputes involving property rights, including real estate agreements and mortgages, insofar as such may be involved in the case at hand, are not subject to the exclusive remedy of the dispute resolution process. In this respect, the phrase “this chapter does not provide an exclusive remedy for the following matters” does not mean that the dispute resolution process cannot be voluntarily used by the parties defined in Bylaw 1.10.2 and does not preclude those parties from voluntarily agreeing to engage in the dispute resolution process of the Synod rather than resorting to other dispute resolution processes, including the secular courts. Rather, the bylaw recognizes that in such matters, the participants need not agree to participate in the Synod's process nor be involuntarily bound by that process. The language of Bylaw 1.10.3 allows persons involved in disputes concerning property rights or contractual arrangements not to subject themselves to the binding processes of the Synod but rather to rely on other remedies and forums.

Question 2: What specifically precipitated the addition of the “exception clause” contained in Bylaw 1.10.3?

Opinion: The current version of Bylaw 1.10.3 was originally found in former Bylaw 8.02. While amended by 2004 convention Res. 8-01A, the process in which the current dispute resolution process is based was originally adopted by 1992 Res. 5-01B as a result of a task force effort to review and revise the entire dispute resolution

process of the Synod as it had previously existed. The exception clause was not an addition but rather an integral part of an overall formulation of dispute resolution, recognizing the limits of the authority of the church in a secular society.

The exception clause of 1.10.3 is certainly recognition of the reality that, due to the fallen nature of our world, even within the church itself there will be conflicts which may fail to be resolved within the church, and may ultimately need to be resolved outside the church, even within the secular courts. In our society, our secular government has asserted exclusive jurisdiction over some types of issues, often involving contract law, employment duties and responsibilities, environmental regulation, and similar issues. While Christians may desire to have those issues resolved within the Christian community rather than through the use of secular means involving either the courts or other processes, a Christian may not have that choice. On the other hand, the Constitution of the United States recognizes that in certain issues relating to theological matters, churches such as the LCMS may retain exclusive jurisdiction regarding such issues, even to the exclusion of the secular courts. The Synod has historically chosen to do so, at least to the extent provided in its Constitution and Bylaws.

As part of our living in the secular world, one of the issues which the Synod does not control is the issue of ownership of property and contract rights. The Synod does not register deeds or titles to vehicles, register mortgages or security interest, or otherwise become involved or have binding jurisdiction over such issues.

Question 3: Is an entity/agency subject to participation in the Synod's dispute resolution process whose complete governing control is provided for by either Synod- or district-level appointment?

Opinion: The Synod's dispute resolution process applies to an entity/agency created and controlled by the Synod or one of its component parts, its districts. The letter of the congregation expresses its understanding and desire, shared by the Synod itself, that all disputes, disagreements, and offenses which arise among members of the body of Christ are a matter of grave concern for the whole church. That concept is contained in the first sentence of the Preamble to the Synod's dispute resolution process, Bylaw 1.10.1, quoted above. While the Synod has expressed as a matter of policy its recognition that it is desirable that all such conflicts be resolved within the body of Christ and consistent with the Holy Scriptures, the Synod has also recognized in its bylaws that it has no authority to impose its dispute resolution process on those who are not members of the Synod. As such, Bylaw 1.10.2 identifies the scope of the dispute resolution process provided in Bylaw 1.10, to apply to "(1) members of the Synod, (2) the Synod itself, (3) a district or an organization owned and controlled by the Synod, (4) persons involved in excommunication, or (5) lay members of congregations of the Synod holding positions with the Synod itself or with districts or other organizations owned and controlled by the Synod."

Only those parties identified in Bylaw 1.10.1.2 are entitled or required to use the Synod's dispute resolution processes as an exclusive remedy to resolve a dispute. The third category listed, a district or an organization owned and controlled by the Synod, requires further discussion. A district is "Synod" in that place. An organization owned and controlled by a district is an organization owned and controlled by the Synod itself. A prior iteration of this bylaw included a definition of "organizations owned and controlled by the Synod" as including any board, commission, committee, or council of the Synod, Radio Station KFUD, the synodwide corporate entities, all educational in-

stitutions owned and maintained by the Synod, and also "all districts and incorporated church extension funds."¹

That language was stricken from a later iteration of the bylaws, which was apparently a reflection of a general understanding that continued inclusion was superfluous, and not a change of policy. This is reflected particularly in the actions of the 1981 convention. At that convention, the district CEF involved in the question was specifically authorized by Res. 5-06A. The same convention, in Res. 5-07, made clear that the Synod considered all corporations formed by its districts to be ultimately owned and controlled by the Synod itself.² Thus, a district CEF is subject to the provisions of the Synod's dispute resolution process for matters involving theological, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical issues, but would not be required to acquiesce in that process in situations involving the exceptions described in Bylaw 1.10.3, including property disputes such as mortgage issues.

Question 4: If an agency which is governed by Synod or district employees becomes a party involved in a conflict with a member of the LCMS, does the Synod or governing district also need to be included in the dispute resolution process?

Opinion: No. The Bylaws of the Synod make no such provision or requirement.

(Adopted Nov. 11–13, 2011)

Election of the President of the Synod (11-2592)

During the commission's May 7–8, 2011 meeting, the Secretary of the Synod submitted in writing a series of questions regarding the voting process for the election of the President of the Synod as a result of 2010 convention Res. 8-17. The commission completed its discussion of the questions during its September 3–4 meeting and responded as follows.

Question 1: In the case of delegates to district conventions that have been duly elected and pre-registered by their congregations or parishes, can such delegates be included on the voting list for President of the Synod if prevented from attending their district conventions because of illness or other emergency?

Opinion: The answer to this question is "no." Bylaw 3.12.2.3 and the resolution adopted by the 2010 convention (Res. 8-17) clearly require delegate attendance at the previous district convention in order to participate in the election of the President the following year. To prevent the situation described in the question, congregations are advised to elect alternate delegates to the district convention.

Question 2: If a congregation experiences a pastoral vacancy at the time of its district convention, the congregation sends its lay delegate to the convention, and the vacancy is filled after the district convention but prior to the election of the President of the Synod, can the congregation be given opportunity to have also a pastoral vote in the presidential election?

Opinion: The answer to this question is "no." The bylaw requirement that the individuals, pastor and lay, who cast ballots in the election of the President of the Synod must have been in attendance at the previous district convention allows no exceptions. Congregations whose pastoral offices are vacant at the time of their district conventions will not have opportunity to participate in the election of the President of the Synod.

Question 3: If a congregation becomes a member of the Synod after its district convention but prior to the presidential election, thereby not having had opportunity to send delegates to

the district convention, can it be allowed to participate in the presidential election, which is to provide opportunity to “every congregation” (Res. 8-17)?

Opinion: The answer to this question is “no” also. Because the congregation was not able to send delegates to the district convention, it therefore is not able to satisfy the attendance requirement of Bylaw 3.12.2.3.

(Adopted Sept. 3–4, 2011)

University Lutheran Student Center—Minneapolis (11-2597)

In a letter dated July 13, 2011, the president of University Lutheran Chapel of Minneapolis, Minnesota, submitted a set of questions along with background information for consideration by the commission. The questions, pertaining to a 1963 resolution adopted by the former Minnesota District of the Synod which created the Minnesota North and Minnesota South Districts, were submitted as follows:

1. Does an adopted resolution by a district in convention pertaining to its division into two or more districts that includes an agreement as to how a piece of property is to be used for the benefit of the newly formed districts constitute an agreement between the newly formed districts?
2. If the aforementioned constitutes an agreement between districts, is that agreement binding?
3. Is it legitimate for a district to unilaterally change, either explicitly or effectively, an agreement it has with one or more other districts if the agreement does not explicitly grant the right to do so?
4. May a district that holds title to a real property that by agreement between it and one or more other districts is to be used to serve each of the districts in question dispose of the property without first obtaining either (a) the permission/approval of the other district(s) to the sale or (b) the approval of the other district(s) to a change in the agreement?
5. If an agreement exists specifically and only due to the ownership of a specific piece of [real] property, would selling the property effectively change/terminate the agreement?
6. If an agreement exists between two or more districts by district convention action, may that agreement be changed, either explicitly or effectively, without first obtaining the approval of a convention of each of the districts in question?

Opinion: The questions presented to the Commission on Constitutional Matters assume the existence of an agreement in the resolution in question. There is no such agreement within that resolution. The commission finds nothing further in the resolution that it can interpret in response to the questions asked.

(Adopted Sept. 3–4, 2011)

Interpretation of Constitution Art. VI 2 b (11-2598)

In a letter addressed to the Commission on Constitutional Matters dated July 11, 2011, a pastor of the Synod submitted four questions requiring an interpretation of Synod Constitution Art. VI 2 b and relevant Synod bylaws (such as Bylaw 2.14.1) with respect to ecclesiastical supervision.

The letter included the background of the February 12, 2010 opinion of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) entitled “Response to ‘Request for CTCR Opinion Concerning Continued Eligibility of an Inactive Emeritus Member Under Article VI of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.’”

A summary paragraph of the CTCR opinion stated:

It is the opinion of the CTCR that the meaning of the phrase “taking part in” within the context of Article VI 2 b is a matter of interpretation

based upon the original intent of our Synod’s fathers when they drafted the Constitution. Its potential theological meanings are varied, as noted above. Its particular usage in the context of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a question, therefore, that can be rightly decided only by those who are charged with the responsibility for such interpretation, the Commission on Constitutional Matters.

The four questions were submitted to the Commission on Constitutional Matters in view of the CTCR opinion (the full February 12, 2010 opinion is available on the Commission on Constitutional Matters Web page: <http://www.lcms.org/ccm/>).

Upon request of the commission, a portion of the first day of the commission meeting was devoted to a conversation with Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, Executive Director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), regarding his commission’s February 12, 2010 opinion and a more recent September 8, 2011 related opinion, “CTCR Response to Request from Rocky Mountain District President.” Also discussed were a paper entitled “Historical Background and Interpretation of Article VI.2 of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” by Dr. Gerhard Bode of the St. Louis seminary and other related documents and former Commission on Constitutional Matters opinions.

Question 1: Is reception of the Lord’s Supper in an unofficial and private capacity considered “[t]aking part in the services and sacramental rites” of a congregation, as that phrase is used in Article VI, section 2 b of the Constitution?

Opinion: No, reception of the Lord’s Supper, by itself, does not constitute “[t]aking part in the services and sacramental rites” of a congregation, as that phrase is used in Article VI, paragraph 2 b of the Constitution. In so answering, it is assumed that the intention of this question is the same question that was asked of the CTCR: “Is reception of the Lord’s Supper ‘[t]aking part in the services and sacramental rites’ of a congregation, as that phrase is used in Article VI Section 2 b of the Constitution?”

This opinion is not based on whether reception of the Lord’s Supper occurs “in an unofficial and private capacity,” as that distinction is not found in the Constitution. The decision is also not based on whether the individual members of the Synod (ordained ministers and commissioned ministers) are active or inactive, as the constitutional requirements of membership are the same for both categories of members. Instead, this opinion is based on the constitutional “[c]onditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod.” And as indicated in the CTCR opinion, it is a matter of the interpretation of the phrase “‘taking part in’ within the context of Article VI 2 b...”

The immediate **context** of “[t]aking part in the services and sacramental rites” is Article VI 1 and 2 as follows:

Article VI Conditions of Membership

Conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod are the following:

1. Acceptance of the confessional basis of Article II.
2. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as:
 - a. Serving congregations of mixed confession, as such, by ministers of the church;
 - b. Taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession;
 - c. Participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities.

The last two words of paragraph 2, “Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as” [emphasis added] indicate that what follows in the three subparagraphs of paragraph 2 are examples of that which is prohibited in the opening sentence of paragraph 2. Subparagraph b prohibits a member of the Synod from

taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession.

Historically, “[t]aking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession” (Art. VI 2 b [emphasis added]) is consistent with and linked to subparagraphs “a” and “c.” Subparagraph “a” is the example of serving as the called pastor administering Word and Sacraments. Subparagraph “c” is an example of the activities of administering the Word through publishing and distributing tracts (pamphlets, written or printed materials, etc.) and the administration of the Word and Sacraments in mission work. (These are public acts of the congregation and/or its pastor.)

Similarly, subparagraph “b” is an example of activities in administering the Word and Sacraments—thus being a co-administrant, co-officiant, celebrant, or worship leader in some capacity in the administering of the Divine Service, conducting either the liturgy of the Word or of Holy Communion. This includes the official sponsorship or involvement of congregations as such, in worship “services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession” (Art. VI 2 b). Leading or sponsoring such services with those not in church fellowship with the LCMS violates the Synod’s biblical and confessional commitments. “[T]he mixing of churches and of faiths” is to be “renounced[d],” “give[n] up,” or “withdraw[n]” from.³

Context and Historical Background

For interpreting and understanding Article VI 2 b, appropriate attention was given to the context, its historical background, and the original intent of the Synod’s fathers when they drafted the Constitution. The source of Article VI 2 is the original 1847 founding constitution of the Missouri Synod. The founders adopted a constitution containing a series of conditions of membership which has been maintained with few changes to the present day. In its historical context, Article VI 2 addressed concerns regarding the “mixing of churches” (now described as altar and pulpit fellowship with those with whom we are in doctrinal disagreement [mixing of faiths]), fellowship involving LCMS and non-LCMS congregations, and the leadership of heterodox congregations by an LCMS pastor. Former LCMS President J.A.O. Preus, in his 1981 report to the Synod convention, acknowledged as much when he stated

We also have a whole series of overtures dealing in one way or another with the subject of interchurch relations and unionism and separatism. I have been in the ministry for over 35 years and have been involved in discussions of unionism and related matters for all of these years. I have hoped that during my years in office some greater clarity could be developed among us as to what really is unionism and what must be dealt with in a disciplinary way, as over against things that might appear to some to be a compromise of the Word of God but to others are not such at all and no intent at compromise is intended. I hope that the Synod will try to develop rubrics and guidelines for a church of 3 million members in the 1980s and 1990s, rather than always relying on definitions which are a century old, which deal basically with a European situation and are not particularly helpful for our modern time. I believe our fathers were eminently sincere and totally correct in what they did, but I think we have to rethink our own position on these matters so as to make their position our own or so as to make their position something that is workable and feasible and acceptable in our own midst. We can all agree that we want to avoid a total separatism on the one hand and a wild irresponsible ecumenism on the other. The difficulty is to find a middle path which will avoid both of these extremes and which can work in all situations in our church.⁴

Question 2: If the answer to question 1 is yes, then: Is the reception of the Lord’s Supper by a member of the Synod in an unofficial and private capacity, with a congregation that

is a member of a church body that is not in church fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (*i.e.*, the ELCA), a failure of the membership requirement of “[r]enunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description” as that phrase is used in Article VI, section 2 of the Constitution?

Opinion: While the answer to question 1 is no, see the full answer to question 1, which recognizes that Article VI 2 b does not address the issue of an individual member attending a service of worship or receiving Holy Communion. Rather, Article VI 2 a, b, and c addresses “mixing of churches” (now described as altar and pulpit fellowship with those with whom we are in doctrinal disagreement [mixing of faiths]), fellowship involving LCMS and non-LCMS congregations, and the leadership of heterodox congregations by an LCMS pastor. The commission recognizes that the examples given in subparagraphs a, b, and c of Article VI 2 do not provide an exhaustive list of every example that might violate the condition of membership that calls for the “renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description.”

Question 3: Is it proper for a district president to restrict or suspend a retired pastor’s (emeritus) ministry in the LCMS... for communing in a church not in fellowship with the LCMS? [Question has been abbreviated in order to focus on the substance of the question.]

Question 4: If the answer to question 3 is yes, then: Is it proper for any district president or other elected officers of the Synod and its districts to provide for monitoring and disciplining members of the Synod [for]... attending worship, communion, a wedding, and/or a funeral in a non-LCMS church? [Question has been abbreviated in order to focus on the substance of the question.]

Opinion: Because of the nature and relationship of the two questions, the commission hereby answers the questions together. The constitutional requirements for maintaining membership are the same for all members, whether active or emeritus. While the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod do not make explicit use of the terminology “monitoring and disciplining members of the Synod,” the responsibility for ecclesiastical supervision is clear in the Constitution and Bylaws. The following bylaw and constitutional provisions apply whether or not an individual member of the synod is active or inactive (including “emeritus”).

Bylaw 2.13.2 states: “An individual member of the Synod may be placed on restricted status by the district president who has ecclesiastical supervision of the member.” Bylaw 2.13.2.1 (a) states: “The district president may take this action if information with respect to such member provides a substantial basis to conclude that such member (a) has engaged in conduct which could lead to expulsion from the Synod under Article XIII of the Constitution...”

Bylaw 2.13.4 states: “When formal proceedings have been commenced against a member of the Synod (individual and congregation) under the procedures set forth in Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17 which may lead to expulsion from the Synod under Article XIII of the Constitution, the member shall have suspended status. If such member was on restricted status at the commencement of formal proceedings, the restricted status shall become suspended status.” Bylaw 2.13.4.1 states: “Suspended status shall continue until the formal proceedings are completed favorably to the member or until membership is duly terminated.”

Bylaws 2.14.1 and 2.14.1 (a) also apply in answering these questions:

2.14.1 Termination of membership in the Synod is a serious matter involving both the doctrine and life of those to whom it has

been granted. Such action should only be taken as a final step when it is clear that those who are being terminated after previous futile admonition have acted contrary to the confession laid down in Article II or the conditions of membership laid down in Article VI or have persisted in offensive conduct (Constitution, Art. XIII 1). For this reason, the Synod establishes procedures for such action, including the identification of those who are responsible for ecclesiastical supervision of its members. Such supervision includes not only suspension or termination of membership but also advice, counsel, encouragement, and, when necessary, admonition regarding teaching and/or practice. Furthermore, the procedures that may lead to termination of membership also provide for the protection of members by including provisions for challenging the decisions of ecclesiastical supervisors in these matters as well as provisions for restoration of membership that has been suspended or terminated.

a Although the Constitution (see Art. VI 3 and Art. XII 7–8) deals with the “life” of ordained and commissioned ministers of the Synod and provides for dealing with “ungodly life” of ordained and commissioned ministers, this does not suggest that the Synod, including any district of the Synod, has the duty or even an opportunity to observe the activities in the life of an individual member of the Synod or has the means or authority to regulate, restrict, or control those activities. The only remedy available to the Synod in response to improper activities in the life of such a member of the Synod is, as is true with respect to violations of other conditions of membership or is otherwise appropriate under the Constitution or the Bylaws, and following the procedures set forth in these Bylaws, to take such action as may lead to termination of that membership and the attendant rights and privileges.⁵

Article XIII of the Constitution provides the constitutional basis for the above bylaws:

Article XIII Expulsion from the Synod

1. Members who act contrary to the confession laid down in Article II and to the conditions of membership laid down in Article VI or persist in an offensive conduct shall, after previous futile admonition, be expelled from the Synod.
2. Expulsion shall be executed only after following such procedure as shall be set forth in the Bylaws of the Synod.
3. If the member expelled is a pastor or teacher in a congregation of the Synod, such congregation, unless it has already done so, is held to depose him from office and to deal with him in accordance with the Word of God, notwithstanding an appeal. If it persistently refuses to do so, the respective district is to deal with it. If all negotiations and admonitions fail of their purpose, such congregation forfeits its membership in the Synod.
4. Because of their expulsion, those so expelled forfeit their membership and all share in the property of the Synod. The latter holds good also with respect to those who for any reason themselves sever their connection with the Synod.

In Article XII of the Constitution, the district president is given ecclesiastical authority in the Constitution of the Synod: “The district president shall, moreover, especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their district...” (Art. XII 7). “District presidents are empowered to suspend from membership ordained and commissioned ministers for persistently adhering to false doctrine or for having given offense by an ungodly life, in accordance with such procedure as shall be set forth in the Bylaws of the Synod” (Art. XII 8).

Any “discipline” by a district president (ecclesiastical supervisor) must be in compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod (cf. the above constitution and bylaw citations). For instance, ecclesiastical supervision is exercised not by the individual interpre-

tation of the ecclesiastical supervisor, not by public opinion, and not by individuals or groups within or outside of the Synod, but by the collective will of the congregations of the Synod in convention. This holds true in administering the supervisory and disciplinary provisions of the Bylaws in carrying out Article XIII of the Constitution.

Ecclesiastical supervision in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is not determined by “contemporary situations,” “gut feelings,” “individual” judgment, personal opinion, or personal conscience, but by the collective will, judgment, and conscience of the Synod, a human organization, as stated in its Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions. Such provisions in the Synod’s Constitution and Bylaws provide not only “evangelical supervision” (Art. III 8), but also “protection for congregations, pastors, teachers, and other church workers...” (Art. III 9). The Synod’s Constitution and Bylaws provide not only for the membership requirement of “[a]cceptance of the confessional basis of Article II” (Art. VI 1), but also for the freedom to participate in doctrinal discussions, brotherly dissent, dispute resolution, and determining theological positions and practices.

The Synod’s covenant provides for a healthy balance of honoring and upholding the Synod’s position while having the right to discuss issues freely and disagree with the Synod’s position or each other in Christian love and respect, without suspicion, slander, and violating the Eighth Commandment and without legalism, condemnation, dissension, and politicizing the matter. The ecclesiastical supervisor has the ministry opportunity and responsibility to assist, to support, to facilitate, to lead, and to give advice in the balance of these two tensions in an evangelical manner.

In conclusion, “In accordance with the confessional nature of participation in the Lord’s Supper (cf. pp. 19–23), and in agreement with Lutheranism’s historic position, it is inappropriate to attend the Lord’s Supper at non-Lutheran altars. Since participation in Holy Communion, scripturally and confessionally understood, entails agreement in the Gospel and all its articles, it would not be appropriate to attend the Lord’s Supper in a church with which such agreement is not shared [emphasis added]” (1983 CTCR Report, *Theology and Practice of the Lord’s Supper*, p. 25).

“What is said here about Lutherans in general (*i.e.*, members of Lutheran congregations) certainly applies also to Lutheran pastors (emeritus or otherwise), who by virtue of their office bear a special responsibility “to witness publicly and privately to the one and only Gospel set forth in the Holy Scriptures (see CCM response cited above [02-2278])” (February 12, 2010 CTCR Opinion).

However, a district president (ecclesiastical supervisor) cannot use constitutional Article VI 2 b as the cause for an action to expel (Article XIII) a member from the Synod for simply attending worship, Holy Communion, a wedding, and/or a funeral in a non-LCMS church.

In Res. 8-30B, the 2010 convention of the Synod resolved to study Article VI. Its second WHEREAS paragraph indicated in part the urgency of this study: “WHEREAS, Concerns have been expressed throughout the history of the Synod, including recently, about the proper understanding and application of Article VI with respect to the conditions or requirements for acquiring and holding or retaining membership in the Synod.” These 2010 concerns of the convention echo the 1981 entreaties of President Preus to give this matter our attention. The commission urges the timely implementation of this convention resolution including its second-last resolve paragraph: “Resolved, That following the study, the Commission on Handbook, in consultation and concurrence with the Synod President, the Commission on Constitutional Matters and the Council of Presidents,

submit a proposal to clarify and affirm or amend Article VI to the next convention of Synod.”

(Adopted Feb. 10–11, 2012)

Implementation of New Synod Structure (11-2600)

In a letter received July 21, 2011, a member of the Synod submitted a series of questions regarding the restructuring that was taking place following the 2010 convention of the Synod, questions prompted by articles in the Synod’s *Reporter*.

Question 1: The June 2011 issue of *Reporter* on page 3 indicates that Rev. John Barton Day “will join the Synod staff... as executive director of the church body’s new Life Together department,” and later the article states, “The executive director of Life Together is one of two new executive-level positions created to support the LCMS churchwide emphasis of WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER,” and the article further states, “The other position, executive director of Witness and Mercy—yet to be filled—will oversee international missions.” Is this (the above) in harmony with the Bylaws and resolutions of the 2010 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod convention?

Opinion: The Synod has historically recognized and has variously defined “departments.” For example, corporate Synod includes in Bylaw 1.2.1 (d) “...the departments operating under the supervision of the Board of Directors...” Bylaw 1.5.4 recognizes an “accounting department” while not specifically creating that entity. The board of directors under Bylaw 3.3.4.5 is authorized to allocate available funds to the “...mission boards, commissions, councils, offices, and departments of corporate Synod...” Concordia Historical Institute, under Bylaw 3.6.2, is declared to be the “official department of archives and history of the Synod,” and the Bylaws recognize that colleges and universities will have various departments. Bylaw 4.1.1.3 contemplates the existence of a “Department of Planning and Research,” and Bylaw 4.6.1 (a) contemplates a “Department of Stewardship.” While the Synod itself has not created a “Life Together Department” and nothing in the Constitution or Bylaws of the Synod provides for the creation of a new “Life Together Department,” the creation of such a department is not expressly prohibited.

At its 2010 convention, the Synod created two new offices—the Office of National Mission and the Office of International Mission. Based upon information provided by LCMS President Matthew Harrison, Rev. Bart Day will head the Office of National Mission. With respect to the use of the title “executive director,” Bylaw 1.2.1 (h) defines such a position as the “top staff administrator of a mission board or commission of corporate Synod.” The term has also been employed in other contexts, however, consistent with the human resources policies of the Synod. As head of the Office of National Mission, it is not inappropriate to use that title for Rev. Day.

With respect to the focus and emphasis of the Offices of National Mission and International Mission, Bylaws 3.8.2.4 and 3.8.3.4 allocate responsibility for establishing that focus:

3.8.2.4 In carrying out its mission responsibilities, the Office of National Mission shall receive its primary focus from the mission and ministry emphases developed triennially by the national Synod in convention and from the policies developed and determined by the Board for National Mission...

3.8.3.4 In carrying out its mission responsibilities, the Office of International Mission shall receive its primary focus from the mission and ministry emphases developed triennially by the national Synod in convention and from the policies developed and determined by the Board for International Mission...

It appears that the referenced *Reporter* article may have misunderstood the source and scope of an emphasis on WITNESS, MERCY, and LIFE TOGETHER. The triennial emphasis for the Synod, as well as for the Boards and Offices of National and International Mission, must originate from a process which begins with congregations and circuits and is to be finally determined by conventions of the Synod. Because the 2010 convention adopted the structural changes described in this opinion without having adopted a triennial emphasis before adjournment, and because the newly established mission boards had not yet had opportunity to organize themselves, the President of the Synod took the lead in attempting to formulate for and on behalf of the Synod such an emphasis for the national office for the current triennium. Because of the responsibility of the two mission boards, it is incumbent on the mission boards to take the lead in developing a current mission emphasis, from which goals will be established for the National and International Mission Offices, and from which the mission boards will formulate policies embracing the triennial emphases until the next convention has opportunity to develop new mission and ministry emphases for the following triennium.

Question 2: The July 2011 issue of *Reporter* on page 3 speaks of Rev. John Barton Day as “[the one who] will head the Office of National Mission” and later in the article uses the words “until a head is appointed” and then the article goes on to speak of “leading the unit.” Are these terms and references in harmony with the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?

Opinion: As discussed above, it would be appropriate to refer to Rev. Day as the executive director of the Office of National Mission.

Question 3: What is the correct title for the two top staff positions for the Office of National Mission and the Office of International Mission according to the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod?

Opinion: As described above, the top staff positions for the Office of National Mission and the Office of International Mission may be designated as the Executive Director of the Office of National Mission and the Executive Director of the Office of International Mission.

Question 4: The above cited issues of *Reporter* seem to indicate that the appointment of Rev. John Barton Day to the Office (“Department”? “Unit”?) of National Mission and that the appointment, yet to be made, to the Office (“Department”? “Unit”?) of International Mission was and will be made by the President of the Synod. Does the President of the Synod have the authority to NOT create or NOT recognize an Office of National Mission (and Office of International Mission) and, rather, create a “department” or “unit” to take on the responsibilities of that office? Who has the authority to appoint/call these two positions (executive directors of the two offices) according to the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod? Does anyone other than the Board for International Mission and the Board for National Mission have the authority, according to the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, to make these appointments?

Opinion: Neither the President nor anyone else in the Synod has authority to disregard or overrule actions of the convention. The Office of National Mission and the Office of International Mission were created by convention action. The President is charged with the responsibility for seeing to it that the resolutions of the Synod are carried out (Constitution, Art. XI B 4; Bylaw 3.3.1.1.1). This

includes the creation of the Office of National Mission and the Office of International Mission by 2010 Res. 8-08A. He may not supplant or frustrate this action of the convention or do away with the offices themselves.

Bylaw 3.3.1.2 also gives the President the responsibility to oversee the activities of all officers, executives and agencies of the Synod. The issue of to whom authority has been delegated to appoint the head of these two offices has resulted in confusion, particularly among those most intimately involved. During the work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance and the deliberations of the floor committee charged with evaluating and presenting the results of that work to the convention, members of the Commission on Constitutional Matters informally advised that the elimination of all program boards, the concentration in the office of the President of the responsibility for the carrying out of those functions, and the resulting amassing and centralization of power without appropriate checks and balances as had historically been in place was neither wise nor constitutionally permissible without an amendment to the Constitution. Discussions ensued regarding methods to avoid perceived constitutional problems and continued up to the floor committee presentation to the convention. However, no formal opinion was ever requested from or issued by the commission on this important issue. As an example of the scope of the discussions, if the goal was the creation of a policy-based governance model, consideration was given to a possible requirement that the President might be made accountable to the Board of Directors in all his duties—a result that conflicted with his ecclesiastical responsibilities.

The task force, and ultimately the floor committee, moved away from the concept of creating two advisory commissions to that of creating two fully functioning policy boards, which many of those involved, including the Commission on Constitutional Matters, understood to be fully functioning operating boards. The proposed and adopted changes to the Bylaws included definitions which support that interpretation (Bylaws 1.2.1 [l] and [n]). The convention updated Bylaw 1.2.1 (h) defining an executive director to include the top staff administrator of a mission board, yet a purely “policy” board would have no staff administrator. Bylaw 1.2.1 (n) was also updated to expressly include the mission boards within the definition of an “operating board.”

Leading up to the 2010 convention, many delegates and members of the Synod expressed concerns to the task force and floor committee similar to those expressed by the commission. Now, in the aftermath of the convention, the above question has been submitted to the commission requiring a formal and binding opinion. Despite its continuing concern in light of a clear and consistent understanding of historical Synod polity and practice, and despite continuing serious reservations about the lack of appropriate checks and balances, a dispassionate analysis of the actual explicit language of the Constitution reveals no prohibition of the elimination of all program boards. Likewise, the language of the Constitution does not prohibit the vesting of authority for control of all programmatic functions of the Synod directly or indirectly in the office of the President. Despite the references in Bylaw 1.2.1 discussed above, which suggest a different intent, a dispassionate analysis of the actual, explicit language of the entirety of the bylaws as amended by the 2010 convention indicates that the convention in fact eliminated all program boards and vested authority for all programmatic functions directly or indirectly in the office of the President.

Given the confusion which has followed the convention’s actions, given the commission’s ongoing and serious concerns, and recognizing that the results of the convention’s actions as described in this opinion may not have been that which was actually intended

by the convention delegates, the commission will refer this issue to the Commission on Handbook for appropriate consideration.

Finally, with respect to the issue of the selection of the executive directors of the two mission offices (the Office of National Mission and the Office of International Mission), the commission finds that such appointments cannot be made until the President of the Synod, as required by Bylaw 3.3.1.3 (e),⁶ consults with and receives the concurrence of the appropriate mission board on a slate of candidates before a person is appointed to that position. With respect to the appointment of the Executive Director of the Office of National Mission, that process was not followed and the appointment was not proper. In consultation with the President, however, he has acknowledged this oversight and has assured the commission that he will act promptly to correct that error.

(Adopted Nov. 11–13, 2011)

Call of Missionaries for Service Outside of District **(11-2607)**

An ordained minister of the Synod, via an August 10, 2011 email, submitted a question to the commission regarding the authority of a district to call members of the district to serve as missionaries outside the district. The commission responded as follows.

Question: Does a district of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have the authority under the Constitution and Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to call members of their district as missionaries and place them in locations of service around the United States outside their district?

Opinion: No. The principles governing districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are contained in Article XII of the Constitution as well as Bylaw 4.1. The Synod itself has retained exclusive jurisdiction with respect to the placement of foreign missionaries (Bylaws 4.4.3 [b]), 4.1.5, and 3.8.3). No express provision of the Constitution or Bylaws directly addresses the issue raised.

With respect to mission outreach which crosses district lines, the issue was addressed as to individual congregations by 2010 Res. 1-07A.⁷ The Bylaws now expressly address the issue with respect to the efforts of an individual congregation. Bylaw 4.1.6.2 reads:

4.6.2 Congregations interested in expanding their Gospel outreach into an area that crosses district lines are encouraged first to discuss their intent with their own district officials, followed by discussion with the appropriate district officials and the local congregations impacted by such work.

- (a) Any such expansion of Gospel outreach into an area that crosses district lines shall require the concurrence of both the president of the receiving geographical district and the board or committee responsible for mission in that district.
- (b) The ecclesiastical supervision of a new church start, satellite worship site, or any ministry established by a congregation in another district shall be decided by the affected district presidents.

The Synod contains two non-geographic districts, the English District and the SELC District. There are no geographic limitations on the mission work which each undertakes, and any domestic mission of such districts will occur in the geographic area of another district. Even in this case, non-geographic districts are encouraged to consult with other districts.

With respect to the remaining districts (all defined by the Synod on a geographic basis), while there is no express limitation on one district calling a missionary to serve in a different district, it would be inconsistent with the concept that a district is the Synod in that place for one district to call a missionary to serve the people of a different

district and different place. While there may be instances where a mission outreach effort in one district has crossover impact into another district, the very organizational structure of the Synod contemplates that each district will operate in its own geographical area.

(Adopted Nov. 11–13, 2011)

Fellowship within the Synod (11-2610)

In a letter dated August 17, 2011, a pastor of the Synod submitted three questions pertaining to fellowship with one another through membership in the Synod. The letter, which was also sent to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), contained some background material.

Question 1: Is it the self-understanding of the LCMS that all of its pastors and parishes are in fellowship with one another?

Opinion: Yes, it is the self-understanding of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod that all of its congregational members (congregations that have joined the Synod) and individual members (ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—commissioned on the roster of the Synod) are in fellowship with one another.

First, the Synod’s Bylaws not only reflect such a self-understanding, but describe the agreements of the members and the requirements of the members’ fellowship with one another:

- 1.3.4 Congregations together establish the requirements of membership in the Synod (Art. VI). In joining the Synod, congregations and other members obligate themselves to fulfill such requirements and to diligently and earnestly promote the purposes of the Synod by word and deed. Members of the Synod, compelled by love for each other, accept the responsibility to support financially the work of the Synod and provide annual statistical information to enable the Synod to plan current and future ministry efforts based upon an accurate picture of the results of current ministries within its churches, communities, and world [emphasis added]. (Cf. also Bylaws 1.3.1 and 1.3.3)
- 1.3.4.1 Members agree to uphold the confessional position of the Synod (Art. II) and to assist in carrying out the objectives of the Synod (Art. III), which are objectives of the members themselves. Thus, while congregations of the Synod are self-governing (Art. VII), they, and also individual members, commit themselves as members of the Synod to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod under which they have agreed to live and work together and which the congregations alone have the authority to adopt or amend through conventions [emphasis added].
- 1.7.1 The Constitution, Bylaws, and all other rules and regulations of the Synod apply to all congregational and individual members of the Synod [emphasis added].
- 1.8.1 While retaining the right of brotherly dissent, members of the Synod are expected as part of the life together within the fellowship of the Synod to honor and uphold the resolutions of the Synod [emphasis added].
- 1.8.2 Dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers and then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescission. While the conscience of the dissenter shall be respected, the consciences of others, as well as the collective will of the Synod, shall also be respected [emphasis added].

Second, the Constitution and Bylaws’ use of the word “fellowship” (and other words such as “common,” “unity,” “association,” “walk together” and “agree” that are synonymous with or define and describe “fellowship”) is helpful to the self-understanding of the fellowship with one another in the Synod:

- 2010 Constitution, Article III 1: “Conserve and promote the unity [i.e., ‘oneness’; cf. *unus* (‘one’), *unites* (‘one, common’)] of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10), work through its official structure toward

fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy” [emphasis added; amended in 1979, effective 1980].

- 1847 Constitution: “The preservation and furthering of the unity [*Einheit* (‘oneness’)] of pure confession (Eph. 4: 3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10) and to provide common [*gemeinsame* (‘common, held jointly, mutual’)] defense against separatism and sectarianism (Rom. 16:17).”
- 1854 Constitution: “The conservation and promotion of the unity [*Einheit* (‘oneness’)] of the pure confession (Eph. 4: 3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10) and the common [*gemeinsame* (‘common, held jointly, mutual’)] defense against schism and sectarianism (Rom. 16:17).”
- 2010 *Handbook*: “...confessional unity” (Article III 6); “...common profession of faith” (Article III 7); “...common confession and mission, congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod join with one another in the Synod to support one another and to work together in carrying out their commonly adopted objectives...in association with other member congregations through the Synod...” (Bylaw 1.1.1); “*Synod*...Refers collectively to the association of self-governing Lutheran congregations...” (Bylaw 1.2.1 [v]); “...the bond of Christian fellowship” (Bylaw 4.4.4 [e]); “...to strengthen the spirit of unity among circuit congregations to effect mission and ministry and shall seek to strengthen and support the spirit of fellowship...” (Bylaw 5.2.3.1[b]); “...network of congregations that ‘walks together’...” (Bylaw 5.1.1) [emphasis added].

Third, resolutions of the Synod provide the Synod’s self-understanding of “fellowship.” The 1965 convention of the Synod adopted *Theology of Fellowship* as a Synod document for reference and guidance (Res. 2-13). It therefore serves the Synod’s understanding of “fellowship” or *koinonia*. The following excerpts from this Synod-adopted document prove helpful:

Being in fellowship with the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church entitled the layman to participate in the sacraments; it enabled one cleric to officiate in the parish of another, with proper permission. But above all things, *church* fellowship was *altar* fellowship. This understanding is still preserved centuries later by the prince of Lutheran dogmaticians, John Gerhard, when he says in his *Loci*:

“So there is a threefold *koinonia* (fellowship) laid down by the apostle: (1) the sacramental participation in Christ’s body and blood, which takes place by way of the bread and wine that has been blessed, 1 Cor. 10:16; (2) the spiritual apprehension of the entire Christ and all His benefits, which takes place by true faith, 1 Cor. 11:26; (3) the fellowship of the church as a body (*communio corporis ecclesiae*), 1 Cor. 10:17: ‘We many are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one bread.’ The first fellowship (*koinonia*) is the foundation of the others, because the spiritual participation in Christ and His benefits is confirmed and sealed in the believers through the sacramental fellowship (*koinonia*). The fellowship of the church as a body can, for the sake of teaching, be designated as twofold: namely, as external and as internal; the external fellowship exists among all who embrace the same doctrine and make use of the same sacraments; the internal fellowship exists among those only who truly believe, who have the Spirit of Christ. The external fellowship of the church as a body arises from the sacramental fellowship (*koinonia*); the internal, however, arises from the spiritual fellowship (*koinonia*)” (Volume V, *Locus XXI*, Cap. XI, ed. Preuss, p. 98).

The 1981 convention of the Synod commended *The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship* study of the CTCR along with its previously adopted *Theology of Fellowship* to the members of the Synod for their study and guidance (Res. 3-10). This Synod-

adopted commendation also serves the self-understanding of “fellowship” or *koinonia*. The following are pertinent excerpts:

I. THE NATURE OF FELLOWSHIP

A. THE SCRIPTURAL CONCEPT OF FELLOWSHIP

1. Fellowship: Having Part in a Common Thing

In the New Testament the word *koinonia* (and its cognates), the Greek term for fellowship, appears in a number of places...

Without referring to every place where *koinonia* (and its cognates) appears in the New Testament, it can be concluded that this is a term which has as its root meaning “having part in a common thing.” It is with this meaning in mind that the New Testament writers use it to refer to a variety of relationships. Important in this discussion on the nature of fellowship in the context of inter-Christian relationships is the fact that *koinonia* most frequently appears in connection with that spiritual unity which exists in the body of Christ (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3), but it is also used at times to refer to the attempts of Christians to manifest this unity externally (e.g., Acts 2:42; Gal. 2:9). It dare not be overlooked, however, that the Scriptures also have much to say about each of these two distinct (but not separate) relationships without making specific use of the term *koinonia* at all. For example, this word appears neither in Paul’s discussion of spiritual unity in the body of Christ in Eph. 4:1–6 [note this reference in Synod’s Constitution] nor in Christ’s High Priestly Prayer in John 17:20 f., nor is it used in many of those sections of Scripture which exhort Christians to guard the truth and to live together in the church in an external relationship of peace and love on the basis of agreement in God’s Word (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:10 [note this reference in Synod’s Constitution]; 2 Tim. 1:13–14) [emphasis added].

The implications of that which has just been stated are clear. This study on fellowship will have to be more than a mere word study on the meaning and usages of *koinonia* in the New Testament. If we are to be faithful to the Scriptural understanding of the nature of fellowship in the context of inter-Christian and inter-church relationships, then it will be necessary not only to examine those sections of the Scriptures where the word *koinonia* appears but also to take into account what God’s Word has to say about the spiritual unity which is given with faith in Christ and to heed the guidance the Scriptures give to Christians regarding external unity in the church [pp. 8–9; emphasis added].

...

3. Fellowship: An External Relationship to Be Manifested and Maintained

a. “Forbearing One Another in Love”

Since it is faith in the heart which binds believers together with Christ and with one another, no human eye can see this spiritual unity. But there is an inner dynamic to faith in Jesus Christ which works toward an external unity embracing all those who confess faith in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:10) [emphasis added]. What the church *is* by God’s design is what He wants the church to show itself to be—one—so that “the world may believe” (John 17:21).

The Scriptures, therefore, exhort Christians to manifest the unity which has already been given them by virtue of their incorporation into the body of Christ. St. Paul writes: “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, *forbearing one another in love*, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1–3). Those who have been grafted into Him who is the true vine are to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Having been incorporated by Baptism into the body of Christ, they should manifest love for the fellow members of His body. Love for the brethren, writes St. John, is evidence that we have “passed out of death into life” (1 John 3:14; cf. Eph. 5:2). This external unity, although involving human efforts, is also a gift from God [emphasis added].

To the extent that love controls their conduct, Christians seek fellow believers in Jesus Christ in order to build them up and to be built up by them (Rom. 1:11–12). Love rejoices with those who rejoice, it weeps with those who weep (Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12–13). It works to strengthen the weak, encourage the strong, and admonish the erring (Gal. 6: 1–2). Above all, it seeks to help fellow believers remain faithful to Christ and to His Word. This love may in certain situations lead members of the church to separate themselves from fellow Christians and even to exercise church discipline, although it be with many tears (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:4).

And finally, for an application of Synod’s fellowship with one another, Resolution 2-21 of the 1971 convention (1971 *Proceedings*, pp. 118–119) states in its Preamble:

The provision that allows a member to reject a doctrinal resolution of the Synod is that such a resolution is “not in accordance with the Word of God” (Article VII of the Constitution). The Synod, therefore, holds that every member, by virtue of his agreement when he voluntarily joined the Synod and freely placed himself under the provisions of the Synod’s Constitution and Bylaws, is bound by the Word of God expressed in the Synod’s resolutions until it can be demonstrated that a resolution is in fact “not in accordance with the Word of God.” Otherwise the Synod holds that its resolutions are to be considered “of binding force if they are in accordance with the Word of God” (Bylaw 1.09 b), and the Synod permits no member to teach or practice in violation of a resolution simply on the grounds that he does not agree with it or that it is in conflict with his private persuasion.

The object of the Synod, as stated in Article III, 1, of the Constitution, is (1) to conserve and promote a unity in which all are “united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10), and (2) to avoid schism caused by contrary doctrine (Rom. 16:17). This purpose of the Synod is defeated when individuals are permitted to teach in accordance with their private views, for then there can be no such thing as a *synodical* position, and a meaningful corporate confessional commitment is impossible. Formal commitment of the Synod to a confessional base is pointless unless the Synod has the right as a synod to apply its confessional base definitively to current issues and thus conserve and promote unity and resist an individualism which breeds schism...

If a member cannot for conscience’ sake accept a doctrinal resolution of the Synod, he has the obligation and opportunity through mutually approved procedure to challenge such a resolution with a view to effecting the changes he deems necessary. Failing in that, he is completely free by reason of his wholly voluntary association with the Synod to obey his conscience and disassociate himself from the Synod. Meanwhile every member of the Synod is held to abide by, act, and teach in accordance with the Synod’s resolutions” [Emphases added].

Question 2: Along with it: Has this always been the self-understanding of the LCMS?

Opinion: Yes. See answer to question 1.

It has always been the self-understanding of the LCMS that the members of the Synod (walking together) are in fellowship (*koinonia* and its cognates) with one another. The members of the Synod were and are “having part in a common thing.” The nature and concept of “fellowship” has also been described as association, one together, oneness, unity, agreement, participation, partaking, partnership, etc.

The members of the Synod joined with one another together to form a “walking together” union. As believers unite in a congregation, like-minded congregations band together to form a church body, a “Synod” united in the bond of love.

An October 16, 1969 opinion of the Commission on Constitutional Matters states in part:

The very nature and purpose of a synodical fellowship need to be restated once again. A synod is a “walking together.” The choice of the word “synod,” derived from the Greek, is significant because it emphasizes the idea of unity. For good reason our church body has chosen for itself the name: “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.” We are

congregations, pastors, and teachers who have decided to join hands and to walk together.

The Preamble of the Constitution has the sub-heading: “Reason for the Forming of a Synodical Union.” Union was the major concern in effecting the organization of the Synod. The concepts of fellowship, togetherness, brotherhood, and “walking together” express the basic purpose of the Synod’s existence.

The reasons given in the Preamble for forming the union are “1. The example of the apostolic church, Acts: 15:1–31,” and “2. Our Lord’s will that the diversities of gifts should be for the common profit, 1 Cor. 12:4–31.” Once again the emphasis falls upon the idea of unity [emphases added].

United with Jesus Christ, the members of the Synod have bound themselves to oneness of doctrine and confession, and oneness of life, mission, purpose and support. The members have bound themselves together in common to the Word of God, which alone determines and establishes the doctrine and mission of the church. The members have bound themselves together in common to adopt doctrinal resolutions and doctrinal statements in order to determine and to declare its collective understanding of what the Scriptures teach. The members have bound themselves together in common to convince and persuade one another by the power of God’s Word.

And as such, in joining together with one another, the members of the Synod have bound themselves together in common to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod and also its resolutions if they are in accordance with the Word of God and if they appear applicable as far as the condition of the congregation is concerned. The members have bound themselves together in common to honor and uphold the collective will of Synod as expressed in its convention resolutions and to carry out any brotherly dissent or dispute resolution according to the provisions set forth by the fellowship of the Synod.

Question 3: Convinced that we really are in a declared state of fellowship with one another by virtue of our synodical membership, therefore, must we either accept our brethren as they are (and commune them and commune with them) and show that those brethren are in error, or depart from them, lest we break the unity of the synod?

Opinion: By virtue of having voluntarily “joined together to form the Synod and relate to one another through it” (Bylaw 1.3.1) and, therefore, by virtue of its fellowship being compelled by love for each other, members of the Synod accept the “brethren” (“brotherhood”) “as they are” (cf. above answers to questions 1 and 2, which reflect the implication of “members/membership” or “brethren”). Together with accepting the “brethren,” members of the Synod also accept the responsibility for carrying out the established provisions within the fellowship of the Synod to resolve brotherly dissent (Bylaw 1.8) and disputes (Bylaw 1.10) and to carry out any expulsion as set forth in the Bylaws (cf. Constitution, Art. XIII and Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17).

These provisions or avenues have been established by the members of the Synod to preserve and promote the unity of the Synod so that such unity may not wither, waste away, or progressively decline (cf. Article III, 1 and 6). In the same above-referenced 1969 CCM opinion (under question 2), it is stated:

Christians as well as non-Christians expect differences of opinion and judgment to arise when people walk together. The Synod has provided for forums in which such differences can be discussed and evaluated beyond the confines of the local congregation... When the majority will has been determined, it must be respected. Otherwise life together (synod) becomes all but impossible. Discussion may indeed continue; but it needs to be carried on with full respect for the majority will and within the forums established by the Synod for the preservation of the synodical unity. If additional channels for discussion are needed, the

Synod can provide for the same in its Bylaws through appropriate convention action [emphasis added].

Disparate and alien avenues within the Synod such as withholding funds, shunning one another, failure to relate to one another (disassociate with, exclude one another) and failure to discuss disagreements and differences with one another as well as refusal to meet together, refusal to commune or commune with another while having no desire, decision, or action to carry out the mutually accepted provision of dispute/conflict resolution (Bylaw 1.10), are divisive, un-brotherly and are themselves destructive of the fellowship or a “walking together” and “militate against the essential unity intended by the structure of the Synod as provided in its Constitution and Bylaws” (cf. October, 1966 CCM Opinion).

Marking or characterizing its life together, the fellowship of the Synod has responsibly and lovingly provided an avenue of dissent (Bylaw 1.8) which is “brotherly,” expresses the dissent with the “fellowship” of peers and respects the “collective” will of the Synod. In referring to the Synod provision of “dissent,” November, 2005 CCM Opinion 05-2444 states: “Dissent that is “brotherly” will always regard another as a brother or being in a “brotherhood”” (cf. reference to “brotherhood” in Bylaw 1.10.1.1) and will treat and relate to others in the “fellowship” as “brothers” [emphasis added].

In the Synod bylaw provision of “Dispute Resolution” (Bylaw section 1.10), the Preamble states:

When disputes, disagreements, or offenses arise among members of the body of Christ, it is a matter of grave concern for the whole church. Conflicts that occur in the body should be resolved promptly (Matt. 5:23–24; Eph. 4:26–27). Parties are urged by the mercies of God to proceed with one another with “the same attitude that was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). In so doing, individuals, congregations, and various agencies within the Synod are urged to reject a “win-lose” attitude that typifies secular conflict. For the sake of the Gospel, the church should spare no resource in providing assistance. (Bylaw 1.10.1)

Even the Synod’s “expulsion” provisions (Bylaws 2.14–2.17) reflect its state of and desire for fellowship even though the Synod may be required in a final step to “depart from” its “brethren,” “lest we break the unity of the Synod”:

Termination of membership in the Synod is a serious matter involving both the doctrine and life of those to whom it has been granted. Such action should only be taken as a final step when it is clear that those who are being terminated after previous futile admonition have acted contrary to the confession laid down in Article II or the conditions of membership laid down in Article VI or have persisted in offensive conduct (Constitution, Art. XIII 1). For this reason, the Synod establishes procedures for such action, including the identification of those who are responsible for ecclesiastical supervision of its members. Such supervision includes not only suspension or termination of membership but also advice, counsel, encouragement, and, when necessary, admonition regarding teaching and/or practice. Furthermore, the procedures that may lead to termination of membership also provide for the protection of members by including provisions for challenging the decisions of ecclesiastical supervisors in these matters as well as provisions for restoration of membership that has been suspended or terminated (Bylaw 2.14.1) [emphasis added].

Regarding the provisions the Synod has made to provide avenues essential to preserving the fellowship relationship of the Synod, a November, 1973 CCM opinion urges, “We appeal once again to all members of the Synod to use the channels which the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod provide for resolving our differences...” A recent September 3–4, 2011 CCM opinion states: “For any member or organization of members to advocate disagreement with and unwillingness to use the Synod’s Bylaws without following the approved dissent procedures or dispute resolution procedures invites the member’s/members’ ecclesiastical supervisor(s) to use those

same Synod-established procedures to discipline them... In summary, all Synod members, including organizations of Synod members, must follow the Synod's bylaws regarding dissent, dispute resolution, and ecclesiastical supervision. To do otherwise invites the member's/ members' ecclesiastical supervisor(s) to use those same Synod-established procedures to discipline them" (CCM Opinion 11-2589).

Thus, fellowship with one another in the Synod is not a selective fellowship. And the fellowship of the Synod is not a cafeteria where members can pick and choose, *i.e.*, take what they want and leave the rest or serve themselves. The nature of fellowship with one another in the Synod is not marked by selective appropriation or elimination of certain constitutional and bylaw provisions and resolutions—much less the confessional basis, confessional position(s), and objectives of the Synod. As reflected in the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws and resolutions throughout its history, the members of the Synod are in fellowship with one another. For a further relevant treatment of the matter, the commission calls attention to the entire CCM Opinions 05-2443, 05-2444, and 11-2589.

(Adopted Nov. 11–13, 2011)

Authority of a District President (11-2616)

In a letter dated September 17, 2011, a pastor member of the Synod submitted a series of questions for response by the commission. Additional supplemental information was received on September 27.

[NOTE: In carrying out its duties, the commission is required by Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (b) to notify an officer or agency of the Synod, including the district president involved in this matter, if a request for an opinion involves an activity of that officer or agency, and to allow that officer or agency the opportunity to submit in writing information regarding the matter(s) at issue. While the commission is not a finder of facts and must rely on the information provided to it in questions submitted, the additional background information contemplated by Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (b) can often assist in understanding and responding to the questions presented.]

Question 1: In light of Article VII of the LCMS Constitution and 4.4.6 of the LCMS Bylaws and the Synod's recent action declaring that the LCMS Constitution takes precedence over LCMS Bylaws, under what circumstances, if any, may a District President write a letter on District letterhead, using a congregation's membership directory in his possession to mail said letter directly to the individual members of the congregation for the purpose of calling a Voters Assembly?

Opinion: The duties, responsibilities, and authority of a district president do not include the unilateral authority to call a business meeting of a congregation's voters' assembly. He does, however, have authority to assist a congregation as it may request, and the duty, responsibility, and authority to inquire as to the prevailing spiritual conditions of a congregation, as directed in Bylaw 4.4.5,⁸ and may arrange and conduct official visits or investigations as described in Bylaw 4.4.6. Article VII of Constitution reads as follows:

Article VII Relation of the Synod to Its Members

1. In its relation to its members the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation's right of self-government it is but an advisory body. Accordingly, no resolution of the Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears to be inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned.

2. Membership of a congregation in the Synod gives the Synod no equity in the property of the congregation.

Bylaw 4.4.6 reads as follows:

- 4.4.6 The district president, even without formal request therefor, may through the proper channels arrange for an official visit or investigation when a controversy arises in a congregation or between two or more congregations of the district or when there is evidence of a continuing unresolved problem in doctrine or practice.
 - (a) He shall ask for a full report on the case in order that he may have a clear understanding of the situation.
 - (b) If he authorizes anyone to represent him in such matters, his representative shall be accorded the same rights as the district president.

The responsibilities of a district president in this regard flow not only from the Bylaws, but also Article XII 7 of the Constitution:

The district presidents shall, moreover, especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their district and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the congregations of their district. To this end, they shall visit and, according as they deem it necessary, hold investigations in the congregations. Their assistants in this work are the circuit counselors, who therefore shall regularly make their reports to the district president.

In conducting an official visit or investigation, a district president or his representative may arrange for such meetings with a pastor, the leadership of a congregation, groups within a congregation, or the congregation itself as he deems necessary. Even such a meeting with the entire congregation, however, cannot properly be characterized as the calling of the voters' assembly unless the congregation itself chooses to convene such a meeting as part of its response to such visit or investigation.

Separate and apart from any such official visit or investigation, pastors and/or congregations often call upon a district president for guidance, assistance, and support in the conduct of their spiritual and other affairs. Where called upon by the recognized leaders of a congregation to do so, a district president might well use his letterhead and a membership list supplied by the congregational leaders to assist the congregation's leaders in publicizing a voters' assembly business meeting authorized and called by the congregation's leaders as provided in the governing documents of that congregation, and at the congregation's invitation, use such a meeting to carry out the responsibilities described in Bylaws 4.4.5 and 4.4.6. Nothing in the Constitution or Bylaws of the Synod prohibit the providing of such assistance upon request. In fact, they encourage such support and assistance when appropriate.

As described in recent CCM Opinion 10-2581, there may be times when internal disagreement in a congregation results in the need for a district president, by specific provision in a congregation's governing documents or the absence of having been provided some other internal dispute resolution, to be involved in the resolution of a congregation's internal disputes.⁹ In carrying out his responsibilities in such a circumstance, and in assisting the congregation's leaders in the conduct of their own affairs, a district president might be even more inclined to allow the use of district letterhead and the resources of the district office in the scheduling and coordination of a voters' assembly called by the leaders of the congregation itself. However, it should not be construed that the district president himself is calling a meeting of the voters' assembly of the congregation for the purpose of conducting congregational business but the congregation itself in accordance with its own governing documents.

While a district president may not call a meeting of the voters' assembly of a congregation, he or his designee may be present at such meeting for the purposes of carrying out the district president's

responsibilities. He may certainly, in the exercise of his ecclesiastical supervision, request the opportunity to speak at such a meeting and give input, advice, encouragement, and if necessary, admonition, as he deems appropriate. Ultimately, however, it is the responsibility of the voters' assembly itself to make decisions regarding the conduct of that congregation.

[NOTE: Questions not discussed in this Opinion: The letter submitting Question 1 then continues with sub-questions A through W. Most of these address details which a district president may include in communication regarding the scheduling of a voters' assembly meeting, or topics which may be properly identified by him for discussion or action. As discussed above, a district president cannot on his own convene a voters' assembly or determine its agenda. Only at the request and concurrence of the proper, recognized leaders of a congregation as authorized under its own governing documents may a district president facilitate the calling of such a meeting, including the announcement of the scheduled time and the identification of the business to be considered, including consideration of any official visit or investigation.]

Some of the additional questions address interpretation of a congregation's internal documents. Even if such governing documents were submitted to the commission, which they were not, the commission's role is to interpret the Synod's own documents and not those of an individual congregation. The additional sub-questions which the commission can address are discussed below.]

Question 2: Is it ever permissible for a district president to withhold district aid, help, and support, or to in any way pressure a congregation either to close or cede control of its property/assets to the district? If it is, is a district president's opinion that a particular congregation is "unhealthy" and/or unviable an adequate reason to withhold said aid, help, and support from a congregation?

Opinion: A district president is charged with providing ecclesiastical supervision and support for each member congregation of his district. Such supervision is not always welcome, particularly where dissension and factions exist in a congregation, where admonition is involved, where long-time members of a congregation face changes in membership and economics which raise the prospect of disbanding, or where the congregation is otherwise "unhealthy." As the circumstances of a congregation change, some congregations will ultimately become non-viable. Under such circumstances, a district president may be required to exercise his responsibility by providing counsel, encouragement, and advice which urges a congregation to merge, to become part of a multi-congregation parish, or even to disband and close. Such efforts may be considered "pressure" on a congregation, but "pressure" by definition may very well result from any good counsel, encouragement, advice, or admonition.

Should a congregation consider disbanding and closing, the district president may well be called upon to advise and encourage the congregation with respect to the disposition of its assets and property. The question submitted is unclear as to what kind of "aid, help, and support" is being referenced. If the aid, help, and support referenced are to the conversation, relationship, encouragement, admonition, or other aspects of ecclesiastical supervision, such aid, help, and support are to be provided by a district president until and unless the congregation disbands. If reference is being made to financial subsidy or support, it is the responsibility of not only the district president, but also the district board of directors or those otherwise charged with the stewardship of the district's resources, to determine whether or not a congregation is healthy or viable enough to justify the use of the district's resources for such support.

Question 3: If a congregation's leaders become frustrated with a district president, feeling as though he has been neglectful

in helping them to provide adequate LCMS pastoral ministry to the congregation, are frustrated by what they view to be excessive district interference in the day-to-day operation of the congregation, and feel increasingly under pressure by the district to close the congregation and/or give control of the congregation's assets and property to the district, the frustration building to the point that one or more congregational leaders tell the district president that they may need to disassociate from the LCMS—is it ever appropriate for the district president to respond to these complaints by stating something like, "People can vote to leave the Synod. But the congregation (its property and assets) remain with the one or more persons who vote to remain in the Synod"?

Opinion: While the question is somewhat argumentative, more importantly, it goes beyond the scope of the commission's authority and responsibility. Determination of whether a congregation's property and assets would remain with the one or more persons who vote to remain with the Synod is a question of the congregation's governing documents, not the Synod. Since a congregation's governing documents are filed with the district, a district president would be aware of such provisions and, if the issue of disassociation were to arise in discussion with members of the congregation, he ought to be prepared to candidly discuss the results and consequences of such action. In the event of disagreement within a congregation, if the language of the congregation's own governing documents has delegated to the Synod, and ultimately to the district president, responsibility for determining which persons or faction within a congregation have remained true to the confessions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, such governing documents may well dictate the result suggested by the question.

(Adopted Nov. 11–13, 2011)

Congregation Representation at Circuit Forums **(11-2617)**

In an emailed letter dated October 4, 2011, a circuit counselor requested an opinion regarding the interpretation of Bylaws 5.2.2 (c), 5.3.2, and 3.1.2.1 (c) pertaining to representation at circuit forums from a dual parish that has two called pastors. He asked two questions:

1. In the case of a dual parish with two called pastors, may both pastors of this dual parish vote at the circuit forum to elect delegates to a convention of the national Synod, each pastor representing a different congregation (governed by Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [c])?
2. In the case of a dual parish with two called pastors, may both pastors of this dual parish vote at the circuit forum to select a circuit counselor, each pastor representing a different congregation (governed by Bylaws 5.2.2 [c] and 5.3.2)?

The bylaws pertinent to these questions are, as mentioned, the following:

- 3.1.2.1 (c) The privilege of voting shall be exercised by one pastor and one layperson from each member congregation of the circuit, both of whom shall have been selected in the manner prescribed by the congregation. Multiple parishes shall be entitled to a lay vote from each member congregation.
- 5.2.2 (c) Selection of the circuit counselor shall be by election by written ballot. The privilege of voting shall be exercised by the representatives from each member congregation of the circuit, who shall have been selected in the manner prescribed by the congregation (Bylaw 5.3.2).
- 5.3.2 The circuit forum consists of a pastor of each congregation and one member of each congregation designated by the congregation.

Question 1: In the case of a dual parish with two called pastors, may both pastors of this dual parish vote at the circuit forum to elect delegates to a convention of the national Synod, each pastor representing a different congregation (governed by Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [c])?

Opinion: No. In contrast to lay delegates who are affiliated with only one congregation, a pastor/pastors of a multiple-congregation parish is/are called by and serve the whole. Therefore, only one pastor would be eligible to represent the multiple-congregation parish at meetings of the circuit forum to elect delegates to a convention of the national Synod.

The commission observes that Article V of the Constitution of the Synod lays the foundation for the matter of franchise within the Synod. Paragraph A of Article V states:

A. Voting Members

All organized congregations that have joined the Synod hold voting membership. At the meetings of the districts of the Synod, every congregation or parish is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate. At the meetings of the Synod, a number of congregations shall form a group which shall be represented by two voting delegates, one a pastor and one a lay delegate.

At district conventions, Article V A establishes that each congregation or multiple-congregation parish is entitled to two votes, one by a pastor and the other by a lay delegate representing the congregation. At its February 7–8, 2009 meeting, the provision that at district conventions a multiple parish was entitled to two votes, one by a pastor and the other by a lay delegate, was reexamined and affirmed by the Commission on Constitutional Matters:

79. Voting Rights of Congregations (09-2545)

In a January 18, 2009 e-mailed letter, a parish pastor requested an opinion with respect to the representation of a four-congregation partnership (a multiple-congregation parish) at a district convention.

Question: Four congregations have formed a partnership. They each have called the two pastors who serve this partnership. Can each of the four congregations send a lay delegate to our district convention which is in June? Also, what is the status of the two pastors in regards to being the pastoral delegate or delegates to the district convention?

Opinion: The four-congregation partnership is entitled to two votes, that of a pastor who serves the four-congregation partnership and a lay delegate, both chosen by the four-congregation partnership.

Article V of the Synod's Constitution states: "At the meetings of the districts of the Synod, every congregation or parish is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate."

In its Opinion 03-2327 (January 20–21, 2003), the Commission on Constitutional Matters opined with respect to Article V the opinion, "Voting Rights of Congregations," included the definition of the term "parish" and addressed a multiple-congregation arrangement.

"In the May 3–4, 1985 ruling (Ag. 1748), the commission ratified an opinion that had been offered by the Secretary of the Synod regarding the voting rights of congregations at district conventions when several congregations form a dual or multiple parish, namely, 'that a multiple parish has only two votes, that of the pastor who serves the parish and a lay delegate chosen by the parish.'

"This opinion took into consideration earlier versions of the *Handbook* that had provided a definition of the term 'parish,' e.g., 'If a pastor serves two or more congregations, these shall be regarded as one parish and shall be entitled to only one lay vote' (1963 *Handbook*, Bylaw 3.09). The term [parish] therefore refers to a dual or multiple-congregation arrangement served by the same pastor and is not synonymous with 'congregation.' As such, two or more congre-

gations are served by one pastor share the right of representation by one lay delegate and one pastoral delegate to a district convention."

The four-congregation partnership constitutes one "parish" as defined above.

Article V of the Constitution, however, does not specifically address the issue of voting at forums of circuits. Voting at the forums of circuits is addressed in the Bylaws. Bylaw 3.1.2.1 describes the policy and process of voting at meetings of electoral circuits for the purpose of selecting the delegates of that circuit to conventions of the national Synod.

Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (c) delineates who has the privilege of voting in these electoral circuit meetings. It specifies that the vote is exercised by one pastor and one layperson from each member congregation of the circuit, who are selected in the manner prescribed by the congregation. A second sentence then continues and specifies that each congregation in a multiple-congregation parish is entitled to a lay vote. The second sentence was added to the *Handbook* in 1973 incorporating rulings from the Commission on Constitutional Matters in 1968 and 1970:

142. Right to Vote for Convention Delegates: The Secretary of the Southern District had phoned Sommermeyer asking whether each congregation is entitled to vote in the election of the delegate to a synodical convention or only each parish. The commission resolved to inform Secretary Kleinhans of its interpretation that each congregation in a multiple parish is entitled to a separate vote. (June 13–14, 1968 minutes of the Commission on Constitutional Matters)

115. Election of Convention Delegates, Bylaw 1.53: The commission formally ruled that each congregation in a multiple parish is entitled to a lay ballot in this matter but that a pastor of a dual or multiple parish should cast only one ballot.

The 1973 resolution adopting this insertion into the *Handbook* states in part:

WHEREAS, The bylaw on the election of delegates to synodical conventions is derived from the terms of the Constitution which explicitly describe the Synod to be a federation of congregations which alone possess the franchise and have the power to determine who shall exercise the pastoral and lay vote at synodical conventions.

Since the right to vote belongs to congregations, therefore at the circuit forum to elect delegates to the conventions of the national Synod, each congregation of a multiple-congregation parish is entitled to one vote from a lay member of that congregation as expressly allowed by Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (c).

In the case of the pastor/pastors in a multiple-congregation parish the situation is different. He/they are called by and serve the whole. In a multiple-congregation parish with more than one pastor, these pastors are still pastors of the entire multiple-congregation parish and not simply one of the congregations. Even if a pastor primarily serves one of the congregations, he remains a pastor of the whole. Therefore only one pastor would be eligible to represent the multiple-congregation parish at meetings of the circuit forum to elect delegates to a convention of the national Synod. The Bylaws do not grant pastors a similar exception as given for the laity.

Question 2: In the case of a dual parish with two called pastors, may both pastors of this dual parish vote at the circuit forum to select a circuit counselor, each pastor representing a different congregation (governed by Bylaws 5.2.2 [c] and 5.3.2)?

Opinion: No. In contrast to lay representatives to circuit forums who are affiliated with only one congregation, a pastor/pastors of a multiple-congregation parish is/are called by and serve the whole. Therefore only one pastor of a multiple-congregation parish that has more than one pastor is entitled to vote for the multiple-con-

gregation parish at meetings of the circuit forum to select a circuit counselor.

In addressing question 2, it should be noted that while Bylaws 5.2.2 (c) and 5.3.2 make reference to voting and representatives of the congregations at circuit forums, they do not offer specific parameters. Rather, the question of who votes is based on Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (c), which sets the parameters for voting at circuit forums.

Therefore, the same conclusions from question 1 also apply to question 2.

(Adopted Nov. 11–13, 2011)

Congregation Representation at District Conventions **(11-2618)**

In a letter dated October 14, 2011, a district president inquired regarding exceptions to the standard definition of a “parish” as “two or more congregations served by the same pastor” when representation to the district convention is being determined. In his letter he called attention to an August 30, 1990 opinion of the commission (Ag. 1898 “Pastoral Voting Eligibility”) in which a seminary professor was not granted voting privilege on behalf of a nearby congregation although he was serving the congregation on a regular basis. The district president wrote: “Since the CCM declared that a called pastor in one ministry (the seminary) could do Word and Sacrament ministry in a congregation (Trinity, Worden, Illinois) without a call to that congregation and declared the pastor was ‘not in the technical sense the pastor of Trinity, Worden, Illinois,’ could the CCM perceive additional situations where a congregation could enter into such an agreement?”

He then offered a series of “situations that might call for additional exceptions” to the definition of a parish and asked, “Can an exception be granted for any of the above or others that you perceive?” and, “Could the current interpretation force large congregations to forbid their pastors from serving small congregations which cannot afford a full-time pastor because they do not want to be recognized by the Synod as being a dual parish?”

The commission notes that the second question in the foregoing paragraph calls for speculation that is beyond the responsibility of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, which is to “interpret the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions” (Bylaw 3.9.2.2). The commission will, however, provide a response to the first question in the foregoing paragraph regarding exceptions to the standard definition of a “parish.” The commission will then also respond to the questions associated with the series of “situations that might call for additional exceptions” described in the district president’s letter.

Question 1: Could the commission perceive of additional situations (other than that addressed in Ag. 1898) where a congregation could enter into such an agreement (one that would not constitute a “parish” situation)?

Response: Article V A of the Constitution of the Synod states: “At the meetings of the districts of the Synod, every congregation or parish is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate.” This requirement has taken on additional significance as a result of 2010 Res. 8-17 “To Elect the Synod President” and new Bylaw 3.12.2.3, which assign to the voting delegates to district conventions the responsibility to elect the President of the Synod prior to the national conventions.

Questions regarding the definition of the word “parish” were already submitted to the commission as early as 1970, when the *Handbook* of the Synod provided its definition and significance: “If a pastor serves two or more congregations, these shall be regarded as one parish and shall be entitled to only one lay vote” (Bylaw 3.17, 1969 *Handbook*, p. 81). The commission therefore ruled: “[I]n view

of the language of the Constitution in Article V, A which speaks of ‘every congregation or parish,’ the bylaw which states that two or more congregations being served by one pastor shall be regarded as one parish entitled to only one set of delegates is not contrary to the Constitution” (Ag. 181).

At its May, 1972 meeting, the commission endorsed the counsel provided by the Secretary of the Synod that only when a congregation that is being served by a pastor “on the side” is a “bonafide vacancy” is that congregation entitled to its own lay delegate. Otherwise, if “it is in reality a dual parish,” it is not so entitled (Ag. 305). In a June, 1978 opinion the commission further clarified “that it is not necessary to actually participate in the calling of the pastor as long as the congregation is being served by a neighboring pastor in order to be regarded as a dual parish” (Ag. 1275 A, B).

Such has been the commission’s consistent response to questions regarding the intention of the word “parish,” leading up to 2003 Opinion 03-2327, which referenced a 1985 opinion of the commission (Ag. 1748):

This opinion took into consideration earlier versions of the *Handbook* that had provided a definition of the term “parish,” e.g., “If a pastor serves two or more congregations, these shall be regarded as one parish and shall be entitled to only one lay vote” (1963 *Handbook*, Bylaw 3.09). The term therefore refers to a dual or multiple congregation arrangement served by the same pastor and is not synonymous with “congregation.” As such, two or more congregations served by one pastor share the right of representation by one lay delegate and one pastoral delegate to a district convention.

The August 30, 1990 opinion (Ag. 1898), introduced by the district president requesting this opinion, is no exception to the consistent response of the commission to this question. It offered no exception because the standard principle did not apply in the case being discussed. While the professor in question was indeed serving as the pastor of the congregation in question under an agreement reached between him and the congregation, Article V A regarding “parish” representation did not apply due to the fact that his call to the seminary, which made him an advisory member of the Synod, disqualified him from service as a voting delegate of the congregation.

In response to the first question articulated above, therefore, the principle stands without exception: Two or more congregations being served by the same pastor constitute a parish with the right of representation by one lay delegate and one pastoral delegate. This principle must therefore be applied to each of the circumstances described as follows.

Question 2: 1. A large congregation with a number of associate pastors which allows one of the associate pastors to do ongoing pulpit supply for a small congregation that cannot afford a full-time pastor. Does such action make the small congregation and the large congregation a dual parish with one lay vote and one pastor vote?

Opinion: For the purpose of determining district convention franchise in the Synod, “a parish is defined as a situation in which a pastor serves two or more congregations” in which “it is not necessary to actually participate in the calling of the pastor” in order to be regarded as a dual parish (Ag. 1275 A,B). If the congregations demonstrate the intent to continue in this manner in the foreseeable future, the small and large congregations therefore constitute a dual parish, their lay vote shared in a manner that presumably is fair and equitable for both congregations.

2. A small Spanish speaking congregation that is using the services of an associate pastor of a larger congregation who speaks Spanish. There are no other Spanish speaking pastors available to assist. Does the Spanish speaking congregation lose its own lay delegate at a district convention?

Opinion: In response to the contention that forming a dual parish “deprives one of the congregations of its constitutional right of suffrage,” the commission ruled in May, 1972 (Ag. 181) that “in view of the language of the Constitution in Article V A which speaks of ‘every congregation or parish,’” the principle that “two or more congregations being served by one pastor shall be regarded as one parish entitled to only one set of delegates” is not contrary to the Constitution and does not cause a congregation to lose its lay delegate representation at a district convention. Rather, it shares its representation with the other congregation(s) in the parish, presumably in a fair and equitable manner.

3. A large congregation which does not need the financial support of any other congregation, allows their pastor to provide pulpit supply on Sunday afternoons for a small congregation which cannot afford a full-time pastor. There are no other pastors available in the area.

Opinion: The question speaks of “pulpit supply.” It also speaks of “a small congregation which cannot afford a full-time pastor.” Regardless of financial considerations, if the pastor is regarded by the small congregation as its pastor and speaks of him as its pastor, and if he provides Word and Sacrament ministry, ministers to the sick and dying, etc., this and the larger congregation are a dual parish being served by one pastor and, therefore, a parish to be represented at district conventions by the pastor and one lay delegate. Such lay representation will be shared in a manner that presumably is fair and equitable for both congregations.

4. Two congregations are being served by one pastor (the pastor is called to a large congregation which does not need any financial help to support their pastor). The large congregation allows their pastor to provide pulpit supply on Sunday afternoons for the small congregation which cannot afford a full-time pastor, and where no other pastor is available. The large congregation is in one visitation circuit and the small congregation is in a different visitation circuit. Does each congregation have a lay vote at the respective circuit forum in electing (by a voting process) a circuit counselor? If so, how is this different from voting representation at a district convention? Does the small congregation, in effect, have to forfeit its lay vote to the district convention to receive word and sacrament service from the large congregation?

Opinion: This question again speaks of “pulpit supply” and a “small congregation which cannot afford a full-time pastor.” Again, if the pastor is regarded by the small congregation as its pastor and speaks of him as its pastor, and if he regularly provides Word and Sacrament ministry, ministers to the sick and dying, etc., this and the larger congregation are a dual parish according to the Synod’s definition, entitled to representation at district conventions by the pastor and one lay delegate. The fact that the congregations are in separate visitation circuits has no bearing on the requirement for one pastor and one lay delegate representation at district conventions.

Representation at circuit forums is another matter, such representation determined by Bylaw 5.3.2: “The circuit forum consists of a pastor of each congregation and one member of each congregation designated by the congregation.” In this case, each congregation sends a representative to its own circuit’s forum, the pastor serving as representative to the forum of the circuit of the congregation in which he holds membership.

Regarding whether the small congregation must “forfeit” its lay vote to the district convention in order to receive Word and Sacrament service by the pastor of the large congregation, here again it must be said that a parish arrangement does not cause either congregation to lose its lay delegate representation at a district convention. Rather,

the congregations’ representation is shared—presumably through a fair and equitable arrangement.

5. Two congregations that are being served by one pastor in a dual arrangement (both congregations are needed to provide for a full-time pastor) where one congregation is in one district and the other in a different district. Does one congregation have to forfeit their lay vote at their district convention because they are in a dual parish arrangement?

Opinion: When a parish crosses district lines, it is nonetheless entitled to representation at district conventions by one pastor and one lay member. The pastor is a voting delegate to the convention of the district of which he is a member. The lay vote is shared by the congregations as in any other parish, presumably in a manner that is fair and equitable. The district membership of the congregation of the lay delegate determines the district convention that he/she will attend as a voting delegate.

(Adopted Nov. 11–13, 2011)

Role of CTCR and CCM Opinions, Doctrinal Statements and Resolutions (12-2634)

With a letter received March 14, 2012, the chairman of a Hearing Panel under Bylaw section 2.14 submitted two questions for the commission’s response in accord with Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k) (2).

Question 1: In performing its function under Bylaw 2.14, what weight or significance should a hearing panel give to:

- (a) Prior opinions of the CTCR?
- (b) Prior opinions of the CCM?
- (c) Opinions of the CTCR or interpretations of the CCM provided to the panel in response to questions submitted under Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k)?

Opinion: The role of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) is set out in Bylaws 3.9.5 through 3.9.5.2.2. Bylaw 3.9.5 indicates that the commission “exists to assist congregations in achieving the objectives of Article III 1 and 6 of the Constitution of the Synod and to assist the President of the Synod in matters of church relationships.”

Bylaw 3.9.5.2.1 goes on to state that the CTCR “shall provide guidance to the Synod in matters of theology and church relations.” In performing its function, the CTCR is to prepare and distribute special studies and documents to the members of the Synod and to conferences, refer theological issues and questions to proper individuals or groups of individuals for additional study, suggest and provide studies of contemporary issues, including current issues, foster and provide for ongoing theological education, and obtain theological treatises, conference papers, and similar documents and studies. The CTCR also has responsibilities with regard to “Fraternal and Other Organizations” under Bylaws 3.9.5.3 and 3.9.5.3.1 and responsibilities to assist the President of the Synod at his request in discharging his constitutional responsibilities “for maintaining doctrinal unity within the Synod” (Bylaw 3.9.5.2) and “for maintaining doctrinal integrity as he relates to other church bodies” (Bylaw 3.9.5.2.2). In addition, the CTCR receives from time to time special instruction and direction from the Synod in convention.

Fundamentally, the weight or significance that a hearing panel should give to a theological statement or opinion of the CTCR is the same as the weight or significance that should be given by all members of the Synod. That is to say, its opinion should be recognized as the considered opinion of the CTCR in attempting to carry out the bylaw functions identified above.

With respect to the opinions of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM), Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c) states that “[a]n opinion rendered

by the CCM shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of the Synod.” As such, a hearing panel is bound by prior opinions of the CCM, since a convention of the Synod has never overruled an opinion of the commission.

With respect to the opinions of the CTCR or interpretations of the CCM provided to a panel in response to questions submitted under Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k), a different result attaches. While, as discussed above, in general the opinions of the CTCR are provided for the “guidance” of the Synod, Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k) (4) specifically states: “When an opinion has been requested, the time limitations will not apply until the parties have received the opinion. The panel must follow any opinion received from either the CCM or the CTCR.” Therefore, unlike other letters, opinions, study guides, and other materials prepared by the CTCR, in this particular circumstance the Synod has chosen to bind a panel, for the purposes solely of the case then before it, to an opinion issued by the CTCR when a question is submitted to it by the panel under this bylaw.

With respect to interpretations provided to a panel by the CCM, such opinions, as described above, are always binding on the Synod. No difference in weight or significance attaches to an opinion of the CCM under Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k).

Question 2: Does the Synod require as a condition of membership that a member be bound by a doctrinal statement or resolution by the Synod in convention?

Opinion: No. This issue was resolved at least as far back as 1962. The 1959 convention had adopted Resolution 9 of Floor Committee 3, which read as follows:

Subscribing to the “Brief Statement,” the General Confessions, and Particular Symbols of the Lutheran Church; Teaching the Doctrine of Inspiration at Our Colleges and Seminaries; Using Scripture as the Word of God

RESOLUTION 9, COMMITTEE 3

WHEREAS, The pastors, teachers, and professors of Synod at the time of their ordination and installation pledge themselves to be faithful to the Holy Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions (“...solemnly pledge to the Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God and to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church as a true exposition of the Scriptures...” *Synodical Handbook*, 4.19; 4.21; 4.23); and

WHEREAS, Some persons have inquired as to the binding force of the Brief Statement as well as other statements on doctrine and practice formally adopted by Synod; and

WHEREAS, Article II-C of the Articles of Incorporation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod lists as an objective of Synod “to exercise supervision over such pastors and teachers as to doctrine, practice, and performance of their official duties”; therefore be it

Resolved:

A. That Synod further clarify its position by reaffirming that every doctrinal statement of a confessional nature adopted by Synod as a true exposition of the Holy Scriptures is to be regarded as public doctrine (*publica doctrina*) in Synod; and

B. That Synod’s pastors, teachers, and professors are held to teach and act in harmony with such statements; and

C. That those who believe that such statements are not satisfactory in part or in their entirety are not to teach contrary to them, but rather are to present their concern to their brethren in the ministry, particularly in conferences, to the appropriate district officials, and if necessary to the synodical officials.

The issue of the constitutionality of adding to the confessional statement of the Synod and effectively the requirements of membership by resolution, rather than by the process of amending the Constitution, was then raised. While no formal opinion of the CCM

had been previously requested, the issue was submitted to them in preparation for the 1962 convention. During the CCM’s meeting of May 14–15, 1962, most of the entire meeting was spent examining and discussing the issue. A standing committee was appointed to draft an opinion which was published as a supplement to the CCM’s report to the convention. That opinion directly addressed and answered this question:

Supplement to Report of Committee on Constitutional Matters (re Resolution 9) 1962 CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS, p. 187

1. The most controversial resolution presented to and adopted by the San Francisco convention in 1959 was, without doubt, Resolution 9 of Floor Committee 3 (Proceedings, 1959, pp. 191, 192). This was evident while the convention was in session. It became obvious also in several ways after the convention had adjourned; for example, for the first time, if memory serves well, the Committee on Constitutional Matters was asked by a district (English District) to rule on the constitutionality of an adopted resolution.

2. The request of the English District seemed to us to be based, at least in part, on the fact that Resolution 9 of Floor Committee 3 had not been given to the congregations for general study prior to the convention. On this basis, our committee formulated an opinion which stated that it could not declare this resolution unconstitutional on this technical ground, because Resolution 9 had been formulated by a floor committee of the convention in answer to several overtures and it was therefore impossible to present it to the congregations prior to the convention. Our committee admittedly did not pass on the question of the constitutionality of Resolution 9 because there seemed to be no compelling reason to do so at that time. For one thing, the President and vice-presidents of the Synod had promised an amplification and clarification of the resolution, and protocol indicated that this clarification should be published before any opinion would be expressed on the constitutionality of Resolution 9; again, it was obvious that the Cleveland convention would be asked for a ruling on the constitutionality of Resolution 9, either by a vote to rescind or to reaffirm this resolution.

3. However, it is now common knowledge that a continuing and ever-increasing concern over this issue has been expressed by many members of the Synod. As a result a request has again been addressed to our committee to render an opinion on the real issue without further delay. It seems to us as of now, that the doctrinal issues confronting the church will be discussed much more dispassionately if the uncertainty of the status of Resolution 9 could be removed. This consideration prompts us to submit the following supplemental opinion to the section of our report captioned “Resolution 9 of Floor Committee 3” (p. 227, Reports and Memorials).

A. The right of the Synod to add to Article II of our Constitution (“Confession”) by following the prescribed method of amending the Constitution (Article XIV) must be recognized and accepted.

B. The Brief Statement, which has become the focal point of attention in this present controversy, is not under attack as such; it has been praised highly by many who wish Resolution 9 rescinded and also by those who agree with Resolution 9. In expressing an opinion as to the constitutionality of Resolution 9, we are in no way underestimating or minimizing the value of the Brief Statement or of any other doctrinal statement accepted by the Synod, nor are we questioning their Scriptural correctness. This is not the province of the Committee on Constitutional Matters.

C. By including paragraph “B” of Resolution 9 of Floor Committee 3 (“That Synod’s pastors, teachers, and professors are held to teach and act in harmony with such statements”) in the resolution, the resolution, in our opinion, was given the effect of amending Article II of our Constitution. Furthermore, paragraph “B” limits the binding force of doctrinal statements to pastors, teachers, and professors and says nothing about its binding force on member congregations of the Synod.

D. We call particular attention to the fact that the Synod and every member of the Synod accepts without reservation the confessional standard as set forth in Article II of the Synod's Constitution; these are the conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod (Article VI). Furthermore, members who act contrary to these Confessions may be expelled from the Synod (Article XIII). The Confessions mentioned in Article II are the only confessions to which pastors and teachers bind themselves in taking their ordination and installation vows or to which a congregation binds itself when it becomes a member of the Synod. It necessarily follows that in order to make any other confessional or doctrinal statement binding upon the members of the Synod, the statement must be made a part of the Constitution. Accordingly, Resolution 9 of Floor Committee 3 of the San Francisco convention, in our opinion, should have been treated as an amendment to the Constitution rather than as a measure that could be adopted by a simple majority vote.

E. Therefore, in our opinion, Resolution 9 of Floor Committee 3 of the San Francisco convention is unconstitutional, not because of any inherent defect in the wording or the content of any doctrinal statement adopted by the Synod as a public doctrine but because Resolution 9 of Floor Committee 3 was not submitted as an amendment to the Constitution in accordance with the provisions of Article XIV.

The 1962 convention considered the matter further and recognized that the Synod could not require as a condition of membership that a member be bound by a doctrinal statement or resolution adopted by the Synod in convention, unless the process of constitutional amendment was followed, and adopted 1962 Res. 6-01:

WHEREAS, The confessional basis which all members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are bound to accept without reservation is set forth in Article II of the Constitution of the Synod, namely: the Holy Scriptures and the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church (see Reports and Memorials “Reference Material” [yellow], p. 3); and

WHEREAS, Article VI of the Constitution of the Synod prescribes that one of the conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod is: “Acceptance of the confessional basis of Article II,” which article prescribes only the Holy Scriptures and the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, The Synod at its 1959 convention, in answer to a question as to the binding force of statements on doctrine and practice, passed a resolution known as Resolution 9 of Committee 3, declaring that the Synod's pastors, teachers, and professors are held to teach and act in harmony with every doctrinal statement of a confessional nature adopted by the Synod as a true exposition of the Holy Scriptures, which are to be regarded as public doctrine (*publica doctrina*) (see Reports and Memorials [yellow], “Reference Material” p. 22); and

WHEREAS, Questions have been raised as to whether this resolution, by making such doctrinal statements binding on members of the Synod, is not thereby requiring members of the Synod to subscribe to doctrinal statements additional to those which are required by the Constitution of the Synod and therefore has the effect of amending the Constitution by a simple resolution; and

WHEREAS, Article XIV of the Constitution of the Synod provides that an amendment of the Constitution requires a two-thirds majority vote of all votes cast and submission to congregations of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The Synod has been requested to declare Resolution 9 unconstitutional because (1) it has the effect of amending the Synod's Constitution and (2) was not submitted as an amendment as required by Article XIV; and

WHEREAS, The doctrinal content or Scriptural correctness of any doctrinal statements is not being judged or questioned in the consideration of the constitutionality of Resolution 9, but the question of constitutionality is confined to proper procedure, as fully set forth in the supplemental report of the standing Committee on Constitutional Matters, in which the committee rendered the opinion that Resolution 9 is unconstitutional (see Unprinted Memorial 601-A); and

WHEREAS, Your Floor Committee 6 of this convention is in agreement with the opinion of the standing Committee on Constitutional Matters; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod declare Resolution 9 of Committee 3 of the 1959 synodical convention unconstitutional on the ground that said resolution has the effect of amending the confessional basis of the Constitution of the Synod without following the procedure required by Article XIV of the Constitution.

The issue is further clarified by recognizing that one must unconditionally accept and subscribe to the confessional position set forth in Article II of the Constitution to obtain and retain membership. The Synod provides no avenue of dissent from that unconditional subscription. With respect to doctrinal resolutions and statements, however, the Synod expressly recognizes and provides for a process of dissent. While members of the Synod are expected to honor and uphold the resolutions of the Synod, including doctrinal resolutions and doctrinal statements, the Bylaws specifically provide for a process of dissent, described in Bylaw section 1.8:

- 1.8.1 While retaining the right of brotherly dissent, members of the Synod are expected as part of the life together within the fellowship of the Synod to honor and uphold the resolutions of the Synod.
- 1.8.2 Dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers and then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescission. While the conscience of the dissenter shall be respected, the consciences of others, as well as the collective will of the Synod, shall also be respected.

(Adopted March 20, 2012)

Transfer of Congregations Between Districts (12-2636)

With a March 26, 2012 emailed memo, the Secretary of the Synod requested an opinion from the commission in response to questions surfaced by the request of a new congregation of an LCMS district to have its membership transferred to the neighboring district. The congregation is situated on the border of its current district but is the product of a mission effort that also involved the neighboring district.

Question: Does Synod Bylaw 4.1.1.3 pertain in this situation, since the transfer would in effect change the boundaries of the districts, or does Bylaw 4.1.1.4 pertain, since this is intended to be no more than a transfer of congregations between districts at the request of a congregation?

Opinion: Since the transfer to another district “is intended to be no more than a transfer of congregations between districts at the request of a congregation,” only Synod Bylaw 4.1.1.4 pertains.

According to Res. 7-10 of the 1995 Synod convention,

[*Resolved*,] That in order to provide direction for transfer of congregations, the following bylaw provision be added:

- 4.03 d Transfer of congregations between districts is completed upon approval of the respective district boards of directors at the request of the congregation [current Bylaw 4.1.1.4]. Transfer of congregations between partner churches requires the additional approval of the governing boards of the church bodies [current Bylaw 4.1.1.5].

And be it further

Resolved, That such actions be reported by the district president of the transferring district in the official periodicals of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod [1995 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 153].

Synod Bylaw 4.1.1.3¹⁰ is the provision “for the formation, division, realignment, merger, or dissolution of a district or districts ... initiated by a national convention of the Synod or the Board of Directors of the Synod” [emphasis added]. The 1995 convention resolution made it clear that new Bylaw 4.03 d [2010 Bylaw 4.1.1.4] was an

additional provision allowing a congregation to initiate a request for a transfer to another district and therefore was not in conflict with Bylaw 4.03 a,b,c [2010 Bylaw 4.1.1.3]. The Bylaw 4.1.1.4 provision for transfer of congregations between districts applies even though it has the effect of changing the boundaries of the districts.

(Adopted April 13–14, 2012)

Confessional Standard—Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (12-2638)

In an April 10, 2012 emailed letter, a district secretary asked for an opinion from the commission regarding the requirement by his district's Constitutional Review Committee that the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope be specifically listed with the other symbolical books in the confessional paragraphs of congregations' constitutions.

Opinion: The commission is aware of differing opinions regarding the specific listing of the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope as one of the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The list provided in Article II of the Synod's Constitution, for example, has never included mention of the Treatise (reflecting the document's association historically with the Smalcald Articles). At the same time, instances of specific listings of the Treatise as one of the confessional documents in the Book of Concord can be found in various materials published by the Synod.¹¹

Whether separately listed or not, the inclusion of the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope in the content of the Book of Concord is not questioned. Any insistence, therefore, that the treatise be listed as an expectation of membership in the Synod is excessive on the part of a district constitution committee, whose responsibility it is "to ascertain that [member congregations' constitutions and bylaws] are in harmony with Holy Scripture, the Confessions, and the teachings and practices of the Synod" (Bylaws 2.2.1 [b]; 2.4.1 [b]). (Adopted April 13–14, 2012)

Prior Approval of CUS Theological Faculty (12-2643)

In a May 4, 2012, emailed letter, the interim executive director of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System indicated a problem and then asked two questions of the commission.

In accord with Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (b), the commission notified the boards of regents of the Synod's colleges and universities, the boards of regents of the seminaries, and the Synod President, allowing them to submit in writing information regarding the matters at issue. Prior to finalizing this opinion, the commission also consulted with the Commission on Handbook, given that commission's convention-mandated responsibility to participate in updating the 2010 *Handbook* (2010 Res. 8-12A) and to bring it into harmony with resolutions and changes adopted by the Synod's conventions (Bylaw 3.9.4.2 [b]).

Problem: Editions of the *Handbook* prior to 2010 contained the following statement:

3.8.3.4 In keeping with the objectives and the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, the Board for University Education shall...

(f) Grant approval for initial appointments of theological faculty;...

This paragraph is not contained in the 2010 *Handbook*. However, the policy is stated in the section on faculty in older editions of the *Handbook* as well as the current edition.

Question 1: What is the correct text of the *Handbook* with regard to prior approval of theology faculty members?

Opinion: The following portion of Bylaw 3.10.5.6.3 should be stricken: "All initial appointments to college/university theology faculties shall require the prior approval of the Board of Directors

of Concordia University System." The following sentence should be amended to read: "All other initial full-time appointments to college/university faculties shall require prior approval of the board of regents and shall include a thorough theological review involving the district president and selected members of the boards of regents."

Prior to (and since) the 2010 Synod convention, the boards of regents of the Synod's colleges and universities as well as the Synod's seminaries had the responsibility to appoint all full-time members of the faculty, including theological faculty. Prior to the 2010 Synod convention, the Board for University Education also had the responsibility to grant prior approval for initial appointment of theological faculty at the Synod's colleges and universities. Prior to the 2010 Synod convention, the Board for Pastoral Education had similar responsibility to grant prior approval for initial faculty at the Synod's seminaries.

Prior to the 2010 convention, the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance made recommendations to the Synod, many of which were adopted by the 2010 convention, to restructure the national office around two mission offices. Res. 8-08A eliminated the Board for University Education and the Board for Pastoral Education. Some of the responsibilities of the eliminated Board for University Education were given to the boards of regents of the colleges and universities and some were revised into the responsibilities of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System. No board other than the seminary boards of regents was given responsibilities for the seminaries.

The responsibility to grant prior approval for initial appointments of seminary faculty members in any body other than the boards of regents of the seminaries was eliminated with the elimination of the Board for Pastoral Education (2007 "Handbook Convention Version," p. 263 of 2010 *Today's Business*). Prior to the changes of the 2010 convention, a parallel reference to the responsibility to grant prior approval of initial seminary faculties by the Board for Pastoral Education had also been placed in the bylaw section for seminary faculties (Bylaw 3.8.2.7.3, 2007 *Handbook*). This section was stricken in the 2007 "Handbook Convention Version" (p. 286 of 2010 *Today's Business*).

The responsibility to grant approval of initial theological faculty to the Synod's colleges and universities was stricken from the text of the responsibilities transferred from what had been the Board for University Education to the Board of Directors of Concordia University System (2007 "Handbook Convention Version," p. 256 of 2010 *Today's Business*). This responsibility for prior approval of initial theological faculty at the Synod's colleges and universities was then not included in the bylaws delineating the responsibilities of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System (Bylaw 3.6.6.5, 2010 *Handbook*). Prior to the changes of the 2010 convention, a parallel reference to the responsibility to grant prior approval of initial theological faculty by the Board for University Education had been placed in the bylaw section for college and university faculties (Bylaw 3.8.3.8.3, 2007 *Handbook*). This section (renumbered as 3.10.5.6.3 in the 2010 *Handbook*) did not get stricken in the 2007 "Handbook Convention Version," (p. 297 of 2010 *Today's Business*) and remains in the 2010 *Handbook*, with the exception that the reference to the Board for University Education was changed to the Board of Directors of Concordia University System.

The responsibility to revise the *Handbook* of the Synod after a convention is that of the Commission on Handbook and the Commission on Constitutional Matters. Bylaw 3.9.4.2 (b) indicates: "In consultation with the Commission on Constitutional Matters, [the Commission on Handbook] shall revise the *Handbook* of the Synod

immediately after each convention to bring it into harmony with the resolutions and changes adopted by the convention.”

After the 2010 convention, the Commission on Handbook and the Commission on Constitutional Matters worked diligently to make sure the extensive changes made by the convention would be reflected in the 2010 *Handbook*. The problem brought to the Commission on Constitutional Matters by the Board of Directors of Concordia University System which had not been noted by the 2010 convention itself could have, indeed should have, been noted by one or both of those two commissions. It was not. Had it been, the inconsistency created by the two places in the Bylaws indicating the responsibility for prior approval of initial theological faculty at the Synod’s colleges and universities by the Board of Directors of Concordia University System could have been resolved earlier. Now that the inconsistency between the two references has been brought to the attention of this commission, this commission and the Commission on Handbook have the responsibility to resolve the inconsistency.

In researching the background for this matter, the commission determined that the focus of the attention of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance, Floor Committee 8 of the 2010 convention, and the delegates of the 2010 convention for what responsibilities of the Board for University Education would be transferred to the Board of Directors of Concordia University System was on Bylaw 3.8.3.8.3, the listed responsibilities of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System. This reference to prior approval was clearly stricken. The parallel responsibility for “prior approval” in the bylaw section for college and university faculties was changed as all other references to the Board for University Education which had not been eliminated from the bylaws were changed to the Board of Directors of Concordia University System, as the Board for University Education no longer existed.

Further examination of what responsibilities were transferred from the Board for University Education to the Board of Directors of Concordia University System support this conclusion. The responsibilities of the Board of Directors of Concordia University System for the colleges and universities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod under Bylaw 3.6.6.5 include policy development, coordination of planning, and general oversight. Responsibilities for day-to-day management and operations of the institutions were given to the boards of regents of the colleges and universities by the 2010 convention. Besides the responsibility to grant approval for initial appointments of theological faculty, other responsibilities given to the boards of regents of the colleges and universities include: approve capital projects in relation to campus property management agreements and institutional master plans; visit institutions periodically to identify strengths and weaknesses based upon professional standards; monitor recognized service organization standards and follow up in cases of inadequacy; and establish and maintain a system of colloquy and certification of commissioned ministers (see 2007 “Handbook Convention Version,” pp. 256–257 of 2010 *Today’s Business*).

The Synod has had throughout its history significant concern for the recruiting and training of pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers for the Synod. Appointments to the faculties of the Synod’s seminaries as well as to the theological faculties (indeed to all the other faculties as well) of the Synod’s colleges and universities are of vital importance to the Synod. For decades, while boards of regents of colleges and universities as well as seminaries have been given the responsibility to appoint members of their faculties, prior approval of Synod boards were also required for initial appointments of faculty members of the seminaries and also for initial appointments of theological faculty members of the Synod’s colleges and universities.¹² Recognizing that history, and continuing to encourage and even enhance the Synod’s significant concern for recruiting and

training pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers for the Synod, the 2010 convention eliminated the responsibility for approving the appointment of fully qualified members of the seminary faculty from any board other than the boards of regents for the seminaries and placed that responsibility squarely with the seminaries’ boards of regents. The 2010 convention decided that the responsibility to ensure qualified faculty for the Synod is with the seminaries themselves. Likewise the 2010 convention decided that the responsibility to ensure qualified theological faculty as well as all other faculty for the colleges and universities is with the colleges and universities themselves and their boards of regents. It would have been inconsistent for the Synod to eliminate prior approval for seminary faculties by a second board and not reflect the same for theological faculties of colleges and universities.

The conclusion of the commission is also consistent with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Concordia University System. These governing documents of Concordia University System, while covering many other responsibilities of the Concordia University System, include no reference to carrying out responsibilities for prior approval of initial theological faculty members of the Synod’s colleges and universities.

Question 2: If the correct text cannot be established until the next Synod convention, what policy regarding prior approval should the CUS Board operate under until then?

Opinion: The correct text can be established. The Board of Directors of Concordia University System does not have prior approval of initial appointments of college/university theological faculty members and does not need to establish such a policy.

(Adopted Aug. 10–12, 2012)

Dispute Resolution Process Procedural Questions **(12-2645)**

With a May 9, 2012 email, a member of the Synod submitted a series of questions related to the dispute resolution process under Bylaw 1.10. The actual questions submitted have been amended by the commission to avoid argumentative assumptions and to approach the issues in a more neutral manner.

Question 1: May an individual involved in an investigation or proceeding under Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17 initiate a dispute resolution process under Bylaw section 1.10 against witnesses because they offer testimony relating to the allegations in the underlying action?

Opinion: No. Bylaw 2.14.1 recognizes that “[t]ermination of membership in the Synod is a serious matter involving both the doctrine and life of those to whom it has been granted.” The need to obtain accurate and complete information necessary to consider allegations which could lead to termination of membership has resulted in the requirement (Bylaw 2.14.7.8 [d]) that “[a]ny member of the Synod, officer of a congregation, or officer of any organization owned or controlled by the Synod shall, when called upon by the panel to do so, testify or produce records related to the matter.” Members are thus encouraged to cooperate in an investigation and are required to provide testimony in order to bring such an action to conclusion quickly where not warranted, and to facilitate the prompt expulsion from membership where warranted.

In order to maintain the integrity of the process, Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (i) gives the panel hearing such an action the authority to determine which witnesses are necessary. Paragraph (g) of the bylaw requires that “[w]hile the matter is still undecided or while an appeal is contemplated or pending, publicity shall not be given to the issues in the matter by any of the persons involved during any part of the procedures outlined in this bylaw.” The seriousness of maintaining

that confidentiality is emphasized in Bylaw 2.14.9.2, which further provides that “[a]ny member participating in this bylaw procedure that violates any of the requirements or procedures in this bylaw or is persistent in false accusations is subject to the same disciplinary measures as set forth in this bylaw. Violations of the prohibition against publicity while a matter is still undecided or while an appeal is contemplated or pending (Bylaw 2.14.7.8 [g] above) by any of the persons involved are specifically included as violations subject to the same disciplinary measures set forth in this bylaw.”

Question 2: When an investigation or action is pending under Bylaw sections 2.14–2.17, is that a matter to be delayed if there is a dispute resolution process under Bylaw 1.10 involving one or more of the parties or witnesses to the expulsion action simultaneously pending?

Opinion: No. While the same parties may be involved in both the Bylaw section 1.10 dispute resolution process and a Bylaw section 2.14–2.17 expulsion process over related facts and issues, the two processes are independent of each other, and neither process should be unduly delayed. The Synod recognizes the need both to restore a member promptly following unsubstantiated allegations resulting in an expulsion proceeding and to expel a member promptly when expulsion is justified.

Question 3: If a member disapproves of testimony offered by a witness relating to allegations against the member in a Bylaw section 2.14–2.17 matter, is the appropriate forum to challenge the witness’ testimony within the Bylaw section 2.14–2.17 process itself, or is the appropriate forum the dispute resolution process under Bylaw section 1.10?

Opinion: The entirety of a Bylaw section 2.14–2.17 process is the evaluation of conflicting information and testimony, a determination of the facts involved, and the appropriate action based upon those facts. It is expected that challenges to all evidence and testimony will occur within that process. A dispute resolution action under Bylaw section 1.10 would only be appropriate for actions occurring outside that process, or for violation of the Bylaw section 2.14–2.17 process itself.

Question 4: If the complainant refuses to meet face-to-face with the respondent under Bylaw 1.10.5, may the complainant nonetheless proceed to the formal reconciliation process under Bylaw 1.10.6?

Opinion: As stated above, the entire purpose of a Bylaw section 1.10 action is a God-pleasing reconciliation. Such reconciliation cannot occur without communication between the parties in dispute. Bylaw 1.10.5 recognizes this when it indicates that “the parties involved in a dispute must meet together.” Recognizing that such failure to communicate in a God-pleasing manner often causes a dispute to come to the attention of a district president in the first place, Bylaw 1.10.5 (c) requires the district president to “require the complainant to meet face-to-face with the respondent in the manner described in Matthew 18:15, if the complainant has not already done so,” before any formal process can continue under that bylaw.

Question 5: If a complainant refuses to attend a formal reconciliation meeting under Bylaw 1.10.6, can the complainant nonetheless proceed to a Dispute Resolution Panel under Bylaw 1.10.7?

Opinion: As suggested by Bylaw 1.10.4 (f), the matter should not proceed to a Dispute Resolution Panel if the reconciler determines that it was the accuser who refused to participate in the reconciliation process. On the other hand, the process may move forward if

such a meeting did not occur because the accused refused to participate. A matter may not proceed to a Dispute Resolution Panel under Bylaw 1.10.7 until the requirements of the preceding bylaws have been met, including the preparation of the reconciler’s report under Bylaw 1.10.6.5, which would report the failure of the accused as the basis to move forward if such were the case.

Question 6: Can a non-party attend the formal reconciliation meeting held under Bylaw 1.10.6.4?

Opinion: Yes, Bylaw 1.10.6.4 includes the provision that “[w]ith the approval of the reconciler, each party may, in the manner described in Matthew 18:16, bring one or two persons to the meeting ‘so that every matter may be established by their testimony.’” The reconciler may exercise discretion to allow any person who may assist the process to attend the formal reconciliation meeting.

(Adopted May 11–13, 2012)

Procedural Matters re Bylaw Section 1.8 (Dissent) **(12-2646)**

A member of the Synod, in a May 10, 2012 email, addressed a series of statements and corresponding questions to the commission regarding procedural matters pertaining to Bylaw section 1.8 (“Dissent”).

Bylaws 1.8.1 and 1.8.2 describe the process by which members of the Synod express dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements adopted by the Synod. Bylaw 1.8.2 indicates that before a member of the Synod may submit an overture to a convention calling for the revision or rescission of a resolution adopted by the Synod, that member must first express that dissent within the fellowship of peers and then bring it to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). Having done that, the member of the Synod (either an individual or a congregation) may proceed with the process of bringing an overture to a convention.

Synod Bylaw 3.1.6.2 specifies those eligible to submit overtures. Among those listed is the forum of a circuit. Therefore, a member of the Synod (individual or congregation) who has followed the requirements for dissent described in Bylaw 1.8.2 may submit a proposed overture to a circuit forum, which if adopted by the circuit forum may be submitted either to a convention of a district or a convention of the Synod. In this instance, the circuit forum and/or the district convention become(s) a channel through which the member submits an overture to revise or rescind “doctrinal resolutions and statements” to a convention of the Synod.

Based on this process prescribed by the Bylaws of the Synod, the commission replies to the four statements and their following questions submitted by the member of the Synod. In the interest of brevity and clarity, the commission has summarized a number of the questions submitted under statements 2–4, taking care to retain the general content and intent of the original questions.

Statement 1: A circuit forum submits to its appropriate district convention an overture proposing that the district in turn call upon the Synod to revise or rescind a doctrinal resolution adopted by the Synod.

Question 1.1: If the circuit forum member who made the motion to place the matter in question before the circuit forum is a pastor, is it relevant whether this pastor had previously discussed his point of dissent within the fellowship of peers and brought this matter to the attention of the CTCR before expressing his dissent in the form of an overture for eventual convention consideration?

Opinion: Yes. Bylaw 1.8.2 requires that a member (individual or congregation) follow this process before expressing dissent by pre-

senting an overture to a circuit forum calling for the revision or rescission of a doctrinal resolution or statement of the Synod.

Question 1.2: Would there be a difference if the circuit forum member who made the motion to place the matter in question before the circuit forum were a layperson?

Opinion: The process of dissent in Bylaws 1.8.1 and 1.8.2 applies only to members (individuals and congregations) of the Synod. Such an overture could not be submitted by a layperson unless done on behalf of a congregation which had previously followed the process.

Question 1.3: Before a circuit forum adopts the kind of overture mentioned in item 1 above, would it be incumbent upon that circuit forum to take the steps enjoined upon members of the Synod in Bylaw section 1.8? If so, who is the “peer” of a circuit forum? Would two or more circuit forums have to hold official joint meetings for discussion?

Opinion: Since a circuit forum is not a member of the Synod but rather a channel through which a member of the Synod submits such an overture, the provisions of Bylaw 1.8.2 do not apply to those present and voting at the circuit forum.

Statement 2: An agency of the Synod (especially but not limited to a district, through its convention, or a circuit forum) submits to the Synod in convention an overture that calls upon the Synod to revise or rescind a doctrinal resolution adopted by the Synod.

Question 2.1: Must every member of a circuit forum, agency of the Synod (including a district), or district or Synod floor committee considering such an overture participate in the Bylaw 1.8.2 steps of dissent required of a member of the Synod before that circuit forum, agency, or floor committee can submit such an overture to a convention?

Opinion: As stated above, neither a circuit forum nor a district convention is a member of the Synod, but rather a proper channel through which a member presents his/her/its concerns. After a member involved in the Bylaw 1.8.2 process has initiated a matter and an overture is before a convention, the matter no longer belongs to the individual. The individual who initiated the process is not required to participate.

Question 2.2: As a related question, Bylaw 1.8.2 mentions an “overture to *the* convention” (emphasis added to highlight the definite article). To which convention? Is “the convention” in view here exclusively the national convention (which is the only convention that can actually revise or rescind a doctrinal resolution adopted by the Synod) or does “the convention” include any convention of the synod at the national or district level, *i.e.*, also district conventions?

Opinion: Ultimately it is a convention of the Synod that decides the matter. However, such an overture could also be presented to a district convention as an appropriate channel through which the matter is presented to a convention of the Synod.

Statement 3: At a circuit forum or district convention, a pastor (an individual member of the Synod) casts a vote in favor of (a) a properly submitted motion that calls upon the district to memorialize the Synod to revise or rescind a doctrinal resolution adopted by the Synod, or (b) a properly submitted motion that calls upon the Synod to revise or rescind a doctrinal resolution adopted by the Synod.

Question 3.1: Is it relevant whether this pastor had previously discussed his point of dissent within the fellowship of peers and brought this matter to the attention of the CTCR and expressed his

dissent in the form of an overture for convention consideration?

Statement 4: At a convention of the Synod, a pastor (an individual member of the Synod) casts a vote in favor of a properly submitted motion by which the Synod revises or rescinds a doctrinal resolution adopted by the Synod.

Question 4.1: Is it relevant whether this pastor had previously discussed his point of dissent within the fellowship of peers and brought this matter to the attention of the CTCR and expressed his dissent in the form of an overture for convention consideration?

Opinion: Statements 3 and 4 and the questions that follow each statement (referencing those in attendance at circuit forums or conventions who vote on the overture) are irrelevant because neither a circuit forum nor a district convention is a member of the Synod, and such voting at a circuit forum or district convention is part of the process by which such an overture from a member comes to a convention of the Synod, where delegates decide the issue voting according to their own convictions.

(Adopted May 11–13, 2012)

District Convention Registration Fees (12-2649)

With an emailed June 2, 2012 letter, a pastor of the Synod submitted a series of questions and supplemental information regarding a district’s requirement that convention fees be paid prior to the registration and accreditation of delegates.

Question 1: May a district charge a registration fee to delegates of a district convention?

Opinion: There is no provision in the *Handbook* of the Synod that addresses the subject of charging a registration fee to delegates to conventions. It is, however, common practice in the Synod for districts to request payment of convention registration fees by district congregations in order to offset the operating costs of the district convention. This practice resembles (but is not identical to) the national Synod’s practice of offsetting convention costs by various means including a “district levy per communicant member” (Bylaw 3.1.9 [d]).

Question 2: May attendance at such district convention be contingent upon payment of a registration fee?

Opinion: Past commissions have already issued two opinions on this issue. In its March 13, 1992 opinion (Ag. 1928), in response to an inquiry regarding a proposed change to a district bylaw (“Only those congregations that have paid their convention registration fee by the opening of the convention shall have their delegates seated”), the commission opined:

In responding to this question, the commission notes that Bylaw 4.23 accrediting of delegates [see 2010 Bylaw 4.2.2 (a)] deals with the accreditation of such delegates at the district convention. It states, “The delegates of a voting congregation shall stand accredited and entitled to vote upon presenting to the secretary at the opening of the convention the proper credentials provided by the district secretary and signed by two of the congregation’s officers...” The commission notes that at neither the synodical nor the district level does certification involve finances as one of the requirements for certification. While the congregation can rightly be expected to pay the assessment, that payment cannot be required for the certification and seating of delegates. Such accreditation cannot be conditioned on the payment of money.

The commission would note that the concept of a synod, of which the district is a part, involves that of walking together. This is reflected in Bylaw 2.39 b [2010 Bylaw 1.7.2], which states:

The Synod expects every member congregation to respect its resolutions and to consider them of binding force if they are in accordance with the Word of God and if they appear applicable as far

as the condition of the congregation is concerned. The Synod, being an advisory body, recognizes the right of the congregation to be the judge of the applicability of the resolution to its local condition. However, in exercising such judgment, a congregation must not act arbitrarily but in accordance with the principles of Christian love and charity.

In view of this, the district, which is a part of the Synod, can rightly expect its congregations to conform to the Bylaws of the district unless a requirement does not “appear applicable as far as the condition of the congregation is concerned.” The congregation which does not pay its assessment can rightly be expected to demonstrate that its local condition makes the assessment requirement inapplicable for them. It would seem that congregations not paying the assessment for convention expenses should be dealt with evangelically with the understanding that ultimately its continued membership in the Synod through the district might be involved.

At its November 1994 meeting, the commission responded to a similar question from a pastor whose congregation was refusing to pay because of “extreme financial hardship.” The commission responded by quoting from its 1992 opinion, as quoted above. The same response also answers the current question, also in the negative: delegate attendance at a district convention cannot be contingent upon payment of a registration fee.

Question 3: If the answers to the preceding questions are in the negative, what recourse does a congregation or its voting delegates have if they have been improperly denied the opportunity to attend and vote at the convention?

Opinion: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod provide no recourse following the convention, should a congregation be denied voting delegate representation. The time for contesting seating would have been at the time of the convention and according to rules established for that purpose.

Question 4: Also, if a congregation has been denied the right to send delegates to the district convention, what recourse does that congregation have regarding the election for President of the Synod? Are they to be denied the right to vote for president because they have been unjustly barred from attendance at a district convention?

Opinion: As is the case with all congregations of the Synod whose voting delegates are prevented from attending their district conventions for any reason, the Bylaws of the Synod provide no recourse that would allow participation in the presidential election. Bylaw 3.12.2.3 clearly reserves that right to the voting delegates who were in attendance at the prior year’s district convention.

Question 5: But if the convention was not convoked (that is, called together) according to the Constitution, would the convention be a legal convention, capable of transacting business?

Opinion: As the previous questions indicate the questioner’s concern is for district conventions, the commission responds to this question about “the convention” in regard to district conventions.

Article XII 14 of the Constitution states: “For the legal holding of the sessions of the districts, a constitutional convocation of such sessions and the presence of at least one-third of the voting members represented by at least one of their respective representatives (pastor or lay delegate) are required.”

A properly called district convention requires satisfying two stipulations: it must be properly convoked (“a constitutional convocation of such sessions”) and there must be sufficient delegate representation (“at least one-third of the voting members represented by at least one of their respective representatives”).

(Adopted Aug. 10–12, 2012)

Questions re Ecclesiastical Supervisor’s Responsibilities during Expulsion Proceedings (12-2650)

A member of the Synod, with a June 9, 2012 email, submitted a series of “issues” regarding a district president’s responsibilities during Bylaws section 2.17 expulsion proceedings. Noting that the answers to the questions submitted also generally pertain to Bylaws section 2.14 proceedings, the commission responded as follows:

Question 1: Under Bylaw 2.17, should a District President, who has the sole responsibility to commence expulsion proceedings, take no further action when he has determined during the consultation phase [Bylaw 2.17.3] that the information or facts, even if accepted as true, could not lead to expulsion?

Opinion: First, it should be noted that, during the consultation phase described in Bylaw 2.17.3, the accuser may consult with any appropriate ecclesiastical supervisor. That person may well not be the ecclesiastical supervisor of the accused, who alone is able under Bylaw 2.17.4 actually to initiate an expulsion process.

It is a consultation that occurs under Bylaw 2.17.3, and not a determination regarding the merits of the case or whether a formal proceeding should be initiated. It is only under Bylaw 2.17.4, if a district president determines that there is no factual basis to initiate expulsion proceedings under that bylaw, that the Bylaw 2.17 matter is concluded as provided by Bylaw 2.17.5.3.

Whether made by the district president or the Referral Panel, if the determination is not to initiate formal proceedings, the district president shall in writing so inform the accuser, any other district president involved, and the involved member, which shall terminate the matter.

While the Bylaw 2.17 matter may have been terminated, a district president as ecclesiastical supervisor continues to have the right and the responsibility to take other actions as he may determine to be warranted by information he has learned prior to the termination of that process. A fact situation not rising to the level of expulsion may well still require counsel, admonishment, correction, or advice. Under some circumstances, it may be appropriate to consider the issues under the Bylaw 2.14 process or to submit the matter to a Bylaw 1.10 proceeding instead, as recognized in Bylaw 2.17.3 (b).

Question 2: During the phases under Bylaw 2.17.3 or 2.17.4, is it inconsistent with or otherwise violating the Eighth Commandment, Bylaw 2.17.3(d), or Standard Operating Procedure I.F., G., I.(6), N.; II.D., F., G., I., or Q for an ecclesiastical supervisor to give status updates, engage in on-going communications, or to otherwise communicate with anyone other than the accuser, the accused or those with whom the ecclesiastical supervisor may consult (Bylaw 2.17.3[a])?

Opinion: It is not within the authority of the CCM to issue opinions regarding biblical interpretation, including the Eighth Commandment. During any potential expulsion process, the involved ecclesiastical supervisors must be free to gather all information necessary to consider the issues. With respect to the balance of the question, during the investigative phase of a Bylaw 2.17 matter, Bylaw 2.17.3(a) authorizes the involved ecclesiastical supervisor to “consult with any others as considered appropriate under the circumstances.” A district president under Bylaw 2.17.4 may also seek facts by speaking with anyone believed to have relevant information in order to reach the decision as to whether to commence a formal action and to prosecute that action effectively if the decision is made to do so. The district president would also have the ability to discuss issues with an investigation committee under 2.17.4 (a) or a referral panel under Bylaw 2.17.5.

In fulfilling his responsibilities, he must with any communications also keep in mind the provisions and requirements of Bylaw 2.17.7.8, requiring compliance with Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (a)–(j), subsection (g) of which states:

While the matter is still undecided or while an appeal is contemplated or pending, publicity shall not be given to the issues in the matter by any of the persons involved during any part of the procedures outlined in this bylaw. However, at his discretion and as the needs dictate in order to “promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice” (Constitution, Art. XI B 3) and in order to provide counsel, care, and protection for all the members of the Synod (Article III 8, 9), the President of the Synod or the district president in consultation with the President of the Synod, as the case may be, may properly advise or inform the involved congregation(s) and/or the district or the Synod.

Question 3: During the phases under Bylaw 2.17.3 or 2.17.4, is it inconsistent with or otherwise violating the Eighth Commandment, Bylaw 2.17.3 (d), or Standard Operating Procedure I F., G., I. (6), N.; II D., F., G., I., or Q for an ecclesiastical supervisor to share any information or status updates with alleged witnesses?

Opinion: See answer to Question 2.

(Adopted Aug. 10–12, 2012)

Questions re “Actual Partiality or the Appearance Thereof” (12-2651)

In a June 25, 2012 emailed letter, a member of the Synod involved in the Bylaws section 2.14 expulsion process asked a series of questions of the commission.

Background: After an appeal to a Final Hearing Panel in a Bylaws section 2.14 matter, each party selected a district president for the panel. The remaining panel member and the hearing facilitator were selected by blind draw. After providing general information regarding the matter and identifying the persons involved in the matter in order to uncover potential conflict of interest concerns with the parties to the matter, the administrator asked all selected panel members to consider whether the standard of disqualification (“actual partiality or the appearance thereof”) applied to them in this case. All three replied they did not think the standard applied to them and did not disqualify themselves. After the parties to the matter were informed of the panel members selected, the district president who imposed the suspended status then challenged the objectivity of two of the panel members: the district president selected by the accused (because of possible involvement in the matter) and the lay reconciler member of the panel (who resides in the same district as the district president chosen by the accused). The two challenged panel members were then asked by the administrator of the process to consider whether the standard for disqualification provided in the *Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM)* for Bylaw section 2.14 (“actual partiality or the appearance thereof”) applied to them in this case, noting particularly the stated objections to the chosen district president (for possible prior involvement in the matter) and to the lay member (not for partiality toward any party, but rather for residing in the same district as the district president selected for the panel by the accused). Both replied that they did not think the standard applied to them and therefore did not disqualify themselves.

Paragraph “N” of the “General Regulations for Bylaws Section 2.14” (p. 10 of the *SOPM*) provides that under these circumstances “the question shall be decided by a panel of three district presidents not involved in the case, selected by blind draw by the Secretary of the Synod for this purpose.”

This special panel concluded that the district president selected by the accused did not have a conflict of interest and could be a member

of the Final Hearing Panel. The panel also concluded that the lay reconciler member of the Final Hearing Panel should be disqualified because of residence in the same district as the district president chosen by the accused. The panel indicated that this decision “in no way reflects upon the qualifications, gifts, or impartiality possessed by lay reconciler in fulfilling an effective role on the final hearing panel,” but that two members from the same district serving on a Final Hearing Panel, even when one is chosen by blind draw, “may give the appearance of partiality.”

The accused asked a series of questions of the commission regarding procedures associated with the formation of a Final Hearing Panel.

Question 1: *SOPM* guidelines state: “The standard for disqualification is actual partiality or the appearance thereof...” (*SOPM*, p. 9). What is the proper definition of the phrase “actual partiality or the appearance thereof”?

Opinion: Neither the Bylaws nor the *Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM)* for Bylaws section 2.14 provides a definition of “actual partiality or the appearance thereof.” Oxford Dictionary defines “partiality” as “unfair bias in favor of one thing or person compared with another; favoritism.” Such partiality can exist as a result of a personal relationship, a predilection or inclination to one decision or outcome rather than to others, or the holding of a firm opinion on a question before it is presented for consideration. Every tribunal that has to determine facts is concerned with the issue of partiality, because fairness and the appearance of fairness are basic for trust and integrity in the process and the final decision. The concept of partiality is used commonly in courts of law and in arbitration cases, where the burden of proof is on the party alleging that the arbitrator or judge is impermissibly biased. An assertion of partiality requires evidence of facts upon which to base the claim. In such cases an arbitrator or judge is required to make full disclosure of possible conflicts of interest to the parties before the commencement of the proceedings, revealing any relationship or transaction that he/she has had with the parties as well as any other fact which would suggest to a reasonable person that the arbitrator or judge is biased and interested in the outcome of the matter or which might reasonably support the inference of partiality.

Historically in the LCMS, the phrase “actual partiality or the appearance thereof” began to be used when the 1992 Synod convention moved away from the “adjudication” and “appeal” process in the Synod and initiated the dispute resolution process. The phrase became part of Bylaw 8.17 in the 1992 *Handbook* and remained unchanged through the 2001 *Handbook*. In 2004 the *Handbook* was revised and reordered and this section, unchanged from Bylaw 8.17, became Bylaw 1.10.16 and has remained unchanged ever since. When the 2004 Synod convention established the present expulsion-from-membership bylaws (2.14–2.17), the phrase used in the dispute resolution bylaws (Bylaw 1.10.16) was not carried over into the expulsion-from-membership bylaws; however, the Commission on Constitutional Matters was then given the responsibility for developing standard operating procedure manuals for each of these bylaw sections. When providing a disqualification process for each of these bylaw sections, the commission intentionally followed the process established for Bylaws section 1.10 dispute resolution matters, and the phrase “actual partiality or the appearance thereof” has been used in each of those manuals since that time as a guideline for disqualifications.

General Regulation “N” for Bylaws section 2.14 provides clarity to the meaning of “actual partiality or the appearance thereof” as it describes the process to be followed by the district president or the Secretary of the Synod (as administrator for the process) in uncov-

ering potential conflict of interest concerns. The first paragraph of “N” reads:

N. ***Disqualification of Ecclesiastical Supervisors or Panel Members:*** The standard for disqualification is actual partiality or the appearance thereof. When identified by blind draw, potential panel members shall be contacted personally by the district president or the Secretary of the Synod to discuss their availability to serve. The district president or Secretary of the Synod shall provide general information regarding the matter and identify the persons involved in the matter in order to uncover potential conflict of interest concerns. Any ecclesiastical supervisor or panel member may disqualify himself/herself from service. Circumstances that are thought to or are likely to affect performance of duties and the outcome of a formal process shall be disclosed to the district president or the Secretary of the Synod, as appropriate.

General information regarding the matter and parties involved is revealed by the administrator to the panel member “in order to uncover potential conflict of interest concerns.” If any is uncovered, the panel member “may disqualify himself/herself from service. Circumstances that are thought to or are likely to affect performance of duties and the outcome of a formal process shall be disclosed” to the administrator. “N” then continues:

If a hearing facilitator or panel member concludes that he/she has personal knowledge of one or other of the parties to the dispute, he/she shall, upon becoming aware of the same, disclose to the administrator the knowledge and nature thereof and his/her assessment that such will not adversely affect his/her service. The administrator shall share this information with the parties to the dispute. Undue familiarity with the party to the dispute must not be demonstrated in any manner during the panel hearing.

The standard for disqualification is “actual partiality or the appearance thereof” and thus emphasizes some “act” or “action” to create or evidence the proscribed partiality. Actual partiality thus may result from a personal relationship, prior substantive contact with any of the persons involved regarding the substance of the matter, or personal involvement in the matter itself. Such personal relationship or prior involvement in the matter might cause a panel member to disqualify himself/herself from service, or result in disqualification. Such personal relationship or prior involvement in the matter, even if not determined by a panel member to be sufficient to disqualify himself/herself from service, must be revealed by the panel member to the administrator who is then required to share that information with the parties to the dispute. The parties to the dispute, once so informed, would have opportunity to challenge the decision of the panel member.

Beyond “actual partiality,” the standard for disqualification includes the “appearance thereof.” The phrase “the appearance thereof” modifies “actual partiality” and so requires the appearance of some “act” or “action” to create and evidence partiality such as described above. Even where no actual partiality exists as a result of non-substantive contacts with one or more of the involved persons or non-substantive involvement in the issues to be considered, where such relationship or involvement would lead a reasonable person to believe that partiality likely exists, disqualification should occur. It should be remembered that membership on the Council of Presidents, the relationship among district presidents which results from such membership, and contact and discussion that takes place between district presidents while carrying out ecclesiastical supervisory responsibilities (not including discussion of the parties to the matter or the substance of the matter) is not the type of personal relationship or contact which inherently creates or even implies actual partiality or the appearance thereof. Bylaw 2.14.2 (c) defines “Conflict of Interest”: “Representation of two opposing interests. Carrying out the responsibility of ecclesiastical supervision does not give rise to

conflict of interest.” By design, the Bylaws require the selection of members of the Council of Presidents for the formation of many different panels, including Final Hearing Panels. That people active in the Synod are acquainted with each other or have had contact with each other alone is not sufficiently substantive to constitute “actual partiality or the appearance thereof.” As stated above, any such contact, action, or relationship may cause a panel member to “disqualify himself/herself from service” and, even if not sufficient to cause the panel member to choose disqualification, must be disclosed to the administrator, which can be challenged by the parties to the dispute, once they are so informed.

Question 2: Can a panel member be removed from participation in the formation of a Final Hearing Panel merely on the basis of having the same district affiliation as another panel member?

Opinion: No. Having the same district affiliation as another panel member alone is not enough to remove a panel member from participation in the formation of a Final Hearing Panel. Neither the Bylaws nor the *SOPM* for Bylaws section 2.14 (or any other of the *SOPMs* for sections 2.15–2.17 and section 1.10) gives indication that having the same district affiliation as another panel member would cause and evidence actual partiality or the appearance thereof. Nothing in the bylaws or *SOPM* speaks to “actual partiality of the appearance thereof” in the relationship between members of the panel. The concern of partiality appropriately focuses on the relationship between the panel members and either of the parties to the matter. The administrator is to provide to potential panel members “general information regarding the matter and identify the persons involved in the matter in order to uncover potential conflict of interest concerns.”

While the Bylaws in some circumstances disqualify multiple representatives from a single district (e.g., in order to assure geographic representation), such provisions do not address “actual partiality or the appearance thereof” in a Bylaws section 2.14 matter. Bylaw 2.14 and its *SOPM* contain no provision concerning a challenge based on the relationship between panel members. Although the relationship between panel members (not with a party to the matter) is not addressed in Bylaw section 2.14 or its *SOPM*, if a party challenges the eligibility of a panel member to serve on the basis of relationship with another panel member, such as having the same district affiliation as another panel member, the challenged panel member is given opportunity to disqualify himself/herself from service after being provided with the challenge to his/her objectivity on the basis of relationship with another panel member. If the challenged panel member does not disqualify himself/herself, but is aware of facts implicating “actual partiality or the appearance thereof,” he/she is required to disclose such facts to the administrator. If the panel member has given indication of such facts in regard to his/her relationship with the other panel member from the same district besides the fact of residence in the district, the administrator is to inform both parties to the matter about any such information provided by the panel member. This process, however, in no way precludes a party from challenging the eligibility of a panel member to serve on a panel if the party has knowledge believed to constitute “actual partiality or the appearance thereof,” including or apart from the information volunteered by the panel member.

As noted above, a district president will have personal knowledge of and a personal relationship with other district presidents. As indicated in the answer to question 1, this factor alone is considered by Bylaw section 2.14 and *SOPM* to be non-substantive and does not constitute “actual partiality or the appearance thereof.” Thus a district president is not prohibited from service on the same panel

(indeed, such is often required) with another district president. Additional factors would be required to create such “actual partiality or the appearance thereof” as would become sufficiently substantive to prohibit such service. The same is the case for any two members of a panel. Any two panel members may have personal knowledge of and a personal relationship with other panel members. As with district presidents, this factor alone is considered by Bylaws section 2.14 and its *SOPM* to be non-substantive and does not constitute “actual partiality or the appearance thereof.” Thus, any two members of a panel are not prohibited from service on a panel solely because of personal knowledge of and a personal relationship with other panel members or for simply having the same district affiliation. And as General Regulation “N” for Bylaw section 2.14 provides: “Circumstances that are thought to or are likely to affect performance of duties and the outcome of a formal process shall be disclosed” to the administrator, who “shall share this information with the parties to the dispute.” “N” continues, where the relationship between panel members is challenged, “the question shall be decided by a special panel of three district presidents not involved in the case, selected by blind draw by the Secretary of the Synod for this purpose.” The panel selected to determine such a challenge must consider these matters addressed in this opinion in making its conclusion.

Concerns regarding an appearance of fairness or the independence of panel members are different from the question of partiality. If the Synod believes that two panel members coming from the same district leads to the appearance of unfairness or the potential for undue influence between panel members, the Synod ought to address this in convention.

Question 3: Can panel members be removed from their participation in the formation of a final hearing panel beyond the scope of “actual partiality or the appearance thereof”?

Opinion: No. See answers to Questions 1 and 2 above.

Question 4: Can Final Hearing Panels and/or special panels formed to hear special issues/concerns make up rules and/or extend the rules of the hearing panel process when the rules are silent on a specific issue or do not presently exist?

Opinion: Panels are required to function to the best of their ability and judgment under the provisions of the pertinent bylaws and procedures manuals, to the extent they are applicable. While at the time of the commission’s opinion 02-2303 the Synod had not yet established standard operating procedure manuals (which must be followed by all panels), that opinion gives guidance to a disqualification panel in regard to procedures to follow to make an informed decision. See also answers to Questions 1, 2 and 5.

Question 5: If a panel member was removed based on the improper use of the rules and procedures, thus creating a material violation of the hearing panel process, should and/or must that panel member be reinstated?

Opinion: The Bylaws contain no provision for an appeal following the removal of a panel member. However, paragraph “U” of the “General Regulations for Bylaws Section 2.14” of the *SOPM* states:

U. **Right to Object.** If any party learns that any provision of this *Standard Operating Procedures Manual* has not been complied with and fails to object in writing within three (3) days after learning that the provision has not been complied with, the party shall be deemed to have waived the right to object. Issues raised in a timely manner shall be considered and resolved by the appropriate panel (Bylaw 2.14.9.2).

In an opinion regarding a Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP), the commission addressed this issue on June 23, 1998, in Ag. 2109, in answer therein to Question 7:

7. Do Bylaw 3.905 d and Bylaw 8.21 i require a CCM opinion to be implemented by a DRP and require a DRP to change, modify, or otherwise revise its decision in accord with a CCM ruling?

Bylaw 3.905 d states that a function of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) is to “interpret the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws and resolutions...” It further states that “An opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a synodical convention.”

Accordingly an opinion rendered by the CCM must be implemented by a DRP and, further, a decision by a DRP must be changed, modified, or otherwise revised to bring it into accord with an opinion of the CCM.

Bylaw 8.21 i does set forth a procedure to secure a CCM opinion during the dispute resolution process and it concludes with the sentence: “Any opinion received from the Commission on Constitutional Matters must be followed by the Dispute Resolution Panel or Review Panel.”

While Ag. 2109 applies to a Dispute Resolution Panel, it also applies to a special panel to determine eligibility of a challenged panel member to serve on a 2.14 Final Hearing Panel. Thus, if an error regarding disqualification has occurred and timely objection has been made, the error must be corrected.

(Adopted Aug. 10–12, 2012)

Service of District Presidents in Dispute Resolution and Expulsion Processes (12-2652)

In a July 11, 2012 email, the Secretary of the Synod submitted a question to the commission, offering the following by way of preface:

During the district convention year of the Synod’s triennial cycle, it is possible that a dispute resolution or expulsion process will be underway at the time that a new district president is elected. It will be helpful to me as administrator of these processes to receive the commission’s response to the following question.

Question: If a new district president is elected while the current/outgoing district president is involved in a Bylaw section 1.10 dispute resolution process or a Bylaw section 2.14–2.17 expulsion process, does the outgoing president see the matter through to its completion even after leaving office, or does the incoming president assume responsibility for completing the process immediately upon taking office?

Opinion: A review of the processes referenced discloses that the responsibilities placed upon a district president therein are upon the office and not upon the man. Consequently, when the process has not been concluded before an individual leaves the office of district president (for whatever reason), the responsibility for concluding the process still needs to be fulfilled by a district president.

Synod Bylaw 2.14.1(b) indicates that “[t]he action to commence expulsion of a congregation or individual member from membership in the Synod is the sole responsibility of the district president who has the responsibility for ecclesiastical supervision of such member.” When an individual who has been elected district president ceases for whatever reason to be a district president, he no longer has “responsibility for ecclesiastical supervision of such member.” To “commence an expulsion” procedure does not mean that the individual who, as district president, started the process is irrevocably tied to it until its conclusion. Rather, it is only a “district president” who has been authorized to act under the provision of this process.

Similarly, under the provisions for dispute resolution (Synod Bylaw section 1.10, *et seq.*), in every reference in which a district

president is called to act, such action is not dependent upon the specific individual holding the office but is tied to the office itself as the basis for authority to act. It is true that there are occasions within both processes where an individual has a right to select a district president to act within the process;¹³ however, it is the fact that the person selected is a district president that makes him eligible to serve in the process.

Although these dispute resolution and expulsion processes do not speak specifically to the circumstance wherein a district president so chosen to serve may cease to be a district president prior to the final resolution of the matter, the right to have a district president chosen by the individual in the process remains inviolate. Where a district president so chosen ceases to be in that office, the individual who selected him still has the right to have a district president of his/her selection serving in this regard and has the right to make a replacement selection, who would serve to the conclusion of the process.

District Failure to Elect Member of Committee for Convention Nominations (12-2653)

On July 19, 2012, the Secretary of the Synod submitted a question to the Commission on Constitutional Matters with this background: Bylaws 3.12.3.1–3.12.3.3 provide for the election of a Committee for Convention Nominations prior to conventions of the Synod. Districts are required to elect members of the nominations committee (and alternates) according to the schedule provided by these bylaws, using the “regular election procedures at the district convention.”

Question: If a district fails to elect a member of the Synod’s Committee for Convention Nominations while its convention is in session, what (if any) is the process to be used to fill that position following the district convention?

Opinion: When a district convention fails to elect a member of the Synod’s Committee for Convention Nominations, that position must be filled by the Board of Directors of the District in order to fulfill the District’s obligation to the Synod.

(Adopted Aug. 10–12, 2012)

Fairness and Due Process Questions Received from Final Hearing Panel (12-2659)

Pursuant to Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k), a Final Hearing Panel submitted a series of questions to the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM). Immediately after receipt of these questions, the accused member submitted a lengthy history and background raising three “points” or arguments the member wanted to be considered. It is unclear whether the member intended the communication to be a request for an opinion under Bylaw 3.9.2.2. At least one of the “points” is accompanied by a heading, “Procedural Questions to the CCM.” To the extent that the issues presented by the member are relevant to the pending proceeding, the panel itself must process the questions pursuant to Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k). In this opinion, the member’s submission will be treated as background material rather than as a question under Bylaw 3.9.2.2.

Question 1: In a matter arising under Bylaw section 2.14, is a final hearing panel concerned only with the issues raised by the request for a final hearing, or is the panel to review any issues of fairness, due process, or possible procedural infractions that have occurred throughout the entire process? If the latter, does that include matters relating to the procedures of a special hearing panel and the actions or inactions of the administrator relating to the special hearing panel?

Opinion: In performing its function on behalf of the Synod, while the issues raised by the request for a final hearing are its primary

and ultimate focus, a Final Hearing Panel must always be concerned about issues of fairness, due process, or possible procedural infractions. The integrity of the Synod itself is dependent upon its commitment, willingness, and ability to follow the rules and covenants the membership itself has established, both as the basis of joining in our walking together as well as the grounds and process for involuntary removal.

In an overview of membership issues, Bylaw 2.1.1 states:

Included in the objectives of the Synod as stated in its Constitution are, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, to “provide evangelical supervision, counsel, and care for pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers in the performance of their official duties” and to “provide protection for congregations, pastors, teachers, and other church workers in the performance of their official duties and the maintenance of their rights” (Article III 8, 9). In view of this, it is clear that membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, whether individual or congregational, is viewed as a valuable asset to be carefully monitored and managed. In order for this to occur, it is necessary for standards to be developed and maintained for the benefit of all members so that its value is not diminished or destroyed. Consequently, it is important for the Synod to establish the standards and qualifications it believes necessary for acquiring and maintaining the status of membership as well as procedures for protecting those who attain it (emphasis added).

Although directed to a dispute resolution process issue rather than an expulsion, the following comments of the CCM in Opinion 08-2514A apply here as well:

Question 7: May the Dispute Resolution Panel in its proceedings consider issues raised by the parties pertaining to the total process of dispute resolution?

Opinion: The goal of the entire dispute resolution process is reconciliation. Any action which might assist in that process should be considered by the panel. It is the responsibility of each participant in the process to maintain and assure the integrity of the process. As the panel works toward a final decision, it should consider and resolve any issue raised pertaining to the process of dispute resolution.

The process of expulsion from the Synod is a very serious matter, and the goal of the process is always reconciliation. The Synod has spent considerable time and resources establishing and refining the process of expulsion, which process always begins with concerted efforts at reconciliation, and only where that has failed moves on to formal consideration of removal under Constitution Article XIII. Fairness and due process are fundamental keys, not just to protect each member but to maintain the purposes and mutual covenants which are the foundation of the Synod.

With respect to the final question, the answer is “yes.” The responsibility of the Final Hearing Panel includes all matters leading to the possibility of expulsion, including matters relating to all steps leading toward expulsion, including the procedures of a special hearing panel when used, as well as the actions or inactions of the Secretary of the Synod as administrator relating to such special hearing panel. The real question, as discussed below, is how the panel should proceed based on its analysis and findings as to those matters.

Question 2: Section 4.5 (k) of the Guidelines for Section 2.14, second sentence, states: “If it involves questions of constitution or bylaw interpretation, each party shall have a right to an interpretation from the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM).” Paragraph 4.5 (k) (1) states: “The request for an opinion must be made through the panel, which shall determine the wording of the question(s).” May a hearing panel decide to not submit questions to the CCM that are requested by a

party if the hearing panel determines that the questions are not relevant to the issues before the panel?

Opinion: Every member may submit questions to the CCM under Bylaw 3.9.2.2 and an answer will be provided in due course. However, such answers may not be issued before a pending hearing has been concluded, will be of general application for future guidance, and may not be available in time to provide any guidance to a pending panel. Because of the urgency and time limitations involved in a Bylaw section 2.14 matter, the Synod has provided a separate mechanism for the submission and resolution of questions which may be important to the determination of such proceedings. Questions must be submitted through the hearing panels themselves. A 30-day deadline is established in which a member may submit questions to the panel as a matter of right, and all such questions must be processed by the panel as provided by Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k). The panel is allowed to determine the final language of the question, allowing the panel to reconcile conflicting questions from the parties and allowing the panel to assure that issues it believes will assist its consideration of the matter are clearly presented. A 30-day deadline is additionally imposed on the CCM to issue its opinion, assuring that the matter is not unduly delayed.

The Bylaw Section 2.14 *Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM)* simply quotes Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (k) which reads:

(k) If any part of the dispute involves a specific question of doctrine or doctrinal application, each party shall have the right to an opinion from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). If it involves questions of constitution or bylaw interpretation, each party shall have the right to an interpretation from the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM).

In determining whether to submit a question to the CCM, the panel may therefore first determine if any part of the dispute involves a question of interpretation of the Constitution or Bylaws. If the panel finds that any part of the dispute involves such an issue, substantive or procedural, it must under this bylaw submit or pass along a question fairly raising the questions presented to it by either party. If the panel finds that the issue raised cannot possibly be relevant to the outcome of the proceeding, it may decline to submit a question.

Question 3: If the scope of the Final Hearing Panel's inquiry includes fairness throughout the entire Bylaw section 2.14 process, including matters relating to the procedures of a special hearing panel, what would be the consequence of noncompliance with the *SOPM*, or any other perceived lack of fairness, at a previous stage in the process?

Opinion: As described above, a hearing panel must always assure fairness in a Bylaw section 2.14 process. A few examples of the Synod's insistence on fairness, and even the avoidance of the appearance of unfairness, may be helpful. Members of hearing panels and hearing facilitators must be chosen by a witnessed blind draw as provided by Bylaws 2.14.2 (j) and 2.14.7.2 (c). As required in Bylaw 2.14.7.8:

- All hearings are held privately, attended only by the persons involved and necessary witnesses.
- The panel is required to assure that each party involved will be given an opportunity fully to present its respective position.
- Any member of the Synod, officer of a congregation, or officer of any organization owned or controlled by the Synod is required, when called upon by the panel to do so, to testify or produce records related to the matter.
- No party to the matter or anyone on the party's behalf is allowed to communicate either directly or indirectly with the panel or any member of the panel without the full knowledge of the other party to the matter.

- While the matter is pending, no party or panel member may publicize the matter.

The seriousness of the need to maintain fairness is also reflected in disqualification of individuals in both the dispute resolution process of the Synod and the expulsion process, not merely for actual partiality but even the appearance of partiality. See Bylaw 1.10.16 and *SOPM* general regulation "N," as well as CCM Opinion 12-2651.

There are many ways in which either fairness or due process concerns may arise in a Bylaw section 2.14 proceeding, and even more ways in which some detail of *SOPM* regulations may be breached. As with any human endeavor, errors occur. While every effort should be made to avoid unfairness or procedural error, not every error or breach or unfairness will have the same impact on the process. To the extent that corrections can be made, they should be acknowledged and corrected promptly. Until and unless the Synod provides specific remedies or consequences for such errors, that is a responsibility of the panel itself. To the extent that an error cannot be corrected or an unfairness remedied, it is incumbent on the panel itself to consider an appropriate remedy. This may involve consideration of whether the parties were aware of and timely raised objections as provided in Bylaw 2.14.9.2¹⁴, or expressly waived such defect after it was brought to the party's attention¹⁵. It must take into consideration both the seriousness of the underlying issue and the seriousness of the breach. It may involve consideration of whether the error was a single, unintentional, and isolated breach or whether breaches were repeated, systematic, fundamental, or even intentional. The panel may need to consider whether the unfairness rises to the level of undermining the integrity of the Synod itself, on whose behalf the panel is acting.

The Bylaws and the *SOPM* generally provide no absolute remedies. The panel itself must make that determination. Under some circumstances, errors may be rendered moot by subsequent events. Sometimes a remedy may involve simply an acknowledgement and request for forgiveness. When warranted, the remedy may involve dismissal of a single panel member or a request for the replacement of the Secretary of the Synod as administrator. Where circumstances warrant, the panel itself may initiate or suggest the initiation by others of a Bylaw section 1.10 dispute resolution process. But where a panel deems proper, where an error or series of compounding errors are serious enough or unfairness great enough, a panel may in good conscience and fairness need to terminate the current process entirely. If a member's ongoing actions warrant, the initiation of a new proceeding raising ongoing issues would be in order. In the meantime, the Synod's integrity is maintained, the benefit of the doubt inures to the member, and the opportunity for reconciliation continues.

(Adopted Nov. 2-4, 2012)

Revision of "Guidelines for Constitutions and Bylaws of Lutheran Congregations"

Six years having gone by since the last revision of its "Guidelines for Constitutions and Bylaws of Lutheran Congregations" and prompted by recurring questions and issues raised by district constitution committees and recent convention actions, the commission reviewed the existing document and approved the following revision to assist congregations in developing or revising their constitutions and bylaws.

GUIDELINES FOR CONSTITUTIONS AND BYLAWS OF LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS

PREFACE

Congregations, the basic units of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, join together to form the Synod and relate to one another through

it (Bylaw 1.3.1).¹⁶ Together they establish the requirements of membership in the Synod (Constitution Art. VI).¹⁷ Thus, while congregations of the Synod are self-governing (Art. VII), they commit themselves to fulfill not only membership requirements but to act in accordance with the entire Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod, under which they have agreed to live and work and which the congregations alone have the authority to amend through conventions (Bylaws 1.3.4 and 1.3.4.1).¹⁸

In order to assist congregations in the development and preparation of their constitutions and bylaws by the inclusion of the requirements necessary for membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Commission on Constitutional Matters has from time to time issued guidelines for the preparation and review of such documents. This sixth revised edition of the guidelines has been prompted by recurring questions and issues raised by district constitution committees and by recent convention actions.

The Holy Scriptures do not prescribe a form of polity for a local congregation. Congregations are free to structure themselves in such manner that they believe will be most effective for carrying out the Great Commission of our Lord in a manner that is in harmony with Holy Scripture, the Confessions, and the teachings and practices of the Synod. In determining a congregation’s polity, much will depend upon its size, ethnic background, sociological setting—whether rural, urban, or suburban—and other pertinent factors.

Because of its unique needs or setting, a congregation may decide to consider alternate forms of organization. However, in those cases in which a congregation decides to adopt a different type of organization than that described in the following guidelines, the topics that are referenced should still be given serious consideration.

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I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Because member congregations share in the mission of the Synod articulated in its mission statement, *“In grateful response to God’s grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and world,”* it is beneficial that congregations organize themselves and their ministries in an effective manner as provided in their constitutions and bylaws.

B. Among the responsibilities of membership, the Constitution (VI 5)¹⁹ and Bylaws of the Synod require member congregations to submit their constitutions and bylaws for review by their district’s constitution committee when applying for membership in the Synod (Bylaw 2.2.1).²⁰ Congregations which revise their constitutions and bylaws must also submit these proposed changes for review by their district’s constitution committee (Bylaw 2.4.1).²¹ Upon favorable action by the district board of directors, the congregation shall be notified that the changes are acceptable to the Synod, and the congregation may proceed with formal adoption of the revised constitution and/or bylaws, and remain a member in good standing of the Synod.

C. While the requirements for membership in the Synod are established by the Synod for all congregations, differences exist between the congregations of the Synod in size, opportunity, location, and other factors that any attempt to formulate a single example of a constitution and bylaws to suit the needs of every congregation would be ill-advised. As long as the constitution and bylaws of a congregation do not contradict the Constitution, Bylaws, and Resolutions of the Synod, the congregation is free to organize as it wishes. Therefore, in general the organization of a congregation is a matter of self-determination, so long as its constitution and bylaws are in harmony with Holy Scripture, the Confessions, and the teachings and practices of the Synod and are not in violation of governmental laws for not-for-profit charitable organizations.

D. When examining constitutions and bylaws, district constitution committees will ascertain whether the documents honor those basic principles for constitutions and bylaws that are enumerated in these guidelines. When appropriate, the wording of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod should be advocated for the sake of promoting unity and harmony in the Synod. Congregations may note that under Bylaw 2.3.1 (a),²² constitutions of member congregations are not to deny membership or other congregational privileges to any Christian because of race or ethnic origin. It may also be wise to include a statement prohibiting sexual harassment.

E. While these guidelines intend to foster unity in the Synod, it is understood that such unity is grounded primarily in the common confession and mission of the Synod (Constitution Art. II; Bylaw 1.1.1)²³ and in the mutually agreed-upon conditions of membership and objectives of the Synod (Constitution, Art. VI; Bylaw 1.3.4).²⁴

II. FORMAT OF THESE GUIDELINES

A. No section regarding the articles of incorporation of member congregations is included in these guidelines. Suffice it to say that these articles should be brief, including only the essential subjects required by the laws of the state in which a congregation is located. An attorney familiar with such matters should be consulted. If necessary, names of attorneys can be obtained from district officials.

B. In the third section of these guidelines, subjects are identified that ordinarily should be addressed in the constitutions of member congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Instructive comments are offered under each subject, followed by one or more sample paragraphs.

C. In the fourth section of these guidelines, subjects are identified that may be addressed in the bylaws of member congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Instructive comments are offered under each subject, followed by one or more sample paragraphs. More latitude is granted to congregations in their bylaws to allow for differences in size, location, and other circumstances.

D. “Brief but adequate” should be the watchword when congregations develop or amend their constitutions and bylaws. Brevity enables congregations later to develop additional structures and programs (e.g., ad hoc committees) to meet specific needs and goals without the need repeatedly to go through the time-consuming process of amending their governing instruments.

E. It is the goal of this process and the hope of the Commission in providing these guidelines that congregations of our beloved Synod will be assisted in carrying out ever more effectively the great mission which our Lord Jesus Christ has given to His church on earth: to make disciples of all nations, sharing with their communities and the world the good news of salvation and to nurture the faith of those who already believe, by teaching them to observe all that He has commanded.

III. GUIDELINES FOR CONSTITUTIONS

The following are subjects that ordinarily should be addressed in a congregation’s constitution. Instructive comments are provided together with sample paragraphs. For ease of reference, a numeral and decimal numbering system is also recommended.

1.0 NAME

Legal counsel should be consulted to make certain that this paragraph follows the requirements for ecclesiastical corporations established by the state in which the congregation is located. In addition, 1995 Synod convention Res. 3-13A resolved that “all congregations and mission stations in our Synod boldly profess in their official title and/or name that they are ‘Lutheran.’”²⁵

Example:

“The name of this congregation shall be [Name] Lutheran Church of [City,] [County,] [State].”

2.0 MISSION

In the constitution of a Christian congregation it is desirable to state the mission or purpose for which it exists. Such a paragraph should contain the fundamental purposes included in the following example.

Example:

“The purpose of this congregation shall be to give honor and glory to the Triune God, to carry out His will, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, to nurture the faith of its members, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to foster Christian fellowship and love, to extend a helping hand to human need, and to achieve its objectives by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all its members according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.”

3.0 CONFESSIONAL STANDARD

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod requires that its member congregations accept the confessional standard of the Synod. It is recommended that Article II of the Synod’s Constitution be adapted for inclusion in congregations’ constitutions. A congregation’s confessional standard cannot go beyond that of the Synod.²⁶

Example:

“This congregation accepts without reservation:

- 3.1 The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice.
- 3.2 All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.”

4.0 SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

Although not essential, since membership in the Synod is not determined by a statement in a congregation’s constitution, congregations may wish to include mention of their membership in the Synod. If a congregation wishes to include mention of membership in the Synod, the following may be used.

Example:

“This congregation shall be a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as long as the Synod conforms to the congregation’s confessional standards as set forth in this constitution.”

5.0 MEMBERSHIP

Synod congregations often distinguish between three types of congregational membership:²⁷ baptized, communicant, and voting.²⁸ Voting membership may be open to all communicant members but may also be limited to males only.²⁹ Care should be taken that the age at which individuals may hold voting membership conforms to any requirements of state law. Many congregations restrict voting membership to persons who have reached the age of legal majority. This is especially important when decisions involving contracts and other legal matters are made. Again, membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God shall be prohibited (Bylaw 3.9.6.3.1 [a]).³⁰ Also, congregations are not to deny membership or other congregational privileges to any Christian because of race or ethnic origin (Bylaw 2.3.1 [a]).³¹

Example:

“This congregation distinguishes between three types of congregational membership.

- 5.1 The membership of this congregation includes the following:
 - 5.1.1 Baptized members are all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of the pastor of this congregation, including the children who have not yet been confirmed into communicant membership.
 - 5.1.2 Communicant members are those baptized members who have been instructed and are familiar with the contents of Luther’s Small Catechism, have been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, and accept the confessional standard of Section _____ of this Constitution.
 - 5.1.3 Voting members are communicant members who have reached the age of _____ years.
- 5.2 The members of this congregation are received in the following manner:
 - 5.2.1 Baptized members are received through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism or through the consent of one or both parents in the case of children who have been baptized in another Christian congregation.
 - 5.2.2 Adult members are received through the rite of confirmation and Sacrament of Holy Baptism as appropriate, through transfer from a sister congregation, or through profession of faith or reaffirmation of faith.
 - 5.2.3 Eligible communicant members may be received as voting members upon application for such privilege upon approval of the voters assembly.
 - 5.2.3 (Alternate) All communicant members who have reached the age of _____ are voting members.
- 5.3 Members of this congregation shall conform their entire lives to the authority of God’s Word and to that end shall make diligent use of the means of grace, exercise faithful stewardship of God’s many gifts and talents, impart and accept fraternal admonition as the need of such admonition becomes apparent, and be readily available for service in the kingdom of Christ within and beyond the congregation. Membership in organizations whose principles and conduct conflict with the Word of God is prohibited.
- 5.4 Membership in this congregation shall be terminated as follows:

5.4.1 Membership shall be terminated by transfer to a sister congregation, by joining a congregation outside the fellowship of this congregation, by excommunication or self-exclusion, or by death.

5.4.2 Communicant members who conduct themselves in an un-Christian manner shall be admonished according to Matthew 18:15.20 and the congregation's stated and adopted guidelines.³² If they remain impenitent after proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated. Each case of excommunication or self-exclusion shall be presented to the voters assembly for a decision. A two-thirds majority vote of the voters assembly shall be required.³³

6.0 CALLED CHURCH WORKERS

Member congregations of the Synod are required to call and be served only by ordained ministers who are members of the Synod, candidates for the pastoral ministry who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by Synod, or ordained ministers who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place (Bylaw 2.5.2).³³ They may also only call commissioned workers who are members of the Synod, candidates of LCMS colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by the Council of Presidents, commissioned ministers who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place³⁴ (Bylaw 2.5.3).³⁵ This article establishes how the congregation extends such calls and should indicate who is eligible to be called, the manner of removal from office, and how vacancies in called positions are to be handled (Bylaw 2.5.1).³⁶ The example below reflects the way this is done in most congregations.

Example:

“The voters assembly of this congregation shall have the exclusive right to call ordained ministers. The right to call commissioned ministers also belongs to the congregation and ordinarily shall not be delegated to a smaller body and never to an individual.

- 6.1 The pastoral office shall be conferred only upon ordained ministers who are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, candidates for the pastoral ministry who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by Synod, or ordained ministers who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place.
- 6.2 Only those commissioned ministers shall receive a call who adhere to the confessional standard set forth in this constitution, who are qualified for the work of the ministry to which they are called, and who have been endorsed by and are members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, who are candidates of LCMS colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls, or who are commissioned ministers in good standing from church bodies that are in altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- 6.3 The right of calling ordained or commissioned ministers shall be vested in the voters assembly and shall not be delegated otherwise.
- 6.4 Called ordained or commissioned ministers may be removed from office in Christian and lawful order by a two-thirds majority ballot vote of the voters assembly for one of the following reasons: persistent adherence to false doctrine, scandalous life, willful neglect of the duties of office, the inability to perform those duties, or domineering in office.
- 6.5 When a vacancy occurs in an office of an ordained or commissioned minister, the congregation shall notify the president of the district to receive assistance in temporarily filling the vacancy and to receive his counsel in calling a new pastor, teacher, or other church worker (Bylaw 2.5.1).³⁷

7.0 AUTHORITY OF AND WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

At times there is lack of clarity in a congregation regarding the extent of the authority within the congregation to make certain decisions. It is therefore wise to include an article that will obviate this difficulty. The following is one possible model.

Example:

“The voters assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs.

- 7.1 The establishment and conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation or related directly to the congregation shall be subject to the overall authority and general oversight of the voters assembly.
- 7.2 All matters before the voters assembly shall be decided by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by this constitution or bylaws. Matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only on the basis of the Word of God.”

8.0 MEETINGS

Constitutions of congregations should establish how the meetings of the voters assembly or governing entities will be called and how a quorum will be determined. Not requiring a specific number of voting members in attendance permits a meeting to be valid so long as it has been properly called.

Example:

“Meetings of the voters assembly shall be held as determined in the bylaws.

- 8.1 Announcements of regular meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays.
- 8.2 Announcements of special meetings shall be made in the services of the two previous Sundays or in the services of the previous Sunday when accompanied by notification by mail. Such special meetings may be called at the request of the pastor, chairman, church council, or ten (10) voting members.
- 8.3 All voting members present at a properly called meeting shall constitute a quorum.”

9.0 OFFICERS AND BOARDS

Congregations are at liberty to determine their own organizational and operational structures consistent with local and state requirements for not-for-profit corporations. Constitutions should establish only those offices, boards, and other committees that form the essential framework of the congregation. (The Synod encourages every congregation to include in its organizational structure a board or committee for stewardship [Bylaw 2.2.1 (a) (1)].)³⁷

Description of duties in the constitution should be limited to basic responsibilities, with detail to be provided in the bylaws or in job descriptions. This will allow congregations or other authorized entities within congregations to create (and to dissolve) additional offices and committees and determine their responsibilities as necessary. As previously noted, many organizational structures are possible. Two examples, one involving a coordinating church council and the second that of a board of directors, are provided.

In accordance with the teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, women are not to be placed in offices which call upon them to carry out the specific functions of the pastoral office.

Example:

“This congregation shall have the following officers and boards in addition to any which the congregation shall establish from time to time. The officers and the chairpersons of the boards, and the pastor as an advisory member, shall constitute the membership of the church council. Those officers identified by state law shall serve as legal representatives of the congregation.

- 9.1 The officers of this congregation shall be:

- 9.1.1A chairman, who shall conduct the meetings of the voters assembly,...
- 9.1.2A vice-chairman, who shall serve in the chairman's absence or inability to act,...
- 9.1.3A secretary, who shall keep the minutes of the voters' meetings,...
- 9.1.4A treasurer, who shall be responsible for the financial records of the congregation,...
- 9.1.5A financial secretary, who shall be responsible for the receipt of all contributions and shall deposit the same in an account established in the name of the congregation.
- 9.2 The boards of this congregation shall be:
- 9.2.1A board of elders, consisting of..., which shall assist the pastor in the spiritual life of the congregation.
- 9.2.2A board of trustees, consisting of..., which shall be responsible for the physical properties of the congregation.
- 9.2.3A board for Christian education, consisting of..., which shall be responsible for the nurture and Christian growth of the members of the congregation.
- 9.2.4A board for evangelism, consisting of..., which shall lead the members of the congregation in outreach into the community.
- 9.2.5A board for stewardship, consisting of..., which shall be charged with the teaching and promoting proper stewardship of time, talents, and treasures.
- 9.2.6...
- 9.3 Any officer or board member who fails to carry out his or her duties of office or who fails to perform the responsibilities of confirmed membership (see paragraph 5.3 above) may be removed from office by the voters assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances."

—or—

Example:

"This congregation shall have the following officers, board, and committees in addition to any which the congregation shall establish from time to time.

- 9.1 The voters assembly shall elect a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer, who shall be the officers of the congregation. The voters assembly shall also elect three other voting members, who with the four officers and the senior pastor shall comprise the board of directors of the congregation. [The pastor may be a non-voting, ex officio member of the board.] The nomination and election of officers and board members shall be as specified in this constitution and accompanying by-laws.
- 9.2 The board of directors shall have the authority to develop and implement policies, procedures, and ministries as necessary to execute the vision and plans approved by the voters assembly.
- 9.3 The officers of the congregation shall serve as the executive committee of the board of directors.
- 9.4 This congregation shall have such committees as are necessary to assist the called workers, elected leaders, and members of the congregation in carrying out its mission and ministry. Committees of the congregation may include the following.
- 9.4.1A shepherding committee to assist and support the work of the pastor, consisting of...
- 9.4.2An education committee to assist and support the work of the teaching staff of the congregation, consisting of...
- 9.4.3A stewardship committee to carry on an on-going stewardship program for the congregation, consisting of...
- 9.4.4An evangelism and outreach committee to assist the congregation in carrying out the mission of the congregation, consisting of...
- 9.4.5An annually convened nominating committee consisting of...
- 9.4.6A long range planning committee consisting of at least...
- 9.4.7A call committee, convened as necessary, consisting

of...

- 9.4.8 Such other committees as are necessary to assist the called workers, elected leaders, and members of the congregation in carrying out its mission and ministry.
- 9.5 Any officer or board or committee member who fails to perform the duties of office or the responsibilities of confirmed membership may be removed from office by the voters assembly by a two-thirds majority ballot vote, in Christian and lawful order. Matthew 18 should be followed under such circumstances."

10.0 DIVISION

It is an unhappy fact of life that disagreements occur in Christian congregations, and that at times the end result is not reconciliation but a parting of the ways. It is best to set down the principles far in advance that will govern such a situation if it should occur. Congregations should consult with local and state laws when making decision regarding disposal of properties. While the following example suggests reversion of properties to the district, the congregation is at liberty to determine the recipients of its properties.

Example:

"If at any time a division of the congregation should take place for any reason, the following principles will govern.

- 10.1 The property of the congregation and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those communicant members who continue to adhere in confession and practice to the confessional standards set forth in this constitution.
- 10.2 In the event that the congregation dissolves, all property shall be disposed of by the final voters assembly for the payment of debts and all just claims against the congregation, and any and all surplus and all rights connected therewith shall be conveyed to and become the property of the _____ District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod."

11.0 AMENDMENTS

Constitutions should provide a method for their own amendment. A device called an "unalterable article" has been used in the past, but legally there are no unalterable articles. There can be, however, articles in congregations' constitutions that are more difficult to amend. Congregations may therefore wish to provide for two separate procedures for amending.

Congregations which revise their constitutions must submit these proposed changes for review by their district's constitution committee. Upon favorable action by the district board of directors, the congregation shall be notified that the changes are acceptable to the Synod, and the congregation may proceed with formal adoption of the revised constitution and remain a member in good standing of the Synod.

Example:

"This constitution may be amended in the following manner.

- 11.1 Amendments to the provisions of this constitution not identified in the following paragraph shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voters assembly and announced to the congregation by public posting and/or mail to all communicant members prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment will be acted upon. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voters present shall be required for adoption.
- 11.2 Amendments to Articles _____ shall not destroy their essential meaning. Amendments shall be submitted in writing at a meeting of the voters assembly and made public to the congregation by public posting and/or by mail to all communicant members. Notice of the discussion of such amendments shall be given prior to two regular voters assemblies when the proposed action will be discussed. Notice that action will be taken on proposed amendments shall be provided to all voting members prior to the meeting when a vote will be taken. The date of approval

shall be referenced in any amendment adopted.

- 11.3 The revised constitution shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district’s constitution committee and favorable action by the district’s board of directors before being adopted by the congregation.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR BYLAWS

The following are subjects that ordinarily can be addressed in a congregation’s bylaws. Instructive comments are provided together with sample paragraphs.

1.0 PROCEDURES FOR CALLING MINISTERS OF RELIGION

Congregations should be specific in setting forth in their bylaws the procedures to be followed when calling ordained and commissioned ministers.

Example:

“When this congregation calls a minister of religion, ordained or commissioned, the following procedure shall be followed:

- 1.1 When a pastor or commissioned minister is to be called, every member of the congregation shall be provided opportunity to suggest one or more names for consideration.
- 1.2 A call committee shall be appointed [or an existing board or committee designated] to serve as a screening committee and shall submit all suggested names to the district president for information and evaluation. The committee shall then present to the congregation by public announcement its proposed list of candidates and their biographical sketches.
- 1.3 At a voters meeting called for the purpose of calling a new pastor or commissioned minister, the proposed list may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the assembly. When possible, information regarding additional candidates shall be provided by the district president and/or his representative at the meeting.
- 1.4 Ballot voting shall continue until a majority [or two-thirds] vote determines the disposition of the call.”

2.0 CHURCH COUNCIL OR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Even though it is not absolutely necessary for congregations to have a church council or board of directors, as the case may be, experience has shown this to be beneficial. The makeup and responsibilities of this leadership group are decided by each congregation. Two examples are provided.

Example:

“The church council shall provide direction to the congregation on behalf of the voters assembly.

- 2.1 The church council shall consist of the congregation’s president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, financial secretary, and the chairmen of its boards. [The pastor may be an advisory or voting member.] The chairman and secretary of the congregation shall also serve as the chairman and secretary of the church council.
- 2.2 The church council shall meet a minimum of four times a year. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, the pastor, or any three members of the council by providing notice at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. A majority of the voting members of the council shall constitute a quorum.
- 2.3 The principal duty of the church council shall be to coordinate the program and activities of the various departments of the congregation. It shall also have the power to act on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the voters assembly within limitations established by the voters assembly, which actions shall be reported to the next meeting of the voters assembly.”

or—

Example:

“The officers of the congregation along with three other elected at-large members and the administrative pastor (who shall be a non-voting member) shall comprise the board of directors, which shall provide direction to the congregation on behalf of the voters assembly.

- 2.1 The board of directors shall have the authority to develop and implement policies, procedures, and ministries as necessary to execute the vision and plans approved by the voters assembly. Written policies and procedures shall be made available to voting members upon request. The board of directors shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon it by the constitution, its bylaws, or the voters assembly, and authority delegated to the board of directors may at any time be altered or revoked by the voters assembly. The board of directors shall normally meet in regular session at least quarterly.
- 2.2 The officers of the congregation shall serve as the executive committee of the board of directors, which shall have the authority to administer all property belonging to the congregation, make contracts, accept and receive grants and bequests, sign documents, appear in court, review the constitution and bylaws, report to the congregation when appropriate, and take other such action as may be authorized by the church council. The committee shall meet at least monthly.
- 2.3 This congregation shall have such committees as are necessary to assist the called workers, elected leaders, and members of the congregation in carrying out its mission and ministry. These committees may be authorized or created by staff members subject to review by the board of directors, unless a different method of authorization and/or membership selection is required by action of the voters assembly. The committees shall meet on an as needed basis.”

3.0 NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Specific procedures for the nomination and election of officers and board members should be included in the bylaws. Provisions and procedures should also be provided for the appointment of additional officers and board members. Congregations may or may not wish to include provisions restricting the holding of more than one office, providing for term limits, avoiding conflicts of interest, and/or providing for or prohibiting absentee ballots.

Example:

“The procedure for the nomination and election of elected and appointed officers and board members shall be as follows.

- 3.1 A nominating committee appointed by the church council (or board of directors) shall present a slate of candidates for each elected and appointed office. The slate shall normally provide two names [or: one name] for each office. In the case of elected positions, additional nominations may be made from the floor. No person shall be nominated without his or her consent.
- 3.2 A majority of the votes cast shall be required for all elections. Candidates receiving the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated in each succeeding ballot.
- 3.3 All officers shall be elected for a term of _____. Other members of the church council and of boards and committees shall be elected or appointed for a term of _____.
- 3.4 Officers and board members shall be inducted into office in a public service of the congregation.
- 3.5 In case of a vacancy in an elective office, the voters assembly shall elect [or: the church council shall appoint] a successor to fill the unexpired term from a list of candidates provided by the nominating committee. Service for more than one-half of a term shall constitute a full term.”

4.0 OFFICIAL DUTIES

In addition to the basic duties provided in the constitution, the congregation may want to detail responsibilities further in the bylaws or in policy manuals, which must be in harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod. Congregations may wish to include provisions regarding the following: retention of the minutes and records of the secretary as property of the congregation; bonding of the treasurer; some form of financial review or audit; and the release of mailing lists. The Treasurer's Manual provided to all congregations of the Synod is a helpful resource. If such details are not included in the bylaws, provision may be made for such in job descriptions developed by the church council or board of directors and, if desired, approved by the voters assembly. In such case, a paragraph such as the following would be helpful in the bylaws.

Example:

“Officers and members of boards and committees shall perform the duties as provided in the constitution. The congregation shall also have the right to detail and expand upon those responsibilities by the development of job descriptions developed by the church council [board of directors] and approved by the voters assembly.”

5.0 MEETINGS

The frequency and any other expectations of the meetings of the voters assembly should be specified in the bylaws of the congregation. Many states require at least one such meeting annually.

Example:

“The voters assembly shall meet...”

6.0 RULES OF ORDER

In order that all things may be done decently and in order, the rules governing the conduct of the meetings should be established in the bylaws.

Example:

“In addition to principles laid down in Scripture and in the constitution and bylaws of this congregation, accepted parliamentary procedures such as Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.”

7.0 AMENDMENTS

It is essential that provision be made in the bylaws for amending the bylaws. Congregations which revise their bylaws must also submit these proposed changes for review by their district's constitution committee. Upon favorable action by the district board of directors, the congregation shall be notified that the changes are acceptable to the Synod, and the congregation may proceed with formal adoption of the revised bylaws and remain a member in good standing of the Synod.

Example:

“These bylaws may be amended in a properly convened meeting of the voters assembly.

- 7.1 Amendments shall be adopted by a majority of all votes cast, provided the proposed change has been announced in a previous meeting or has been submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting to all communicant members.
- 7.2 The revised bylaws shall, as a condition of continued membership in good standing of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, must be submitted to the president of the district for review by the district's constitution committee and favorable action by the district's board of directors before being adopted by the congregation.”

(Adopted Nov. 2–4, 2012)

Special Hearing Panel Procedures and Role of the Administrator (12-2660)

A request having two parts was submitted to the commission by a Final Hearing Panel, with each part containing several questions.

Part 1

The panel referenced a single statement from CCM Opinion 02-2303: “The Commission rules that the [special] panel itself shall establish the procedure it wishes to follow to reach a decision.” Four questions were then asked regarding the meaning of this statement.

Opinion Introduction

The commission notes that CCM Opinion 02-2303 dealt with the question of the disqualification of members of a Dispute Resolution Panel. The following portions of Opinion 02-2303 put the current request into context:

A party to a dispute in a September 3, 2002 letter asked a series of questions regarding Bylaw 8.17 relating to the procedure to be followed if a party to a dispute alleges that a member of a Dispute Resolution Panel has actual partiality or the appearance thereof...

Question 2: Who determines the procedure to be followed by the disqualification panel to reach a decision?

Opinion: The bylaw is silent on this issue also. The Commission rules that the panel itself shall establish the procedure it wishes to follow to reach a decision. Thus, the panel may choose to reach a decision based on written materials submitted by the parties to the dispute; the panel may decide to hold a formal hearing attended by the parties and may follow the procedure used by a Dispute Resolution Panel, if deemed necessary. The procedure to be followed should be sufficient to allow the panel to make an informed decision.

The commission notes that the Synod has made several significant changes in the *Handbook* since 2001. In the 2001 *Handbook*, Chapter 8 of the Bylaws was used both for resolving disputes between members of the Synod and for reaching a final decision regarding terminating membership in the Synod. In 2004, the process of termination from membership was significantly modified, and expulsion from membership in the Synod was given its own set of bylaws, sections 2.14–2.17. The 2001 process for resolving disputes between members of the Synod, while essentially the same, was thoroughly revised and became section 1.10 of the Bylaws. In addition, the Synod has now authorized the development of a detailed *Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM)* for each of these sections.

Regulation “N” of Section II of the 2.14 *SOPM* deals with the disqualification of ecclesiastical supervisors or panel members. The fourth paragraph states:

Any party may challenge the eligibility of a panel member or hearing facilitator to serve. In the event that the service of a panel member or hearing facilitator is challenged and the panel member or hearing facilitator disagrees with the challenge, the question shall be decided by a panel of three district presidents not involved in the case, selected by blind draw by the Secretary of the Synod for this purpose. In the event of disqualification of a panel member, another panel member shall be selected in the same manner as the disqualified member was selected.

Regulation “N” provides a mechanism to resolve the objection but provides no further guidance regarding the procedure this special panel is to follow in reaching its decision.

The Bylaws of the 2010 *Handbook* do not prescribe a procedure for the process to be used by a special panel to decide on the disqualification of a member of a Hearing Panel or a Final Hearing Panel. However, the procedures laid out in various other sections of Bylaws 2.14.6–2.14.7.8 and 2.14.9.2 as well as the 2.14 *SOPM* do provide

guidance for a special panel regarding how the Synod understands fairness and due process in the resolving of disputes.

For example, while Bylaw 2.14.7.8 applies directly to a Hearing Panel, it may not be ignored by other panels, including special panels, or in other stages of a Bylaw section 2.14 process. The Synod in its commitment to and mutual covenant of fairness and due process, as discussed in CCM Opinion 12-2659, has expressed in the Bylaws and *SOPMs* its understanding of those requirements. Consistent with CCM opinion 02-2303, where the Synod has not expressly spoken in the Bylaws or *SOPMs*, special panels must view those understandings and expressions of fairness and due process as governing their actions to the extent applicable and adopt their procedures in view of those understandings and expressions.

An overarching principle in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod, as well as in the *SOPMs* for both the dispute resolution process and the process for expulsion from membership in the Synod, is one of due process, fairness, and impartiality. Thus, all hearings and all investigations must be conducted in a fair and equitable manner.³⁸ This means that while a specific process is not prescribed for a special panel formed to determine if a challenged member of a Hearing Panel or Final Hearing Panel should be disqualified, whatever process is followed by such a panel to reach an informed decision must insure fairness and impartiality to all parties to the matter so that its decision is just and equitable. And, like any other phase of a Bylaw section 1.10 or 2.14 process, neither the decision nor the process of a special panel may contradict the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod or the appropriate *SOPM*. In a 2.14 matter, if a party to the matter considers the process unfair, that party is to call it to the attention of the Hearing Panel or Final Hearing Panel, as the case may be, for resolution.

Therefore, with regard to the questions from the Final Hearing Panel with reference to the statement, “The Commission rules that the [special] panel itself shall establish the procedure it wishes to follow to reach a decision” from CCM Opinion 02-2303, the commission responds as follows.

Part 1, Question 1: Does this sentence as stated as such mean that a special panel can make up any procedure it wishes, even stepping out of the general principles of the *SOPM* and bylaws of 1.10 and 2.14 procedures?

Opinion: No. A panel may not make up any procedure it wishes. As indicated above, Opinion 02-2303 directed the panel to use a procedure that was sufficient to allow it to make an informed decision. The opinion gave the panel authority to reach that decision either on the basis of the written materials submitted to it, or to hold a hearing following the procedure of a Dispute Resolution Panel (which was the process for resolving all disputes at the time of Opinion 02-2303).

It is unclear to the commission what the questioner means by the phrase, “even stepping out of the general principles of the *SOPM* and bylaws of the 1.10 and 2.14 procedures.” Both 1.10 *SOPM* Section IV, “General Regulations,” and 2.14 *SOPM* Section II, “General Regulations,” deal with a wide variety of aspects pertaining to various portions of the process.

Thus, while a special panel to resolve a dispute over disqualification determines its own procedure to follow in reaching an informed opinion, its process must demonstrate impartiality and fairness to all parties to the matter. And the process cannot contradict the Constitution, Bylaws, and *SOPMs* of the Synod. If a party to the matter believes that the process was unfair, it may bring that concern to the

Hearing Panel or Final Hearing Panel, which will investigate and rule accordingly.

Part 1, Question 2: Does CCM opinion 02-2303 negate the general *SOPM* guidelines and even the bylaws themselves as found in 1.10 and 2.14 DRP procedures?

Opinion: No. See the answer to Part 1, Question 1 above.

Part 1, Question 3: Since the *SOPM* guidelines allow for a ‘special panel,’ how does the sentence in *SOPM* Section II, paragraph Y, ‘Should the provisions of this manual vary from the Constitution or Bylaws of the Synod, the Constitution and Bylaws control and supersede’ affect the phrase “shall establish the procedures it wishes to follow...” as found in Opinion 02-2303?

Opinion: Regulation “Y” of the 2.14 *SOPM* states:

Panels and ecclesiastical supervisors are responsible for interpreting and applying the principles, regulations, and other provisions provided in this manual. General questions regarding the process may be discussed with the Secretary of the Synod. Specific questions may be directed to the Commission on Constitutional Matters, whose responsibility it is to maintain this manual in consultation with the Secretary of the Synod and with the concurrence of the Council of Presidents. Should the provisions of this manual vary from the Constitution or Bylaws of the Synod, the Constitution and Bylaws control and supersede.

This regulation gives panels and ecclesiastical supervisors the responsibility for interpreting and applying the principles, regulations, and other provisions of the *SOPM*. It indicates that general questions regarding the process may be addressed to the Secretary of the Synod and specific questions may be addressed to the Commission on Constitutional Matters. The final sentence makes clear that the *SOPM* may not contradict the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.

Since the phrase, “shall establish the procedures it wishes to follow...” comes from the commission’s Opinion 02-2303, rather than from the 2.14 *SOPM*, Regulation “Y” of the 2.14 *SOPM* does not apply to the question asked. The relation of the procedures of a special panel to the Constitution, Bylaws, and *SOPM* are addressed in Part 1, Question 1.

Part 1, Question 4: Are CCM opinions meant to override the guiding principles of the Bylaws, or merely interpret them?

Opinion: The function of the Commission on Constitutional Matters relative to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod is delineated in Bylaws 3.9.2 and 3.9.2.2.

3.9.2 The Commission on Constitutional Matters exists to interpret the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod and ensure that the governing instruments of the Synod and its agencies are in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.

3.9.2.2 The Commission on Constitutional Matters shall interpret the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions upon the written request of a member (congregation, ordained or commissioned minister), official, board, commission, or agency of the Synod.

Part 2

The panel references Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (f); 2.14 *SOPM* Section II Regulation “K” (e); and 2.14 *SOPM* Section II Regulation “Y.”

Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (f) states:

No party to the matter nor anyone on the party’s behalf shall communicate either directly or indirectly with the panel or any member of the panel without the full knowledge of the other party to the matter.

SOPM Section II Regulation “K” (e) states:

(e) Except as specifically provided elsewhere in this manual, all evidence used by panels shall be taken in the presence of all panel members

and both parties to the dispute, except where a party has waived the right or fails to be present.

SOPM Section II Regulation “Y” states:

Should the provisions of this manual vary from the Constitution or Bylaws of the Synod, the Constitution and Bylaws control and supersede.

The commission makes the following observations regarding Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (f), *SOPM* Section II, Regulation “K” (e), and *SOPM* Section II, Regulation “Y.”

Bylaw 2.14.6 describes the commencing of formal proceedings, which begin with the suspension of the member. If the member does not appeal the suspension within 15 days and request a hearing, that member is deemed to have consented to expulsion from membership in the Synod. Bylaw Section 2.14.7 then describes the formal proceeding process, which begins with the selection of a Hearing Panel. The remainder of Section 2.14.7 gives direction for the selection of a Hearing Panel and the procedures to be followed by a Hearing Panel. Bylaw 2.14.7.8 makes this clear when it begins with the statement, “The following guidelines are applicable to the Hearing Panel and all involved persons.” A Hearing Panel and all persons involved must follow these guidelines in a Bylaw 2.14 expulsion matter.

SOPM Section II carries the title “General Regulations for Bylaw Section 2.14.” Portions of the section pertain to various aspects in the entire process. Other portions of the section pertain to a Hearing Panel or Final Hearing Panel. The topic of Regulation “K” of *SOPM* Section II is providing evidence to a Hearing Panel. It indicates that parties may produce any evidence they consider relevant and cooperate with requests for evidence that the panel deems necessary. The panel referenced in Regulation “K” (e) is a Hearing Panel or a Final Hearing Panel, which is to take all evidence at the hearing it conducts, and the hearing is to be attended by all members of the panel and both parties to the matter.

SOPM Section II Regulation “Y” indicates that if there is a contradiction between any portion of the 2.14 *SOPM* and the Bylaws or Constitution of the Synod, the Bylaws and Constitution of the Synod supersede the *SOPM*.

A series of three questions is then asked.

Part 2, Question 1: If the ‘administrator’ of the DRP-1.10/Hearing-2.14 process has knowledge and/or documentation that violation(s) of the DRP/Hearing procedures (as found in the bylaws and/or *SOPM*) has occurred, what reporting responsibilities, duties, and/or obligations should he have to the panel and to both parties of dispute?

Opinion: The responsibilities of the administrator, as well as all those involved in the process, must be drawn from the overarching concern for due process, fairness, and impartiality in both the dispute process and the process for expulsion from membership in the Synod, as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod as well as in the *SOPMs*. This means that the administrator and all participants must share such information and evidence with all those properly involved: the parties, the panel, and the administrator.

Part 2, Question 2: Should he not investigate such violation(s), immediately inform both parties of his findings, and provide the proof/documentation of such violation(s) to both the panel and to both parties?

Opinion: No. The administrator in a 1.10 dispute resolution matter or a 2.14 expulsion matter does not have responsibility for investigation. The responsibilities of the administrator are to manage the dispute resolution process or expulsion matter. Bylaw 1.10.4 (a) in-

dicates that he is not to take leadership, declare judgments, advise, or become involved in the matter in dispute. The Bylaws spell out his duties regarding the selection of panels, receiving statements from parties to the matter, forwarding of documents to parties and members of panels, serving as timekeeper of the process, and giving general guidance regarding the process, when asked. The Bylaws do not give the administrator authority to determine facts in a case, but rather he is charged to monitor or oversee the process.

In a 2.14 expulsion matter, in the event that a violation is alleged or occurs, it is the responsibility of the Hearing Panel to determine the facts and make a decision. A Hearing Panel is charged not only to determine if the facts of the case provide the burden of proof for expulsion but also to determine that the process has been properly followed. If a Hearing Panel determines that a violation has occurred, it is up to that panel to determine a course of action. See the CCM opinion 12-2659 answers to questions 1 and 3 for a full treatment of this matter. While the responsibility of the administrator does not include investigation, he is required to inform the parties and panel members when he becomes aware of any information, whether in writing or oral, indicating a possible violation of the process.

Part 2, Question 3: What is the ‘role’ of the administrator in a dispute/hearing process?

- a) Should he give advice and additional pointers to a Hearing Panel Chairperson?
- b) Should he withhold information when it is requested?

Opinion: In response to question (a), the administrator is to remain neutral, taking care not to take sides. Bylaw 1.10.4 (a) describes the role of an administrator: “The secretary of a district or of the Synod or an appointee (Bylaw 1.10.6) who manages the dispute resolution process but who does not take leadership, declare judgments, advise, or become involved in the matter in dispute.” 2.14 *SOPM* Section II, Regulation “Y,” “Interpretation and Application of Standard Operating Procedure Manual Provisions,” includes a responsibility of the administrator:

Panels and ecclesiastical supervisors are responsible for interpreting and applying the principles, regulations, and other provisions provided in this manual. **General questions regarding the process may be discussed with the Secretary of the Synod.** Specific questions may be directed to the Commission on Constitutional Matters, whose responsibility it is to maintain this manual in consultation with the Secretary of the Synod and with the concurrence of the Council of Presidents (emphasis added).

One aspect of the role of the administrator in a 2.14 expulsion matter is to provide information and assistance to ensure that the processes are understood by all those involved, not simply a Hearing Panel chairperson, so that they may correctly interpret and follow the process. Other aspects of the role of the administrator are referenced in the response to Part 2, Question 2, above.

In response to question (b) above, the answer is “no.” When a Hearing Panel, a Special Hearing Panel, or a Final Hearing Panel requests information from the administrator of the hearing process, he is required to provide that information. Bylaw 2.14.7.8 (d) states: “Any member of the Synod, officer of a congregation, or officer of any organization owned or controlled by the Synod shall, when called upon by the panel to do so, testify or produce records related to the matter.”

(Adopted Dec. 10, 2012)

Notes

1. See 1989 Synod Bylaw 8.03 (b).
2. 1981 Resolution 5-07:

WHEREAS, The Commission on Constitutional Matters has reported “uncertainty, possible contradictions, conflicts, complexities, and definite lack of clarity, together with the possibility of legal ramifications” in the Bylaws of the Synod pertaining to the rights of Districts and agencies of the Synod to form additional corporations for the promotion of their work under Bylaws 3.07c and 2.87; and

WHEREAS, The CCM has urged the Board of Directors of the Synod to propose legislation it deems necessary to the Synod assembled in convention, for definite procedures and policies for the establishment of additional corporations within the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The Synod’s Board of Directors has responded to this request and has provided a proposal according to which such questions may be resolved, especially in order that church extension work, both at the District and synodical level, can be advanced; and

WHEREAS, This proposal provides safeguards for the whole Synod while at the same time considering the rights of Districts, seminaries, colleges, and other corporations constituting a part of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That Districts, seminaries, colleges, and all other corporations constituting a part of the Synod and seeking to establish or utilize another or added corporations for the purpose of carrying on their prescribed activities and responsibilities shall first obtain authorization from the Synod in convention or from the Synod’s Board of Directors; And be it further

Resolved, That such request for authorization shall be considered when the District, seminary, college, or other corporation constituting a part of the Synod follows the procedures outlined, namely:

1. The petitioning agency shall submit a copy of the proposed articles of incorporation and bylaws of the proposed new corporation together with the date when such new corporation will begin to function. The petitioning agency shall also describe the way in which this new corporation will aid in carrying out the petitioning agency’s responsibilities. All assumptions pertaining to legal matters shall be accompanied by a legal opinion.

2. The District, seminary, college, or other corporation of the Synod or the Board of Directors of any such agency shall be the sole member(s) of the new corporation.

3. The articles of incorporation of such new corporation shall provide that the Synod in convention may determine at any time that the new corporation be terminated and its assets, subject to its liabilities, restored to the appropriate District, seminary or college, or other corporation of the Synod, or, if that corporation of the Synod is no longer in existence, to the general Synod. The articles of incorporation shall also provide that in the event of dissolution other than by direction from the Synod in convention, the assets of such new corporation, subject to its liabilities, shall be restored to the appropriate District, seminary or college, or other corporation of the Synod, or, if such other corporation is not then in existence, to the general Synod.

4. The articles of incorporation of the new corporation shall provide that the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is the constitution of that new corporation, that all provisions of its articles of incorporation and bylaws are subordinate to the provisions of the Synod’s Constitution, and that the provisions of the Synod’s Constitution as interpreted by the CCM shall govern in any case of conflict.

5. The bylaws of the new corporation shall provide that the Board of Directors, officers, and all employees and agents of the corporation and also the activities of the corporation are subject to the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and resolu-

tions adopted by the Synod in convention, and that all of the provisions of the Synod’s Bylaws and resolutions as to supervision or coordination of personnel or activities will be applicable to the new corporation to the same extent as if the Board of Directors, officers, employees and agents, and activities of the new corporation, were directly those of the appropriate District, seminary or college, or other corporation of the Synod [emphasis added].

6. The bylaws of the new corporation shall provide that its assets are “property of the Synod” as that term is defined in, and to the extent and for the purposes established in, the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as the same may be changed from time to time.

7. The bylaws of the new corporation shall provide that minutes of its Board of Directors or other governing board, and regular independently audited financial statements, shall be promptly furnished to the Board of Directors of the appropriate District, seminary or college, or other corporation of the Synod. The bylaws of the District, seminary or college, or other corporation of the Synod shall require its Board of Directors to review and to appropriately respond to the content of those minutes and financial statements;

And be it further

Resolved, That failure to comply with the above procedures and to receive permission to establish or utilize new corporations from the Synod in convention or from the Board of Directors will cause such new and unauthorized corporations to be treated as not a part of the Synod for legal and tax purposes; and be it finally

Resolved, That this resolution be considered in no way as a challenge to or a weakening of the rights assured under the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, and convention resolutions to each district, seminary, college, or other corporation constituting a part of the Synod.

3. In studying this issue and in preparation for this opinion, the commission requested that Dr. Gerhard Bode, historian and professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, prepare a research study paper on the issue. Dr. Bode’s study, “Historical Background and Interpretation of Article VI 2 of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” was received by the commission in January 2012 and is available on the commission’s Web page: <http://www.lcms.org/ccm/>.

4. Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus, “President’s Address,” 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, pp. 65–66.

5. With respect to “improper activities,” it is important to note that all are sinful and engage in improper activities and that not all sinful conduct, and certainly not all conduct which may be deemed improper even if not sinful, can form the basis for expulsion from the Synod. The primary remedy is the power of God’s Word in convincing, persuading, advising, and admonishing (cf. “futile admonition,” Constitution, Art. XIII).

6. Bylaw 3.3.1.3 (e): “He shall engage in consultation with each mission board, commission, and the governing board of each synodwide corporate entity to reach mutual concurrence on a slate of candidates for the position of chief executive or executive director.”

7. 2010 Resolution 1-07A “To Encourage Inter-District Dialogue in the Establishment of New Church Starts, Satellite Worship Sites, and Specialized Ministries across Geographic District Lines”

WHEREAS, Psalm 133:1 states, “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity”; and

WHEREAS, In response to this word of encouragement, the Council of Presidents, the Department of Rosters and Statistics, LCMS World Mission, and the Secretary of the Synod have agreed upon

definitions for “new church starts,” “satellite worship sites,” and “specialized ministries”; and

WHEREAS, Congregations today continue to expand the kingdom of God through the establishment of new church starts, satellite worship sites, and specialized ministries; and

WHEREAS, Congregations on occasion have established such avenues for outreach across district lines without consulting with the geographical district or the local congregations where they have begun the new work; and

WHEREAS, Failure to do so can cause strained relations and impact work that is being planned for that area by local congregations or the geographical district; and

WHEREAS, The Synod places a high regard on geographical district boundaries, evidenced by Constitution Art. XII 1, 6, 7, & 12 and Bylaw 4.1.1.4; therefore be it

Resolved, That congregations interested in expanding their Gospel outreach into an area that crosses district lines be encouraged to discuss their intent first with their own district officials, followed by the appropriate district officials and the local congregations impacted by such work; and be it further

Resolved, That any such expansion of Gospel outreach across district lines shall require the concurrence of both the president of the receiving geographical district and the board or committee responsible for mission in that district; and be it finally

Resolved, That the ecclesiastical supervision of a new church start, satellite worship site, or any ministry established by a congregation in another district shall be decided by the affected district presidents.

8. See, for example, Opinion 04-2387:

Question Regarding the Relationship of the Circuit Counselor to Member Congregations (04-2387)

In an e-mail sent April 30, 2004, an ordained member of the Synod submitted a question regarding the Circuit Counselor’s relation to member congregations.

Question: Since the Bylaw [5.13 j] [2010 Bylaw 5.2.3.1(c)] envisions only visits with “congregation[s],” is it appropriate for the Circuit Counselor to meet with a dissident faction within a congregation to receive accusations against other members or the pastor of the congregation, and does meeting with a dissident faction within a congregation constitute such “extraordinary circumstances” that it is permissible for a Circuit Counselor to schedule such a meeting without prior consultation with the president or other officers of the congregation (much less the pastor), much less without ‘inviting’ them to be present to answer accusations against them?

Opinion: One of the functions of a District President is to inquire into the prevailing spiritual conditions of the congregations of his District and he may call upon the Circuit Counselor to assist him (Bylaw 4.73) [2010 Bylaw 4.4.5(b)]. Bylaw 4.75 [2010 Bylaw 4.4.6] states that a District President, even without a formal request therefor, may through the proper channels arrange for an (a) official visit or (b) investigation when a controversy arises in a congregation or when there is evidence of a continuing unresolved problem in doctrine or practice in order that the District President “may have a clear understanding of the situation.” The same bylaw further recognizes that a District President may authorize another person (such as the Circuit Counselor) to represent him in the matter. The Bylaws do not define the term “proper channels” and thus the procedure to be used in the investigation is chosen by the District President or his representative and does not necessarily require the initial contact or meeting to be with any particular person or group. In such an

investigation, any meeting is to carry out the purposes as set forth in these Bylaws.

Your attention is also directed to the provisions of Article XII 7 of the Constitution, which provides:

7. The District Presidents shall, moreover, especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their District and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the congregations of their District. To this end they shall visit and, according as they deem it necessary, hold investigations in the congregations. Their assistants in this work are the Circuit Counselors, who therefore shall regularly make their reports to the District President.

9. Opinion 10-2581, Question 2 includes the following discussion:

The specific issue of internal disputes in a congregation is an area expressly dealt with in the Synod’s covenants of walking together. The Synod and its individual congregations have recognized that the civil courts, using “neutral principles of law” analyses, are unable to resolve internal disputes on doctrinal grounds, and that neither a pure “congregational” nor pure “hierarchical” Synod structure exists. The Synod and its member congregations have attempted over the years to provide mechanisms to resolve such internal disputes in a God-pleasing manner. Attached to this opinion is a copy of 1983 convention Resolution 5-10A and the commentary published by action of the convention regarding the resolution. The two provisions of that resolution most applicable here are as follows:

Resolved, That the Synod acknowledges that under the definition and application of the word “hierarchical” in civil law there are aspects in the relationships within the Synod between and among congregations (e.g., Article II, Confession; the calling of certified and endorsed pastors only; agreements to abide by adjudicatory procedures and their final determinations) which under civil law may imply, express, or evidence what the courts regard as hierarchical dimensions; And be it further

Resolved, That, believing that Scripture (1 Cor. 6) requires that we make every effort to avoid disputes or to resolve them internally when they do arise, of the two constitutional methods for resolving church disputes by the civil courts, the Synod favors the “neutral principles of law” method whenever it can be applied, and that when neutral principles cannot be applied to resolve a particular controversy, the Synod declares that it is able and willing to resolve disputes internally.

It is in this context that the authority of a district president to investigate internal congregational disputes under Bylaw 4.4.6 quoted above must be understood. A congregation may in advance provide its own chosen method of resolving internal disputes, thereby limiting the authority of the district president to that of advice, admonishment, and, if necessary, discipline. But where it has chosen not to do so, its agreement as a member of the Synod is that such dispute will be resolved using the Synod’s own processes, especially as to disputes in the areas of Article II Confession, the calling of certified and endorsed pastors only, and agreements to abide by adjudicatory procedures and their final determinations. The dispute resolution processes of the Synod include that described in Bylaw 4.4.6 and the involvement of the district president as provided in this bylaw. As part of his ecclesiastical supervision, he may study, counsel, and advise how a dispute should be settled consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod, thereby settling the dispute or conflict by presenting, interpreting, and applying the collective will of the Synod’s congregations.

10. 4.1.1.3 The Synod decides when and whether a district shall be formed, divided, realigned, or merged with another or other districts, or dissolved; determines the boundaries of a district; and approves the name of a district.

(a) A proposal calling for the formation, division, realignment, merger, or dissolution of a district or districts may be initiated by a national convention of the Synod or the Board of Directors of the Synod.

(b) Such proposals shall

(1) be submitted to the President at least six months prior to a convention of the Synod;

(2) be produced in consultation with the Department of Planning and Research;

(3) include a substantiated description of the nonviable aspects of the current district(s) on the basis of general principles of viability adopted from time to time by conventions of the Synod, and shall specify the problems or factors which make the adoption of the proposal advisable or necessary;

(4) provide evidence that the proposed change is the best of the options available;

(5) provide a specific and realistic development plan for the proposed district(s), including detailed proposals for staff personnel and financial operations; and

(6) be the object of an evaluation prepared by the Board of Directors of the Synod and submitted to the convention.

11. A footnote to the document produced by the Commission on Constitutional Matters, "Guidelines for Constitutions and Bylaws of Lutheran Congregations," states, "Historically, *The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, not listed in Article II, has often been considered to be included in the *Smalcald Articles*."

12. The commission was informed by the CUS Board of Directors that "since the Board for Higher Education was formed in 1938, the national Synod has always had the privilege of approving theological faculty at the colleges and seminaries."

13. See, for example, Synod Bylaw 1.10.14(a), wherein the complainant and the respondent both have a right to select a district president to serve on an appeal panel; and see Synod Bylaw 2.14.7.2, where both the accused and the district president who placed the accused on suspended status may choose a district president to serve on the hearing panel. See also a similar procedure in Synod Bylaw 2.13.3.2(a), wherein a hearing panel is selected to consider removal of restricted status for an individual member of Synod.

14. Bylaw 2.14.9.2: "Any member participating in this bylaw procedure that violates any of the requirements or procedures in this bylaw or is persistent in accusations is subject to the same disciplinary measures as set forth in this bylaw. Violations of the prohibition against publicity while a matter is still undecided or while an appeal is contemplated or pending (Bylaw 2.14.7.8 [g]) above) by any of the persons involved are specifically included as violations subject to the same disciplinary measures set forth in this bylaw."

15. Please note also that if an objection is timely raised, *SOPM* general regulation "U" requires: "Issues raised in a timely manner are to be considered and resolved by the appropriate panel."

16. "Individual Christians are joined together in a worshipping and serving community, the congregation. Congregations, the basic units of the Synod, have joined together to form the Synod and relate to one another through it" (Bylaw 1.3.1).

17. "Conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod are the following:

1. Acceptance of the confessional basis of Article II.

2. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as:

a. Serving congregations of mixed confession, as such, by ministers of the church;

b. Taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession.

c. Participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities.

3. Regular call of pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, certified lay ministers, and parish assistants and regular election of lay delegates by the congregations, as also the blamelessness of the life of such.

4. Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school.

5. A congregation shall be received into membership only after the Synod has convinced itself that the constitution of the congregation, which must be submitted for examination, contains nothing contrary to the Scriptures or the Confessions.

6. Pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, certified lay ministers, or candidates for these offices not coming from recognized orthodox church bodies must submit to a colloquium before being received.

7. Congregations and individuals shall be received into membership at such time and manner, and according to such procedures, as shall be set forth in the Bylaws to this Constitution" (Constitution, Art. VI).

18. "Congregations together establish the requirements of membership in the Synod Constitution, Art. VI). In joining the Synod, congregations and other members obligate themselves to fulfill such requirements and to diligently and earnestly promote the purposes of the Synod by word and deed. Members agree to uphold the confessional position of the Synod (Constitution, Art. II) and to assist in carrying out the objectives of the Synod (Constitution, Art. III), which are the objectives of the members themselves. Thus, while congregations of the Synod are self-governing (Constitution, Art. VII), they, and also individual members, commit themselves as members of the Synod to act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod under which they have agreed to live and work together and which the congregations alone have the authority to adopt or amend through conventions" (Bylaws 1.3.4 & 1.3.4.1).

19. "A congregation shall be received into membership only after the Synod has convinced itself that the constitution of the congregation, which must be submitted for examination, contains nothing contrary to the Scriptures or the Confessions" (Constitution, Art. VI 5).

20. "To apply for membership in the Synod a congregation shall have an approved constitution and bylaws.

(a) The congregation shall submit its constitution and bylaws to the appropriate district president, who shall refer such to the standing committee of the district...

(b) The Constitution Committee shall examine the constitution and bylaws to ascertain that they are in harmony with Holy Scriptures, the Confessions, and the teachings and practices of the Synod in order that any necessary changes may be made by the congregation before the application is acted upon" (Bylaw 2.2.1).

21. "A congregation desiring to retain membership in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod shall continue to have a constitution and bylaws approved by the Synod. (a) A member congregation which revises its constitution or bylaws or adopts a new constitution

or bylaws shall, as a condition to continued eligibility as a member of the Synod, submit such revised or new constitution and/or bylaws to the district president... (d) Upon favorable action by the district board of directors, the congregation shall be notified that the changes are acceptable to the Synod and that the congregation is entitled to continue to function as a member of the Synod in good standing under the new or changed constitution or bylaws” (Bylaw 2.4.1).

22. “(a) It shall be the policy of the Synod to decline membership to congregations whose constitutions deny membership or other congregational privileges to any Christian because of race or ethnic origin” (Bylaw 2.3.1).

23. “Committed to a common confession and mission, congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod join with one another in the Synod to support one another and to work together in carrying out their commonly adopted objectives...” (Bylaw 1.1.1).

24. See footnote 5.

“WHEREAS, We have been called Lutheran since the formation of our Synod (and since reformation times) and are thankful for our doctrinal background and heritage; and

WHEREAS, The name Lutheran clearly identifies what the member congregations and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believe, teach and confess; and

WHEREAS, Basic Christian honesty and integrity require that no deception of any sort be used in declaring the truth of the Gospel before all the world, as St. Paul declares: ‘Rather we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God’ (2 Cor. 4:2); therefore be it

Resolved, That all congregations and mission stations in our Synod boldly profess in their official title and/or name that they are ‘Lutheran’; and be it further

Resolved, That all congregations and mission stations of our Synod state in their materials (bulletins, newsletters, etc.) that they belong to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That all LCMS congregations gladly proclaim our great doctrinal heritage to a world that needs the clear proclamation of the truth.” (1995 Res. 3-13A, “To Use the Name Lutheran”)

26. Historically, The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope is not listed in Article II of Synod’s constitution, but it is included in the Book of Concord of 1580, and is therefore one of the confessional writings of the Synod. Because it is not listed separately in Synod’s constitution, it does not have to have been listed separately by a congregation, but a congregation may chose to do so.

27. Some congregations include a fourth category: “Guest Members.” 1989 Res. 5-19 encouraged such a category for congregations with many seasonal members, “which could include such basic rights and privileges as reception of the sacraments, pastoral care, congregational concern, use of their time, talents, and treasures in the service of the Lord, and attendance and participation in voters’ assemblies as advisory or associate members” (1989 Convention Proceedings, p. 140).

28. Variations often occur in the last two categories. Some congregations distinguish between communicant and confirmed members due to the practice of early communion, in which case further definitions will be necessary.

29. 1969 Res. 2-17 concluded that “Scripture does not prohibit women from exercising the franchise in congregational and synodical assemblies,” at the same time concluding that “the Synod itself and

the congregations of the Synod are at liberty to alter their policies and practices in regard to women’s involvement in the work of the church” (1969 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 88).

30. “(a) Pastors and congregations alike must avoid membership or participation in any organization that in its objectives, ceremonies, or practices is inimical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ or the faith and life of the Christian church...” (Bylaw 3.9.5.3.1).

31. “(a) It shall be the policy of the Synod to decline membership to congregations whose constitutions deny membership or other congregational privileges to any Christian because of race or ethnic origin” (Bylaw 2.3.1 [a]).

32. The matter of termination of membership is of great importance since it involves the larger subject of church discipline. It is therefore advisable that congregations prepare and adopt separate guidelines to address this topic, especially keeping in mind the following:

1. Be consistent in applying discipline.
2. Carefully follow disciplinary guidelines.
3. Do not allow unsubstantiated charges to be circulated by the church.
4. Base decisions on clearly stated biblical grounds.
5. Guidelines should state the desired outcome of church discipline, to call a fellow Christian to repentance.

33. “Congregations that are members of the Synod shall call and be served only by (1) ordained ministers who have been admitted to their respective ministries in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in these Bylaws and have thereby become members of the Synod; (2) candidates for the pastoral ministry who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments; or (3) ordained ministers who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place.” (Bylaw 2.5.2)

34. Ordained and commissioned ministers include pastors and all other church workers rostered by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Commissioned ministers include teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, parish assistants, and certified lay ministers.

35. “Congregations that are members of the Synod shall call only (1) commissioned ministers who have been admitted to their ministries in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in these Bylaws and have thereby become members of the Synod; (2) candidates of LCMS colleges and universities who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments; and (3) commissioned ministers (or those holding positions comparable to commissioned ministers) who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place.” (Bylaw 2.5.3)

36. “Congregations shall seek the counsel of their respective district presidents when calling ordained or commissioned ministers” (Bylaw 2.5.1).

37. “(1) Every congregation is encouraged to include in its organizational structure an elected or appointed board or committee for stewardship. (2) This board or committee shall be responsible for

carrying on an adequate stewardship program in a manner prescribed by the congregation” (Bylaw 2.2.1 [a]).

38. See, for example, the commitment to fairness as described in, Bylaw 2.14 SOPM Section I Paragraph “N”: “The ecclesiastical supervisor will make every effort to resolve disputed matters on a timely basis. He will also make every effort to protect the integrity of the process, and will make every effort to be consistent and fair and to guard against improper publicity.” See also Section II Regulation “P”: “Except as provided in this manual, no party to a dispute nor anyone on the party’s behalf shall communicate, either directly or indirectly, with

the panel or a panel member without the full knowledge of the other party. All other communication shall take place at joint meetings. A panel may decide at any time during the process not to accept any communication outside of joint meetings or hearings. In the interest of the integrity, trustworthiness, and credibility of the dispute resolution process in the eyes of all parties, the hearing facilitator and panel members shall take care consistently to conduct themselves in a professional manner, maintaining objectivity and impartiality and avoiding all appearance otherwise, treating all parties equally and fairly, and pursuing no relationship with any of the parties to the dispute until after a final decision has ended the process.”

APPENDIX II
THEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTS
COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

<i>Principles for Cooperation in Externals with Theological Integrity</i>	340
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Principles for Cooperation in Externals with Theological Integrity (2010 Res. 3-03)

Introduction

This document responds to an assignment given to the CTCR by the Synod at its 2010 convention. 2010 Res. 3-03 commends and liberally quotes from a March 2010 document titled “Theological Implications of the 2009 ELCA Decisions” (“Theological Implications”), prepared by a task force appointed by the President of Synod. 2010 Res. 3-03 resolves, “That, in keeping with the basic principles set forth in the task force statement, cooperation in externals with other churches, including the ELCA, continue with theological integrity.”¹

Res. 3-03 also requires the development of “more in-depth theological criteria for assessing cooperative endeavors, determining what would necessitate termination of such cooperative efforts” and assigns to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) that responsibility, “in consultation with the Praesidium and other entities and individuals as needed.”² The Praesidium, working with the CTCR, is then given the task to “assess the current state of cooperation in externals” and to issue “a full report of criteria for ongoing assessment of the same by July 13, 2011.”³

Such principles are of pressing concern specifically to Recognized Service Organizations that are engaged in such cooperative work, both in terms of their internal working relationships and of their accountability to the LCMS. While this document sets forth general principles, the urgency in responding according to the timetable of the process set forth in Res 3-03 has specific reference to such relationships.

Background⁴

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) recognizes some 125 or more Recognized Service Organizations (RSO) which involve Synod, its districts, or congregations in some form of “service” or mercy ministry, including such things as nursing homes and senior care, adoption agencies, housing for low-income seniors, food banks, international relief, immigration and refugee services, and so forth. In addition, the Synod is involved in six different “cooperative agencies,” including Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran Educational Conference of North America, Lutheran Film Associates, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran Services in America, and Lutheran World Relief.⁵ Not only these cooperative agencies, but also many RSO’s involve cooperation with other church bodies or entities outside the Synod. The majority of these endeavors involve cooperation on some level between the LCMS and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The issue of “cooperation in externals” with the ELCA has come to a head because of the sexuality decisions made by the ELCA at its 2009

¹ Res. 3-03, second resolved. (The LCMS, *Convention Proceedings 2010*, 115).

² *Ibid.*, 116 (fourth resolved).

³ *Ibid.* (fifth resolved).

⁴ The Appendix provides additional background information regarding cooperation in externals.

⁵ Please note that our primary focus herein is on the work of cooperative agencies and Recognized Service Organizations, and not on singular, one-time responses to a particular issue or crisis in which the Synod or one of its entities may issue a joint statement or participate in a widespread immediate relief effort.

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Assembly, which give stark evidence of the deep theological divisions between the LCMS and the ELCA.

Before we consider the matter of principles for cooperation in externals with theological integrity, it is important to clarify that an RSO does not necessarily involve cooperation between the Synod (or one of its entities) and another church or church body. An RSO is an organization, recognized by the Synod, which

while independent of the Synod, fosters the mission and ministry of the church, engages in program activity that is in harmony with the programs of the boards of the Synod, and respects and does not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod.⁶

In other words, an RSO is devoted to a purpose which the Synod can endorse and support because its activities are in harmony and consistent with Synod’s doctrine and practice. Note that the definition of an RSO allows for it to be a cooperative agency. An RSO may also be wholly owned, managed, and staffed by LCMS people and involve no cooperative arrangement with another church body.

It should be stated that such “wholly LCMS” RSO’s are ideal in many ways. First, in the all-important question of mission, such RSO’s can fully be involved in and supportive of Gospel outreach in addition to whatever particular service focus they may have. Second, they enable Synod’s entire theological understanding to serve as undergirding for the work they are doing. Third, they will not require the careful “balancing” or negotiating process that a cooperative RSO does when it comes to making decisions about management and leadership, setting policies, choosing staff, and so forth.

However, most of Synod’s RSO’s are cooperative in nature. They have been endorsed by the Synod because of the conviction that the work they do is pleasing to God and meets genuine human needs that we could not otherwise as effectively address. Yet, questions and concerns have risen as to if or whether Synod involvement in such endeavors may also involve us in work with the ELCA that would compromise our doctrine. As noted above, the immediate cause for this concern is action taken by the ELCA when it met in Churchwide Assembly in August, 2009. Among its decisions it resolved to recognize “publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” as morally acceptable and removed any denominational restriction of the eligibility for ordination of individuals in such relationships.⁷

The ELCA decisions regarding human sexuality have clearly provided a tipping point, leading people to question any joint work with the ELCA. A legitimate concern is expressed over activities that might confuse the LCMS with the ELCA. In addition, the validity of the concept of “cooperation in externals” is also open to question by many. A question arises: Can we remain faithful in our confession before the world when we cooperate with another church body that has openly repudiated critical aspects of that confession?

⁶ Bylaw 6.2.1, 2007 Handbook: *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, p. 200.

⁷ Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies; the ELCA, page 5, available online at <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/JTF-Human-Sexuality/Report-and-Recommendation.aspx>. The Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies was adopted by the Churchwide Assembly.

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In “Theological Implications,” the Synod has again reaffirmed a longstanding and important distinction between cooperation in externals and communion in sacred things.⁸ Rather than viewing cooperative work with other churches as a first step toward altar and pulpit fellowship or as necessitating full doctrinal agreement, the Synod seeks to maintain a clear distinction between the two concepts so that the cooperation in externals does not imply communion in sacred things in any way. It has also acknowledged two critical principles with regard to cooperation in externals: (1) that it is often appropriate to engage in cooperative work with another church body or group of Christians, and (2) that such cooperative work may not be done at the expense of doctrinal integrity.

The title of Resolution 3-03 and the quoted resolve indicate the importance of clear distinctions. Any cooperative work with others must be done “with theological integrity.” The purpose of a sharp, clear distinction between cooperation in externals and communion in sacred things is to prevent any cooperative relationships from compromising the purity of the Gospel or undermining the church’s proper work of preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments of Christ. However, it is sometimes difficult or even impossible to draw the line sharply between “externals” and “sacred things.” One obvious example is a senior care facility which has a chaplain on staff.

Basic Principles

The “basic principles” referred to in 2010 Res. 3-03 are important to recall as the starting point for the CTCR’s task. The Convention affirmed them and also charged the CTCR to work on further, more “in-depth theological criteria for assessing cooperative endeavors.”⁹ “Theological Implications” includes a quotation from *Theology of Fellowship*, adopted by the Synod in 1967. It may be helpful to examine more closely that quotation as summarizing the most important “basic principle” in this matter.

Our Synod should clearly recognize that, in cases of necessary work on the local, national, or international level, where the faith and confession of the church are not compromised, and where it appears essential that the churches of various denominations should cooperate or at least not work at cross purposes, our churches ought to cooperate willingly to the extent that the Word of God and conscience will allow.¹⁰

Note that *Theology of Fellowship* refers to “necessary work” and to cooperation that “appears essential.” The term “necessary” brings to mind Article VI of the Augsburg Confession (AC): “Our churches also teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits and that it is necessary to do the good works commanded by God.”¹¹ This reminds us that the kind of “externals” in view are not somehow unimportant or optional even though they do not involve proclaiming the Gospel and administering Christ’s sacraments. That would amount to some form of Gospel

⁸ The Latin phrases *cooperatio in externis* and *communio in sacris* are often used.

⁹ The case of military chaplaincy is particularly thorny. It is separate from this question because it involves *communio in sacris* by definition. Moreover, it involves governmental policies and procedures and involved endorsement procedures. It therefore requires its own, discrete analysis in cooperation with personnel from ministry to armed forces.

¹⁰ CTCR, *Theology of Fellowship* (1965), 28. In the online version of the report at www.lcms.org/ctcr, the page number is 43.

¹¹ Tappert, Theodore G. *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 31.

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reductionism. Christians and the “household of faith” are obligated to show mercy and to care for others, even where needs are purely “external” or physical (Rom 12:20; Gal 6:10). Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions also remind us that such works are motivated by faith, and do not “merit justification before God.”¹² Yet, they are commanded and necessary nonetheless.¹³ Mercy and love, as defined by the eternal Law of God and made clear in the Decalogue, are the life of faith at work in the world.

This emphasis on “necessary” work indicates that we are not referring to matters of *adiaphora*. Our church cooperates with other churches and other organizations in such *adiaphora* as purchasing agreements, insurance companies, investment firms, and so forth. Such agreements—to the extent that they are purely “indifferent matters”—are not at issue. In addition, it should be clear that there is no controversy regarding cooperation in externals with a church with whom we are also in altar/pulpit fellowship.

That which God commands is “necessary.” The ways that works of mercy are promoted and organized, however, will vary according to circumstances. Showing mercy to those in need is not optional, it is commanded. “For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land’” (Deut 15:11). What is commanded is both necessary and essential to the work of the church.

The church will always preach and teach the Gospel. It will always encourage a life of good works according to one’s individual vocation.¹⁴ But the church should also organize its efforts in this goal of obedience to God’s commands for the sake of efficiency and effectiveness. So the early church organized care for widows and orphans (Acts 6:1ff) and offerings were collected for the care of the poor in Jerusalem during a time of catastrophe (1 Cor 16:1ff; Gal 2:10). In the case of Acts 6, it is noteworthy that while priority is clearly given to the ministry of prayer and the Word of God (vv. 2, 4), the care of widows and orphans is not something that can be ignored. In commenting on Acts 6, Chrysostom notes that both care for the needy and proclamation of the Word of God are necessary, but the latter ought always to be the higher priority: “the needful must give precedence to the more needful.”¹⁵

That leads to another aspect of cooperative work, namely, that it is work that is done better cooperatively than it would be if it were done separately. Or, in other words, that working cooperatively prevents working at “cross-purposes.” This is a reminder that in many circumstances it is “essential,” at the very least, to communicate effectively with other churches regarding works of mercy to prevent confusion and to allow more efficiency. For example, in the case of a natural catastrophe, it would be counter-productive for all the different aid organizations to cluster in one location when there are needs in other areas that are unmet.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ E.g., AAC IV 122ff. (KW 140-149) and the scriptural citations within. See also FC SD VI and its scriptural citations (KW 587-591). Cooperative work is in the realm of the *bene esse*, not the *esse*, of the church.

¹⁴ On the importance of this understanding in Luther, see George W. Forell, *Faith Active in Love: An Investigation of the Principles Underlying Luther’s Social Ethics* (New York: The American Press, 1954).

¹⁵ Emphasis added. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament V Acts*, Francis Martin, ed., (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 70.

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Therefore cooperative effort is largely pragmatic in nature, allowing greater efficiencies and economies of scale.

Such concerns, however, require the proviso that cooperative efforts in Christian care can be considered only “where the faith and confession of the church are not compromised.”¹⁶ Cooperative work can be done only “to the extent that the Word of God and conscience will allow.” The church’s efforts in care for those in need may not cloud or compromise the church’s faith, or go against the Word of God and conscience. *This proviso is determinative.* Cooperative efforts are always toward goals, and only the Word of God and the Christian conscience can determine those goals. In individual life this is the case—the Christian person can cooperate with his neighbor in many things, but not in sin, not in denial of the Gospel, not in anything that is contrary to God’s Word or a conscience shaped by the Holy Scriptures. That is all the more the case for a Christian church existing in an era of extreme moral confusion where an unrestricted tolerance is frequently suggested as the highest (and only) good (or, conversely, when the Gospel is undermined by moralism). Christian understanding of a necessary good that must be done is based on God’s revelation, both in the eternal law written on the human heart (Rom 2:15) and, more specifically, in the unerring truth of God’s Word. Nothing other than the truth of God may determine the legitimacy of a cooperative endeavor. Any endeavor that questions or compromises His truth is forbidden to the Church.¹⁷

In summary, Synod has endorsed the concept of cooperation in externals, by which we mean the possibility of working with Christians with whom we are not in church fellowship. Cooperation in externals requires a common goal or an agreed purpose which is consistent and consonant with the objectives, doctrine and practice of the Synod. No external cooperative work may in any way compromise or imply a disagreement with Synod’s teaching and practice (and therefore may not contradict Holy Scripture or the scripturally-formed Christian conscience).

Further Theological Criteria

In addition to this central principle of cooperation with theological integrity, “Theological Implications” also considers the development of further principles, especially with respect to the ELCA:

We cannot dictate the exact direction(s) various cooperative relationships will take in the future, primarily because the nature of agreements between ELCA and LCMS congregations and entities varies on a case-by-case basis. Frank and serious discussion on this issue needs to continue on various levels so that convictions and beliefs are not compromised and that worthy projects, activities, and relationships between our church and others may continue wherever possible. We urge LCMS participants in such cases to make decisions about whether to continue involvement on the basis of the principles we have discussed. We also suggest the following questions for consideration in making these decisions:

¹⁶ *Theology of Fellowship*, 28, online 43.

¹⁷ “Theological Implications” cites a specific example where theological integrity requires a cooperative endeavor to end in the case of an agency that adopts a policy of supporting the adoption of children by homosexual couples. See “Placing Adopted Children into Homosexual Contexts” (2006) at <http://www.lcms.org/pages/?NavID=10096>.

1. Is the purpose of the joint work fully consistent with the positions, policies and objectives of the Synod?
2. Do cooperative efforts imply doctrinal unity with the ELCA or endorsement of ELCA positions on same-sex relationships or other matters of disagreement with the LCMS?
3. Does the joint agency or organization distinguish itself as an entity from the churches that support it?
4. Are all the policies and programs of the organization consonant with the doctrinal position of the LCMS?
5. Do the individuals who lead the organization openly support and encourage efforts, positions, or policies which compromise the theological stance of the Synod?

We urge LCMS participants to answer such questions as these and to make decisions about whether to continue involvement on the basis of the principles we have discussed.

Case-by-case

Two parts of this section of “Theological Implications” are important. First, while the operative principle of cooperation only with theological integrity is absolutely clear, the great variety of human care organizations and efforts necessitates a case-by-case approach in evaluating them. There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to the different organizations that Synod recognizes currently in the general sphere of mercy ministries. Some involve no inter-church cooperation and are solely staffed, administered, and governed by LCMS personnel. Others may have few or even no LCMS personnel in any form of leadership or policy-making. Some involve significant LCMS involvement and resources, others very little. Some organizations carefully and cautiously design their policies and programs in order to prevent any doctrinal compromise. Others may be administered with little care or concern for theology. There is great variety in the purposes and goals of RSO’s, in how they are funded, governed, and staffed. The fact is that no two RSO’s are identical. Individual Districts of the LCMS will, of necessity, need to be an integral part to decisions that are made regarding the RSO’s with which they relate.

Five factors

Second, “Theological Implications” offers five questions for use in a principled, case-by-case approach to cooperative efforts. The questions deal with (1) the purpose or goal of a cooperative effort; (2) possible false implications of doctrinal unity and agreement between the ELCA and LCMS; (3) clear demarcation of the RSO as an entity independent from its supporting churches; (4) consistency of RSO policies with LCMS teaching; (5) possible confusion between the beliefs and stances of organizational leaders and the organization itself.

Additional Clarification

These additional principles may be further clarified as examples of where the church might consider cooperative work and also where it must cease such work.

First, the all-important question for any organized effort involving the church is whether the intended *purpose or goal* is God-pleasing. As obvious as this is, it must still be asserted. The godly necessity of providing Christian counseling to help married couples resolve conflict in a God-pleasing way is clear. Just as clear, however, is the fact that a Christian church must never

engage in efforts to provide counseling that encourages un-scriptural divorce. Yet, why do we say these are both “clear”? Such a value judgment can be made only on the basis of the authority of Scripture and orthodox theology. The following are further reflections in this regard:

- The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament—are the final authority for all church teaching, including the determination of what is and is not a “good work.”
- This does not indicate a “Biblicist” approach, however. Scripture provides a normative role in the question of good works, but it also points beyond itself in an important way toward a “ministerial use” of conscience and human reason in considering moral questions. The Lutheran Confessions and orthodox Lutheran tradition will also provide necessary guidance.
- Christian theology has consistently accepted the teaching variously referred to as “natural law” or, as Luther also describes it, “one law which runs through all ages.”¹⁸ Romans 1 and 2 affirm that a certain knowledge of the truth is ours “by nature,” written on the human heart. But Paul also notes that in a fallen world moral judgments are always potentially fallible and so we cannot dispense with the normative standards of Scripture.
- Theological assumptions underlying an organizational goal are also relevant. For example, an organization might engage in a laudable “social ministry” because it holds that such ministry—not the proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ—is the *primary* ministry of the church. A cooperative endeavor in that instance risks the integrity of the Gospel itself since a “Social Gospel” has been substituted for the genuine Gospel of forgiveness, life, and salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 1:6-9).

Second, cooperative efforts with another church ought to be engaged in with a clear understanding that agreement in the purpose of the particular organization *does not imply agreement in all areas of doctrine and practice.* When two churches cooperate in feeding the hungry, for example, it is appropriate to understand that both are motivated by a common understanding that care for the needy is in keeping with God’s will—this is agreement in a teaching of God’s Law. But some may assume that the two churches are also in agreement about others issues when that is not the case. With respect to avoiding false implications of unity, consideration should be given to various organizational matters, such as:

- It is important—for the sake of truth—that in cooperative efforts there be a clear understanding between the sponsoring churches in the formation of principles and policies for the organization.
- The organization must be responsive to the concerns and beliefs of the LCMS (and any other cooperating entity), and, as such, ought clearly to articulate and distinguish between the areas of agreement which enable cooperation and acknowledge the reality of disagreements between cooperating entities which also exist.
- This does not discount the fact that we may also be able to affirm additional areas of theological concord (e.g., two Lutheran bodies who can affirm that the work they are

¹⁸ See Luther’s *Galatians* (1519), AE 27:355 where he says: “Therefore there is one law which runs through all ages, is known to all men, is written in the hearts of all people, and leaves no one from beginning to end with an excuse, although for the Jews ceremonies were added and the other nations had their own laws, which were not binding upon the whole world, but only this one, which the Holy Spirit dictates unceasingly in the hearts of all.” See also AE 40:96-97. Luther is referring to natural law (see also *Large Catechism* II:96-99, KW 440).

engaged in is based on the motivating principal of faith in Christ, active in love rather than a theology of merit; agreement in confessional subscription; mutual creedal agreement).

- Organizational events or ceremonies must not involve public worship and neither the LCMS nor the ELCA (or any other church with which we might be cooperating apart from a relationship of altar and pulpit fellowship) ought to imply that the joint effort fully represents its confession of faith in all articles.

Third, the corollary to the previous stipulation is that a cooperatively supported RSO ought to have a *distinct identity* from either the LCMS or the ELCA (or other church/church body). The *Handbook* describes RSO’s as “independent of the Synod.” They must also be independent of the ELCA. While both church bodies are free to support the ministry of the RSO, both are also free to withdraw support, so the ministry is “owned” by neither. This, of course, also means that an RSO must have a clear theological rationale and purpose that “fosters the mission and ministry of the church.”¹⁹ This suggests such considerations as the following:

- Leadership of the organization in question ought to have a clear understanding that its rationale and programmatic decisions will be direct factors in LCMS endorsement and involvement.
- It is preferable that such an organization not be portrayed as an arm or entity of the LCMS, ELCA, or other churches, but as a distinct organization with clearly focused goals and purposes.
- The Synod will evaluate whether those distinctive goals and purposes are in harmony with our theology.
- It is possible that in some cases an organization may no longer have any clear identity or purpose.
- It is also possible that in an effort to maintain a distinct identity, an organization loses its identity as a specifically Christian (and Lutheran) entity. For example, just as the YMCA is no longer a “Christian association” in any recognizable way, so also a “Lutheran social service agency” always runs the risk of losing any “Lutheran” element to its identity, and becoming just one more “social service organization.”

Fourth, since we are considering organizations with very direct, practical purposes—specific “good works”—it is necessary that the *implementation* of the organization’s goals and the steps it takes toward those goals be examined. Both goals and implementation must be consistent with Lutheran theology. The activities, policies, and practices of organizations must be evaluated. For example:

- An organization may have evolved over time and no longer directly addresses the need that led to its creation and to LCMS support.
- A board of directors may have little or no representation from the Synod and may be unaware of or unsupportive of LCMS beliefs.

¹⁹ 6.2.1, *Handbook*, 200.

- Organizations may adopt operational principles that are alien or contrary to Scripture and the Confessions (for example, a relief organization policy that forbids volunteers from sharing the Gospel or praying with those who are being served).
- Effective stewardship of financial resources is a valid theological issue.
- The policies and practices of an organization must not be diffused by unstated goals or objectives (for example, an agency organized to help the poor devotes itself to partisan political advocacy).
- The lack of a policy may indicate an unwillingness to address a necessary matter of Christian truth. With regard to homosexual adoptions, for example, the lack of a policy may be a tacit allowance for such adoptions.
- Endorsement questions for institutional chaplaincies may be addressed under this heading of implementation. The ELCA's current theological course presents serious theological challenges to any continued cooperation in endorsement procedures.

Fifth, the *personnel* who actually manage and lead cooperative efforts are a critical factor. Both the public conduct and public positions taken by leaders and staff of organizations are significant to the question of integrity. Personnel issues include (but are not limited to) such concerns as follow:

- If an organization is staffed by someone whose lifestyle is scandalous or openly and unrepentantly sinful, the message of God's Word is inevitably compromised.
- A leader's public identification with and support of ecclesial, social, or political groups which hold positions contrary to the Christian faith compromises any work, no matter how valid it may be otherwise.
- Institutional chaplaincy staffing decisions must be assessed theologically, with regard to matters of the chaplain's life-style decisions, theology, and ministry practices. (The LCMS cannot support heterodox ministry, lend tacit approval to women's ordination or other unscriptural practices, or support chaplaincy services by those engaged in an immoral lifestyle.)
- Over time, leaders and/or staff of organizations may become unsupportive or hostile to Synod positions even though the ostensible purpose of the organization has not changed.
- A management board for an RSO may become conflicted because of differing beliefs on the part of its members.
- The question may arise as to whether an RSO ought to be endorsed by the Synod if the LCMS has little or no influence regarding either board leadership or staffing.
- In all these instances, because of the public nature of leadership, the result will be a compromise of the Synod's beliefs and teachings.

Conclusion

There can and should be a measure of cooperation between the LCMS and other Christians, Lutheran or otherwise, so long as there is no compromise of the teachings of Holy Scripture as explicated in the Confessions. This basic principle requires that the cooperative effort is not an act of fellowship in the Word and Sacraments (unionism). It assumes that the cooperative effort is a godly work—something done in keeping with the eternal or "natural law" of God, written on the human heart and clarified in Holy Scripture and the scripturally-informed conscience. It is

a necessary work which God commands and also a work which is most effectively done in cooperation with others. Therefore, cooperative work with individuals or entities in the ECLA is not necessarily precluded so long as it meets the criteria given above.

This document has responded to 2010 Res. 3-03 with respect to cooperative work in RSOs and other organizations. In such cases, we hope that these guidelines will be helpful for determining where cooperative work can continue with doctrinal integrity and where, for the sake of that integrity, it must cease. However, the markedly different theological courses of our respective church bodies (LCMS and ELCA) mean that cooperation on the national level is a different matter. The ELCA's departure from historic Christian and Confessional Lutheran standards makes it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for the LCMS to cooperate *directly* with the ELCA national office in united efforts with doctrinal integrity.²⁰

In the end, decisions about where the Synod may and may not engage in such cooperative work will involve a Spirit-guided, careful, case-by-case look at each of the shared endeavors according to these scriptural principles.

Approved by the CTCR "for sharing with the Praesidium"
December 17, 2010

²⁰ For example, any continued cooperation with the ELCA in institutional chaplaincy endorsements and similar matters seems significantly problematic.

APPENDIX

Additional Background to 2010 Res. 3-03

The matter of cooperative relationships is extremely broad. All of life involves Christians in countless cooperative relationships. Our Lord prays for Christian distinctiveness, but not that we be taken "out of the world" (John 17:15). St. Paul reminds us of the impossibility of having no association with the people "of this world" (1 Cor 5:9-10). The Confessions condemn the notion of forbidding Christian involvement in public and private relationships and institutions (AC XVI). Theodore E. Schmauk noted that "Wherever there is common ground, there is possibility of cooperation."²¹

A caveat was added by Schmauk: "But no cooperation is possible whose practical or ultimate effect is to slight or ignore even the least central and most insignificant outpost of Lutheran principle."²² Although Christians must relate to every manner of person in common life, St. Paul warned that we ought not associate with those who claim to hold the Christian faith but live in flagrant violation of it (1 Cor 5:11). And while Jesus did not pray for His disciples to be taken out of the world, He did pray for them to be kept safe "from the evil one" (John 17:15), and warns that His kingdom not be confused with this world (John 18:36).

Two principles are present in the cooperative relationships of individual Christians. First, the Christian necessarily cooperates with others in his vocations and in the assorted relationships that occur in daily life. The Christian cooperates in the workplace, in commerce, and in her neighborhood with people who are members of her congregation and with many more who are not. Second, such cooperation occurs only on the basis of "common ground"—shared purposes and understandings. Cooperation ends when it is incompatible with Christian faith and life—when it involves infidelity to the Word of God and biblical standards of life—when it is contrary to Christ's call to faith active in love.

It is one thing to speak of individual Christians cooperating with others, but it is another thing to consider how churches or a church body can or cannot cooperate with other believers or churches or church bodies. The following pages summarize official LCMS action regarding the principle of cooperation in externals (*cooperatio in externis*) in recent years.

Background to Cooperation in Externals with Integrity

Meeting in convention in 1967 the Missouri Synod adopted the document *Theology of Fellowship* (CTCR, 1965). Included in its guidelines it says:

Our Synod should clearly recognize that, in cases of necessary work on the local, national, or international level, where the faith and confession of the church are not compromised, and where it appears essential that the churches of various denominations

²¹ Theodore E. Schmauk and C. Theodore Benze, *The Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church as Embodying the Evangelical Confession of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1911), 900.

²² *Ibid.*

should cooperate or at least not work at cross purposes, our churches ought to cooperate willingly to the extent that the Word of God and conscience will allow.²³ Although it is not referred to by name, the concept of "cooperation in externals" (*cooperatio in externis*) is central to this assertion.²⁴

A 1971 resolution of the Synod referred to "cooperative activity" with churches with which the Synod was not in fellowship.²⁵ A similar perspective from 1974 is evident in *A Lutheran Stance Toward Ecumenism with Application for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*.

It remains a basic principle for the Synod that the unity in the church which we seek is not an external unification imposed from without by the adoption of common politics and by organizational affiliation or by united endeavors in worthy causes, but the unity in the church which results from *confessional* unanimity, that is, genuine concord or agreement in *doctrine*. In relation to other church bodies and agencies the Synod will gladly cooperate in externals, that is, participate in projects which do not involve joint worship or the spiritual ministry of the church. In line with this principle the Synod will continually examine the propriety of present affiliations and will carefully weigh proposals to enter new alliances.²⁶

The 1991 document, *Inter-Christian Relationships: An Instrument for Study*, considered both the prior usage of the distinction between *communio in sacris* and *cooperatio in externis* and also some potential confusion that results from the term "external."

The central role of the means of grace in our understanding of inter-Christian relationships explains the reasons why we distinguish between "communion or

²³ *Theology of Fellowship*, 28. In the online version of the report at www.lcms.org/ctcr, the page number is 43.

²⁴ The Wisconsin Synod's severing of altar and pulpit fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1961, and the consequent demise of the Synodical Conference, were in significant measure the result of Wisconsin's discomfort over Missouri's distinction between the two concepts: "cooperation in externals" (*cooperatio in externis*) and "communion in sacred things" (*communio in sacris*).²⁴ In the judgment of the Wisconsin Synod, such Missouri Synod decisions as construction and operation of service centers for World War II military personnel with the National Lutheran Council and cooperative charitable organizations with Lutherans from outside the Synodical Conference were unionistic in nature. Even though the Wisconsin Synod acknowledged that these particular efforts involved unambiguous restrictions against joint preaching, teaching, or worship, Wisconsin saw them as having the "inevitable" consequence of unionism. "First, cooperation with 'safeguard'; then, the call for complete consolidation, thus bringing the movement to its inevitable unionistic climax."²⁴ From Wisconsin's perspective, "cooperation in externals" is simply a slippery slope toward indiscriminate union without doctrinal agreement. See the essay by the Wisconsin Synod Conference of Presidents 1953-54, "Cooperation in Externals," in *Essays on Church Fellowship*, Curtis A. Jahn, ed. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996), 379-386.

²⁵ 1971 Resolution 3-26: "Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod restate its desire to initiate and work toward fellowship with those Lutheran churches with whom it is not in altar and pulpit fellowship, and continue to work toward a greater degree of unity with those with whom it is in altar and pulpit fellowship, and that the activity proceed as follows: 1) Multilevel discussion of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions with those Lutheran churches with whom we are not in fellowship in order to seek agreement in doctrine and practice leading to a declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship. These discussions may serve to provide guidelines for additional cooperative activity;" quoted in CTCR *The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship* (1981), footnote 70, on 37. In the online version at www.lcms.org/ctcr the page number is 44.

²⁶ CTCR, *A Lutheran Stance Toward Ecumenism with Application for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (1974), 11.

fellowship in sacred things” (*communio in sacris*) and “cooperation in externals” (*cooperatio in externis*). The former term pertains to the highest and deepest kind of communion or fellowship, namely, the joint use of the means of grace, while the latter refers to matters that are not directly related to the proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments, i.e., *external* to the use of the means of grace. As useful as this distinction is in principle (because it is made on the basis of the means of grace), it is nevertheless subject to considerable confusion because of the term *externals*. That a given activity is *external* to the use of the means of grace does not mean we are to regard such an activity as necessarily optional or to be excluded from the church’s calling. For instance, cooperation in caring for refugees may not involve the joint use of Word and sacraments, but this certainly in no way diminishes the importance of such common work as a fitting response to the Lord’s command to love our neighbor. Additionally, we must recognize that not all Christian activities fit neatly into one or the other category. With that understanding, however, measuring proposed activities in terms of their relationship to the means of grace remains central to a confessional Lutheran approach to questions of inter-Christian relationships.²⁷

Once again, in 1995, in its consideration of the relationship of church and state, the Commission provided some historical perspective on the idea of “cooperation in externals.” It also noted concerns about potential confusion due to the terminology.

The gradual agreement on social welfare in the mid-20th century among the leadership of American Lutheran churches led to frequent contacts and cooperation among Lutheran church bodies. A major factor in this cooperation was the problem of interface with the new governmental welfare agencies that arose in the 1930s. In Chicago, on Nov. 17, 1936, new ground was broken in inter-Lutheran cooperation when the Lutheran Church Charities Committee was formed, representing six synods, including the Missouri Synod. The technical term used in the Missouri Synod for such a joint effort is “cooperation in externals.” Yet those supporting the emerging view of social ministry were quick to point out that “the welfare ministry itself was by no means an external matter to the Christian faith and the life of the church; it was an essential sign of the presence of divine grace and the necessary fruit that grew from the root of faith.”

After the mergers of 1960 and 1962, which had created the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) respectively, a new organization of Lutheran cooperation to replace the National Lutheran Council became operational in 1967. This time the Missouri Synod, already cooperating with the National Lutheran Council in Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Service Commission, and Lutheran Immigration Service, was a member. The new agency was called the Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA) and was chartered with two main purposes: theological discussion and cooperation in specified areas of Christian service. All participating bodies were required to take part in the theological discussion, but each could choose whether or not to participate in other areas of activity. One of those areas of cooperative work was the Office of Government Affairs in Washington, D.C.²⁸

²⁷ CTCR, *Inter-Christian Relationships: An Instrument for Study* (2000), 16-17.

²⁸ CTCR, *Render Unto Caesar... and Unto God: A Lutheran View of Church and State* (1995), 50.

Later the same document states:

Similarly, a wide variety of programs and resources have been developed within the Synod (and in cooperation with other Lutheran churches) addressing the problems of poverty, human suffering, settlement of immigrants and refugees, and “war and peace” issues. Such programs and resources allow members of the Synod to focus intentionally on these issues on the basis of Scriptural principles, while leaving necessary room for individual Christians to form their own opinions about the wisdom of specific governmental policies and to make decisions about personal involvement in ecclesial and/or social efforts and activities in these areas.²⁹

In 1999 the CTCR published the report *Faith Active in Love: Human Care in the Church’s Life*. Once again the principle of cooperation in externals with theological integrity was articulated. Under the heading, “The Need for Flexibility,” the document states:

History shows great variety in the way the church organizes for Christian care, a variety that depends in part on the social circumstances in which the church is working. Those gathered together to bring God’s Word to both believers and unbelievers will participate together also in works of mutual care and love toward those outside the church. In restoring our relationship to God, God’s Word frees us for energetic Christian care. Much Christian care is lived out in the believers’ daily work, but some forms of care are more effectively carried out as Christians work together with other Christians. Working together seems especially necessary when distortion or corruption in the established orders of creation make it difficult for Christians to act individually to provide human care.

Christians can also organize to work together with Christians in other traditions and with non-Christians in caring institutions of society. To be sure, Christians most happily and comfortably cooperate with those who share their confession. But just as individual Christians cooperate in and with the social structures where God has placed them, so Christians organized in specific social structures can also cooperate in and with other social and governmental structures for the care of neighbors in need. Again, churches are likely to cooperate especially in the voluntary and special social structures that spring up in response to needs not met by currently established structures in society. Such cooperation with others, either as individuals or in various social structures, need not compromise the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Cooperative endeavors of this kind, when they do not compromise the proclamation of God’s Word, can be simply the living out of love that springs from a living faith. However, when other individuals or communities advocate policies and programs that are contrary to the guidance given in the Scriptures, great care should be taken by Christians not to cooperate in ways that compromise the proclamation of God’s Word.³⁰

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

³⁰ *Faith Active in Love* (February 1999), 27. The report is available in print and also online at <http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CTCR/faith.pdf>. *Faith Active in Love* reminds us that such principles of care for those in need and the priority of Gospel proclamation and purity of confession are both necessary aspects of

It is evident that a consistent understanding is at work regarding both cooperation with others—from cooperating with groups or structures in society to cooperating with other churches—in caring for people in need. Wherever such cooperative work enables us to respond effectively toward those in need, it is considered. Such cooperative endeavor, however, is always restricted by the proviso that it may not compromise the truth of God’s Word. As a consequence of this understanding the LCMS has engaged in a variety of cooperative relationships with other church bodies on international, national, and local levels. However, the proviso that such relationships not compromise God’s truth requires that the LCMS carefully examine its cooperative endeavors with a church body that has clearly departed from that truth.

the church’s life. It also points out that the church’s care for those in need tends to follow one of two “contrasting lines of thought.” The first line of thought emphasizes the need for a more organized, corporate, and cooperative dimension to the church’s care for those in need. The second emphasizes that such care should primarily take place individual efforts, as Christians are active in their vocations. Rather than opposing these dimensions, *Faith Active in Love* indicates how both are needed. (See 12-26; *Render Unto Caesar* raises a similar concern.)

Theological Dialogue with Other Christian Church Bodies

"There is one body and one Spirit" (Eph 4:4)—one Body of Christ, the Father's only-begotten Son, created by the gracious work of the one Holy Spirit. This one Body is the Church, that is, all who in baptismal faith are bound to Christ and to one another (see 1 Cor 1:2). Together with all those through the ages who confess their faith in the Blessed Trinity, we confess our faith "in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church." We confess, as an article of faith, this one Church' (often referred to as the Una Sancta, based on the Latin version of the Nicene Creed). It is real and true, yet, since it includes only those who hold to Christ in true faith, it is also a reality that is fully known only to God who "knows the heart" (Acts 15:8). He alone knows its length and breadth in every age and locale. For this reason, we do not confess any particular earthly institution as "the Church" per se in this full and creedal sense, even as we fully affirm the visible and "bodily" reality of the Church.² To claim that a particular institution alone is "the Church" would deny that salvation and incorporation into the Body of Christ occurs through faith and Baptism into Christ, for "we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another" (Rom 12:5). The Apology of the Augsburg Confession therefore explains:

[T]he church is not only an association of external ties and rites like other civic organizations, but it is principally an association of faith and the Holy Spirit in the hearts of persons. It nevertheless has its external marks so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the gospel of Christ.³

True unity of faith is thus given in Christ and is no human achievement. It is given by means of the proclamation of the one Gospel of Christ and that Gospel's administration in the holy and efficacious Sacraments. Although the Church's unity is a gift of God, it can be undermined and damaged by sin, so the apostle Paul urges the people of God to maintain this unity "in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). To do so involves both certain character traits (humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance) and also a sober maturity that resists shifting doctrinal winds and speaks "the truth in love" (Eph 4:2, 13-15). One of the primary goals for the confessors at Augsburg was to seek to promote a greater measure of harmony so that the God-given unity of the Church might be lived out as fully as possible amid human divisions in the church on earth:

Inasmuch as we are all enlisted under one Christ, we are all to live together in one communion and one church.⁴

However, this understanding of the unity of the Church as the Body of Christ must not become the basis for false conclusions. One such falsely drawn conclusion is the notion that because there is but one Church, all churches should be organizationally united despite different beliefs. Much of the modern ecumenical movement has operated on this basis, with the inevitable result of either an ephemeral

¹ Herein we will mark the distinction between the Church in this sense of the *Una Sancta* fully known only to God by means of an upper case C. We will refer to the church in the sense of earthly gatherings of Christians ("institutions") with a lower case c.
² This, of course, is worthy of much fuller treatment that cannot be offered in this brief document. Such a treatment would include discussion of such matters as the confessional apology against the Roman charge that Luther and the Reformers held to a platonic understanding of the church, the use of "visible" and "invisible" as adjectives to describe the Church, and Walther's careful reference to the Evangelical Lutheran church as the "True Visible Church on Earth."
³ Apology [Ap] VII/VIII, 5. Kolb-Wengert edition, *The Book of Concord* [KW] (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 174.
⁴ Augsburg Confession [AC] Preface, 4; KW 30.

"unity" between churches that in reality hold contradictory beliefs or a united church that disallows the convictions that formerly had kept the uniting churches apart.

Instead of such an understanding with its predictable results, the church throughout much of its history followed a much more difficult yet more appropriate course with respect to divisions among believers and churches. From the apostolic council in Acts 15 to the ecumenical councils (e.g., Nicea, 325) to Reformation era discussions and debates at Augsburg to later efforts that led to the *Book of Concord* itself, Christians sought to resolve division by careful theological reflection and discussion, grounded in the Word of God. Only such a course refused to sacrifice either unity or truth.

In keeping with such an understanding, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) lists as its first objective that it shall

Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3-6, 1 Cor. 1:10), work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism, and heresy.⁵

One way the Synod has sought to "promote unity" and to defend "against schism, sectarianism, and heresy" has been to engage in conversation and dialogue with other Christian church bodies. The result has sometimes been the joyful recognition that we share a full and common understanding of Christian faith and life—full doctrinal agreement. In such cases we have joyfully affirmed this fellowship between our church and another and rejoiced in the opportunity to open our pulpits to each other's pastors and to welcome one another freely at the Lord's Table.

At other times the dialogues have not achieved doctrinal unity. Indeed, it would be contrary to the theology of the cross and to the hidden nature of the church in this world to expect that theological dialogue will always result in doctrinal agreement or structural accord.⁶ Nevertheless, even such "failed" dialogues have always served a beneficial purpose. Proverbs 27:17 reminds us that "iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." So also, discussions even with those who in the end disagree with us, compel us to search the Scriptures, to listen carefully and honestly, and to sharpen and clarify our confession. Such failures to achieve theological unity are painful and sometimes have resulted in even greater misunderstanding, especially when those who have strongly upheld the necessity of doctrinal agreement are accused of having a loveless or proud heart toward other Christians or when the failure to achieve full agreement blinds participants to whatever measure of unity has been reached. Walther, in his "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod," referred to the example of discussions between Luther and Bucer in an attempt to resolve differences over the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Their dialogue failed to achieve complete agreement. Luther could not compromise the truth as he understood it. Despite the failure, Luther urged against any action that would result in "even more

⁵ 2010 Handbook: *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, Constitution, Article III, 1, p. 13.
⁶ The Church never ceases to be a "little flock" (Luke 12:32) in the world, hidden by all that is so impressive and successful. See Luther's comments on the Cain and Abel narrative in Gen. 4 (e.g., *Luther's Works*, American Edition [AE], 1:253). Again, noting Abraham's fear of Abimelech, Luther reminds us that God "nevertheless has His little church, even though it is small and hidden" (AE, 3:345).

uproar and offense" and appealed to Bucer to "keep the peace [resulting from] the degree [of unity] that has been reached."⁷

The Synod's first priority in theological conversation and dialogue has been with other Lutherans. Dialogues with other Lutheran church bodies were typically focused on a goal of establishing church fellowship. Shared Lutheran heritage and subscription—at least on some level—to the Lutheran Confessions heightened the expectation that church fellowship would be a likely outcome. However, the Synod has also engaged in theological dialogues with non-Lutheran Christians on numerous occasions. In such cases, discussions began with the recognition of deep, historical divisions between our respective church bodies—divisions based on significantly different understandings of the Gospel and biblical teaching and practice. Because of such historical divisions, some have questioned the legitimacy and value of the LCMS engaging in theological dialogues with such church bodies, since there seems to be little or no hope of reaching the full doctrinal agreement that would enable altar and pulpit fellowship.

In reply to that concern, several basic points should be considered:

- 1) The first objective of the Synod listed in Article III of the Constitution is to "work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism, and heresy."⁸ This objective points in two directions—"toward fellowship" and away from "schism, sectarianism, and heresy."

While conversations with a non-Lutheran church body are less likely to result in altar and pulpit fellowship than those with a like-minded Lutheran church body, they may nevertheless help to provide a defense against sectarianism since the talks can reveal and emphasize areas that the LCMS and that church body hold in common. A shared confession of the creeds, for example, stands as an important testimony against many forms of heresy, even if it does not result in the full agreement necessary for altar and pulpit fellowship.

- 2) The bylaws of the LCMS are quite general in giving guidance to the Synod on matters of church relations when it comes to the role of the President, as chief ecumenical officer, and to that of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) in its responsibility to assist the President as he carries out his duties in this area. Obviously, constraints of wisdom, prioritization, and budget always apply to what the Synod will do ecumenically (or in any endeavor), but there is no Synod or CTCR policy that would restrict or discourage the sort of talks mentioned above.

- 3) The ecumenical dialogue section of CTCR reports to conventions (as well as many resolutions) indicate that the Synod has a long-standing commitment to participation in ecumenical discussions and dialogs. For example, the LCMS has participated in most Lutheran bi-lateral dialogs (e.g., Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Episcopal, Reformed).⁹

⁷ Essay delivered to "First Iowa District Convention, St. Paul's Church, Fort Dodge, Iowa, beginning Aug. 20, 1879," in C. F. W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, Vol. 2, 1877-1886 (St. Louis: CPH, 1992), p. 23. Brackets in the original, emphasis added. Walther is referring to a letter from Luther to Bucer, but does not provide full documentation.
⁸ The exceptions were when the LCMS was not invited to participate or when the goal of the dialog involved presuppositions/expectations which it could not accept.

- 4) The CTCR's report, *A Lutheran Stance Toward Ecumenism (LSTE)*, has some helpful guidance in this regard. The first two principles set forth in this report are:

- A. Lutherans recognize and rejoice in their oneness with all Christians in the *Una Sancta* and regard this unity as the presupposition for continuing ecumenical endeavors throughout Christendom.
- B. Lutherans deplore doctrinal disagreements, religious disputes, and dissensions among Christians and will not omit doing anything, in so far as God and conscience allow, that may serve the cause of Christian concord. (AC Preface, 13; FC SD XI, 95)⁹

These two confessional references are significant. In the Augsburg Confession's Preface, the confessors recognize that their efforts to resolve the theological differences in 1530 might "bear no fruit." Nevertheless, such an eventuality would not negate the significance of such efforts, but would instead "give testimony that we are not neglecting anything that can in any way serve the cause of reconciled Christian harmony, insofar as it can be done with God and a good conscience."¹⁰ Similarly, a half century later the confessors in the Formula of Concord Solid Declaration declare that they have no desire for any superficial unity, "Rather we have a deep yearning and desire for true unity and on our part have set our hearts and desires on promoting this kind of unity to our utmost ability."¹¹

In both cases theological discussion and study involving divided Christians is viewed from a principled, not pragmatic viewpoint. In the case of the confessors at Augsburg, mutual discussion was inherently important as a testimony to the importance of Christian unity in itself, despite the fact that there was no resolution of differences. In the second case, where a visible unity was achieved, it was important for the confessors in 1580 to stress that their efforts were based on a deep desire to uphold the honor of God and the purity of the Gospel. "Reconciled Christian harmony" and "true unity" call for our highest effort, even where it does not result in full fellowship at the altar and pulpit.

LSTE provides not only such an important rationale for all ecumenical endeavors, but this document also gives practical direction in terms of ecumenical priorities (pp. 13-14):

In initiating conversations and dialogue with other church bodies, the Synod will be careful to do so on terms that are consonant with sound Lutheran theology so as not to give occasion for offense and jeopardize fellowship relations that already exist. The Synod will avail itself of all opportunities to engage in conversation with other Christians so long as this can be done without compromising our confessional position, as would be the case, for instance, were the Synod to be invited to participate in dialogue on the condition that it recognize the legitimacy of a method of Biblical interpretation that is incompatible with the Lutheran view of the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Fruitful dialogue is difficult, if not impossible, unless participants share the same understanding of the authority of Scripture or unless conversations are held for the purpose of reaching agreement about Biblical authority as a first step toward discussion of other areas of doctrine.

⁹ CTCR, 1974, p. 12.
¹⁰ KW §13, p. 33.
¹¹ KW, p. 655.

It remains a basic principle for the Synod that the unity in the church which we seek is not an external unification imposed from without by the adoption of common politics and by organizational affiliation or by united endeavors in worthy causes, but the unity in the church which results from confessional unanimity, that is, genuine concord or agreement in doctrine. In relation to other church bodies and agencies the Synod will gladly cooperate in externals, that is, participate in projects which do not involve joint worship or the spiritual ministry of the church. In line with this principle the Synod will continually examine the propriety of present affiliations and will carefully weigh proposals to enter new alliances.¹²

The reference in *LSTE* to "cooperation in externals" here is significant. The concept appears in an earlier CTCR report, *Theology of Fellowship*, which states:

Our Synod should clearly recognize that, in the case of necessary work on the local, national, or international level, where the faith and confession of the church are not compromised, and where it appears essential that the churches of various denominations should cooperate or at least not work at cross purposes, our churches ought to cooperate willingly to the extent that the Word of God and conscience will allow.¹³

This has implications for dialogue opportunities where theological conversation with another Christian church will most likely not result in altar-pulpit fellowship because of substantial, continuing theological differences. Such discussions should not be viewed as failures if they enable a clearer understanding of our convictions and our differences, as well as those teachings we hold in common. The discovery of common ground with other Christians may well provide the opportunity to explore possible areas of cooperative work in such matters as relief efforts in times of disaster and joint responses to particular moral or ethical questions.

The LCMS has been able, in past years, to engage in joint efforts with the ELCA and its predecessor church bodies because, despite differences, there were also shared convictions that enabled the LCMS and various LCMS entities to engage in that work without doctrinal compromise. More recently, the level of disagreement between our church bodies has grown, not diminished, with the result that more and more joint work is threatened. One outcome is that, as unlikely as it may seem, there are increasing numbers of situations in which the position and practice of the LCMS on certain significant issues has more in common with some non-Lutheran groups than it has with the ELCA.¹⁴

Presently, the Synod has two specific opportunities to engage in theological dialogue with non-Lutheran churches. The LCMS recently began a series of theological conversations/dialogues with the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and has recently discussed the possibility of some formal doctrinal discussions on specific questions of doctrine and practice with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). In both cases—one actual and one hypothetical—the dialogues would not involve an expectation of entering into altar and pulpit fellowship. Prior to any formal discussions with the ACNA

¹² *LSTE*, p. 14.

¹³ CTCR (1965), p. 28.

¹⁴ LCMS 2010 Res. 3-03 required the LCMS Praesidium to report to the Synod on the current state of cooperative work with the ELCA. A link to the Praesidium's report may be found at www.lcms.org/ctcr, together with a link to the CTCR's "Principles for 'Cooperation in Externals' with Theological Integrity." The latter document provides the theological basis for the Praesidium's memo to the Synod.

and in the dialogue itself, LCMS representatives consistently tried to avoid any inaccurate public perception of the purpose and meaning of the dialogue or any misunderstanding on the part of the church bodies with whom we have the opportunity to engage in discussions. For example, we emphasized to ACNA representatives that we would not consider altar-pulpit fellowship as a potential fruit of the dialogues at the present time because of the different understandings of our churches regarding the Lord's Supper and apostolic succession as well as other issues. Nonetheless, we expressed an interest because of the perception—shared by both churches—that we do share important common concerns such as the importance of upholding scriptural authority and the traditional Christian understanding of human sexuality and marriage. It is hoped that the dialogue will result in one or more statements of common conviction, for example, regarding ecclesial or societal issues such as biblical understandings regarding the ordination of those engaging in homosexual acts and the doctrine of marriage.

The invitation to engage in direct theological discussions with the RCC presents a similar case. There are significant differences between Lutherans and Roman Catholics in numerous doctrinal issues, including such primary matters as authority in the church and the doctrine of justification. The LCMS could not join in mutual declarations between the ELCA (or predecessor bodies) and RCC representatives, most notably in the case of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*.¹⁵ Today, with the ELCA having made significant changes in its position on matters of sexual morality and qualifications for ordination, RCC representatives have shared with LCMS leaders their desire for discussions with our church on societal issues as well as on the specific question of the ordination of women to the pastoral ministry/priesthood. They have expressed appreciation for the willingness of the LCMS to continue to emphasize certain biblical and traditional Christian teachings. It is important to recognize that—given challenges to traditional Christian teaching in matters of sexual ethics as well as changing ecclesial practices—now may be a particularly opportune moment for discussions with the RCC. Once again, the goal would not be altar and pulpit fellowship (much less structural union of any sort), but the possibility of statements of Christian truth that may be affirmed by Christians from different theological traditions.

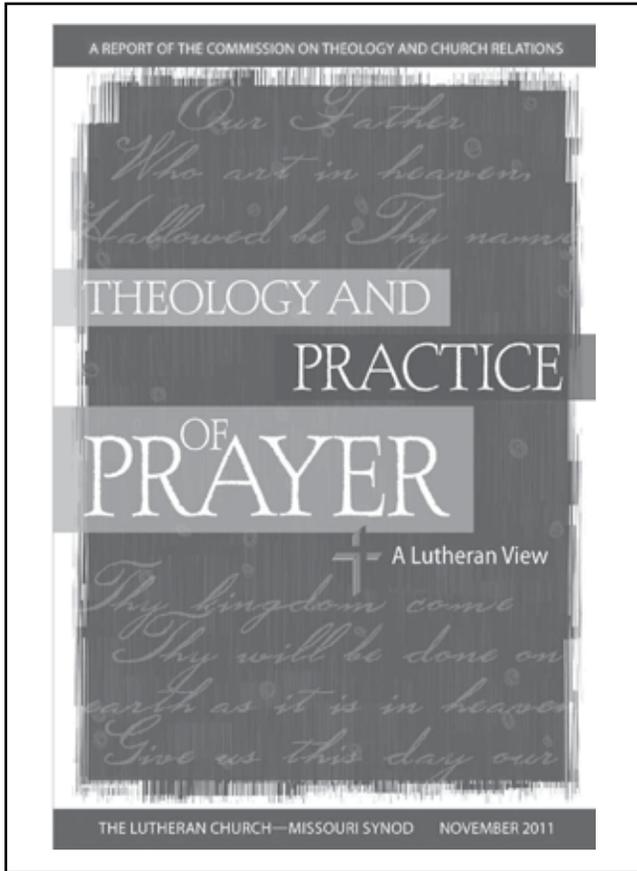
The level of societal, cultural, and ecclesial upheaval on moral issues and changes of long-standing church practices at the present time compel us to consider the importance of a united Christian voice on specific issues, wherever that is possible without compromise in other areas of doctrine and life. Where Christians from varying traditions share a common truth, the strength of their voice is clearer and stronger if they speak together. This invites us to consider theological discussions that would allow us to study and address various issues with other Christians, including those with whom we have marked and substantial theological disagreements in other areas. It is also very possible that such discussions will facilitate joint efforts together with other Christians to uphold biblical standards of morality, to respond to crises and catastrophes, and to participate in certain legal actions and activities.

At no point, however, should dialogue with other Christians be allowed to deny or to gloss over areas of theological disagreement. Authentic ecumenical dialogue must always be in the service of the truth of God's Word, centered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church has no higher treasure.

Adopted by the CTCR

September 17, 2011

¹⁵ See *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in Confessional Lutheran Perspective*, www.lcms.org/ctcr.



Theology and Practice of Prayer: Abbreviations

- AE *Luther's Works*. American ed. 55 vols. St. Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955–1986
- Ap Apology of the Augsburg Confession
- KW *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- LC The Large Catechism
- LSB *Lutheran Service Book*. The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. St. Louis: CPH, 2006.
- NIV New International Version of the Bible
- RSV Revised Standard Version of the Bible
- SA Smalcald Articles
- SC Small Catechism
- WA Luther, Martin. *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. [Schriften.] 65 vols. Weimar: H. Böhlaus, 1912–21.

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Theology and Practice of Prayer
A Lutheran View

Preface

In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Philip Melancthon declared that in the churches of the Augsburg Confession, sermons avoided trivialities and dealt with central aspects of Christian life. Among them, he specifically mentioned prayer, “what it should be like and that everyone may be completely certain that it is efficacious and is heard.”¹ That prayer should be identified as a central aspect of Christian life and a topic for preaching and teaching, and then further defined regarding its manner and its certain efficacy, is no small matter. Consistent with that is a longstanding assignment on the agenda of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to provide a study on the theology and practice of prayer.

One might think that prayer is so common that it needs no study. Christians pray throughout the world in churches, at home and work—or wherever they are. The generically “spiritual” pray. There is no lack of prayer in Hindu temples, Muslim mosques, Buddhist monasteries, and animist shrines. Arguably, even the secular atheist, as he inwardly mentions his hopes and desires to himself, is praying to the only “god” he knows? Anyone who cares seems to know already about prayer. Why bother to study it?

The universality of prayer is the very reason that it requires theological consideration. All the world prays, but to gods of infinitely different conceptions. Even within Christian groups and churches there are often markedly different understandings of prayer. The assignment to the CTCR gave two reasons for a study of prayer: (1) the importance of prayer in Christian piety and (2) a tendency to speak of prayer as if it were a “means of grace.”² This

¹ The topics he lists include: “repentance, fear of God, faith in Christ, the righteousness of faith, consolation of consciences through faith, the exercise of faith, prayer (what it should be like and that everyone may be completely certain that it is efficacious and is heard), the cross, respect for the magistrates and all civil orders, the distinction between the kingdom of Christ (the spiritual kingdom) and political affairs, marriage, the education and instruction of children, chastity, and all the works of love” (emphasis added). Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 229. Future references to the *Book of Concord* will be to the Kolb-Wengert edition (KW) unless otherwise noted, abbreviating the title of the document and providing article, section, and page numbers.

² The atheist chaplain at Harvard University, humanist Greg Epstein, acknowledges this in *Good Without God: What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 179–181.

³ The expression, “means of grace,” is shorthand in Lutheran theology for God’s Word and the Sacraments. E.g., see, SA III, 8, 10, KW, 323: “Therefore we should and must insist that God does

indicates both the need to encourage Christians to pray and also the potential for the Christian view of prayer to be misunderstood.

This study's goal is to encourage prayer and to guard against potential misunderstandings, from the standpoint of Lutheran theology. As such, this document is intentionally *theological* in nature (as distinct from "inspirational," "devotional," "practical," etc.). It is not a "how to" book on steps to a better prayer life. It is meant to be accessible to the catechized layperson, but it is directed especially to pastors, professional church workers, and lay leaders who regularly encounter questions about the underlying theological realities of prayer and seek to address them in sermons, Bible classes, evangelism calls, and religious conversations with Christians and non-Christians. It also focuses unapologetically on the *Lutheran* understanding of prayer. It frequently cites the Lutheran Confessions and the writings of Martin Luther for insight into scriptural realities about prayer. It regularly contrasts what Lutherans believe about prayer with the views of other Christians and other religions. It does this on the basis of the presupposition that a strong, healthy, God-pleasing prayer life is inseparable from a clear understanding of what the Bible actually teaches about prayer. Therefore the document draws heavily on Holy Scripture.

Lutheran theology is noteworthy for dualities: Law and Gospel, justification and sanctification, Word and Sacrament, kingdoms of the left and right hand. So also here, one may note a certain duality about prayer. Consider the following examples. Prayer is as instinctive and simple as a child's first words, yet it is taught and learned. One can pray freely in one's own words spoken straight from the heart (*ex corde*), and one can also pray in the words that flow straight from a book (the Bible, hymnals, prayer books). One can ask God for one's deepest desires; and one also prays that God would fulfill *His* will and not ours. Prayer is as easy as a breath, yet we often struggle to pray.

Because of such dualities, a Lutheran theology of prayer may seem somewhat different than a more "Evangelical"⁴ and informal perspective on the one hand or a more Roman Catholic and liturgical perspective on the other. In particular, Evangelicals are often noted for their emphasis on vigorous and free *ex corde* prayer. Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians are just as frequently identified by the use of traditional, formal prayer offices and practices. A Lutheran view of prayer respectfully values both approaches and does not pit one against the other. Instead, it encourages a middle way that includes and emphasizes both while it invites all to this treasure: "Let us pray."

not want to deal with us human beings, except by means of his external Word and sacrament." The concept is discussed in more detail later.

⁴ We are using the term "Evangelical" in its common, contemporary understanding as a reference to Christians and churches which give central emphasis to a personal commitment made as part of a conscious conversion experience, as well as such teachings as the inerrancy of Scripture and the obligation of personal evangelism.

richly blessed, when with child-like humility and enthusiasm we search the Scriptures and plead, with the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray!" (Luke 11:1).

Introduction

"Thank God," writes Martin Luther in the Smalcald Articles, "a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd."⁵

A seven-year-old child who knows what the church is surely also knows what prayer is. Prayer, as any little lamb of the Good Shepherd knows, is simply "talking to God." Prayer is speaking to God in response to His speaking to us in His Word, just as sheep respond to the sound of the shepherd's voice by "bleating back" to him their inarticulate expressions of gratitude, affection, and dependence.

And "so," Luther goes on to say, "children pray, 'I believe in one holy Christian church.'"⁶ Children not only know what prayer is, they also know how to pray. They pray the words of the Creed, joining together with other baptized children of God in confessing what God, through His Word, has taught them to believe. They pray at mealtime and at bedtime and throughout the day, thanking their Father in heaven for the daily gifts of His presence, provision, and protection. They pray the prayer that the Lord Jesus himself has given to all God's children to pray, in which "God would encourage us to believe that he is truly our Father and we are truly his children in order that we may approach him boldly and confidently in prayer, even as beloved children approach their dear father."⁷

In one sense, therefore, the subject of prayer is very simple, and for this—with Luther—we thank God. It is so simple, in fact, that (like the Gospel itself) its true nature, power and value are often hidden from those who are extolled as the "scholars" and "experts" of this world. "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth," Jesus once prayed, "because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure" (Matt. 11:25–26).

But God's children, whether age seven or seventy, also need to grow in faith and spiritual maturity. This means growing, too, in their understanding and practice of prayer. In this as in every other area of the Christian life, they need instruction and admonition, guidance and encouragement, direction and protection. After all, not every voice we hear today is the voice of the Good Shepherd—even among those voices that claim or intend to be speaking for God. And not everything that goes by the name of "prayer" today is in conformity with the teaching of Scripture regarding prayer. For these and many other reasons, God has included in his Word a vast treasure of comforting and trustworthy teaching concerning prayer. And God is pleased, and we are

⁵ SA III, 11, 2, KW, 324.

⁶ SA III, 11, 3, KW, 325.

⁷ SC, 32, KW, 356.

Chapter One: What Is Prayer?

Prayer as a universal religious practice

The original meaning of the English⁸ word "pray" involves begging. To pray is "to plead" or "implore."⁹ Humanity prays because of great need and distress. The beggar on the street hopes for help in poverty or need and pleads for it. But he is asking that help from strangers and is uncertain that any will respond. He cannot help but beg, yet he hates his circumstance and is alienated from the very people whose help he is begging. Their help is uncertain, even doubtful. He would rather not beg, but he seems to have no other choice.

There is an important parallel here to prayer in its common, religious context. According to standard dictionaries, prayer is "an address (as a petition) to God or a god in word or thought,"¹⁰ it is pleading or imploring addressed to divinity. As humans face their most desperate needs, they plead for help—begging not only one another, but also begging for help from a god or gods. Yet, like the street beggar, fallen humankind's begging is uncertain, even doubtful. Here, too, alienation is at work, because humankind is fallen. Eden's intimacy between a gracious God and His human creation has been lost. Humankind begs, but does so conscious of distance, uncertainty, and alienation. Are we begging the right god the right way? Is there even a god, or are we talking to ourselves? Does the one whose help we are begging care or even notice our misery? Such is our alienation.

The result is twofold. First, our need means that prayer never ends. It is "the oldest and most universal of all religious rites," a rite that "has played a prominent role in all religious systems."¹¹ "In one form or another, prayer is found everywhere, in all ages and among all people. The most discouraging circumstances do not crush it, and the most damaging 'scientific' theories do not prevent it."¹²

⁸ The following comments are especially based on the English term "pray." Neither the most precise Hebrew nor Greek terms that are translated as "to pray," "prayer," etc. are directly derived from the idea of begging. However, besides such specific verbs for praying, Hebrew also uses verbs for asking, begging, beseeching to refer to speaking to God in prayer, e.g., פָּדַח, פָּדַח. Greek uses similar verbs for prayer (e.g., αἰτέω, δεῖται) to ask, to beg or plead, as well as the specific verb for to pray (προσκύβωμαι). See articles on prayer by H. Schönweiss in *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, Colin Brown, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 855–886. See also Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 407–409, and *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), 775–816.

⁹ See "Pray," *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 1423.

¹⁰ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass: Merriam-Webster, 1990), 924.

¹¹ J.W. Acker, *Teach Us to Pray* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), 5.

¹² Ronald W. Goetsch, *Power through Prayer* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 11.

In the Old Testament, it is not just the people of Israel who pray. Israel's neighbors also bow their heads and raise their hands to a pantheon of gods that they believe (or hope) can help, deliver and defend them. In the New Testament, Paul encounters at the Areopagus zealous petitioners of "an unknown God," moving him to observe: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious" (Acts 17:22). Perhaps the best theological commentary on this encounter is Paul's own discourse in the book of Romans on the natural knowledge of God. "Ever since the creation of the world," he says, "[God's] invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (1:20). God's law (however skewed and shrouded by human sin) is "written on the hearts" of all people, leading even those who do not believe to accuse and excuse themselves on the basis of a moral code implanted by God himself (2:15). Reflecting on the implications of this biblical and universal truth, J. W. Acker concludes that

... the desire to pray is instinctive with man. As man's belief in the existence of the soul and in the reality of a hereafter seems to be innate, so there seems to be lodged in man's heart a natural impulse to pray. As naturally as the wing of a bird seeks flight or the fin of the fish takes to water, so the human heart yearns for a higher being, a god. Aware of his utter helplessness, man instinctively seeks help from his god or gods, especially in times of adversity and distress.¹³

God "has put eternity into man's heart," says the Preacher, "yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end" (Eccles. 3:11). Kenneth Korby asserts that "it is human to pray; and we acknowledge that much prayer, day and night, is carried on that is not in the name of Jesus." To be sure, he says, such "instinctual prayer," must "be distinguished from the prayer of faith." Yet there is clearly "a 'driveness' in our creaturehood that gives humanity no success from praying. As praying Christians, seeking to fulfill our mission and destiny as God's church in the world, we need to understand this phenomenon."¹⁴

This "groping after God" through prayer, even when seriously misdirected, is actually a sign of the divinely-planted knowledge of God that still survives and surfaces in every human mind and heart. St. Paul might well respond to the surge of interest in "spirituality" in our society today much as he did in first-century Greece: "I see that in every way you are very religious!" "Very religious," yet Paul could not leave them as they were, for while their religiosity identified a very real need for God, neither our human groping after God nor our begging enable us to find or know God with confidence.

¹³ Acker, 5.

¹⁴ Kenneth E. Korby, "Prayer: Pre-Reformation to the Present," in *Christians at Prayer*, ed. John Gallen (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 116-117.

So our human beggarliness before God also has a second result: the beggar's sense of alienation and doubt. Will anyone listen? Will anyone help? Is anyone there? Is there a god and does he, or she, or it, care? Our alienation from the real God means that humanly devised prayer—because of its uncertainties—inevitably attempts to bargain with God or the gods. It seeks a method, formula, mantra, sacrifice, posture, building—something—that will elicit a favorable response.

"Man is a beggar before God."¹⁵ Yet we do not know God unless He makes Himself known. Part of the purpose of this study, to be sure, is to identify and address deficiencies in "very religious" approaches to prayer that are not rooted in the pure teaching of the true God revealed in Holy Scripture (e.g. "Common Misunderstandings of Prayer" below). Yet, we do well to remember Paul's approach to worshippers of the "unknown God" in Athens. Unscriptural practices of prayer must be identified and rejected, but miserable sinners groping desperately after God must also be gently and lovingly pointed in the right direction: "What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23). Paul's "urgent" admonition to Timothy seems fitting in this context, and applies also to us:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men. . . . This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. . . . (1 Timothy 2:1-6).

We approach the subject of prayer in this study, of course, not merely on the basis of "dictionary definitions" but from the perspective of those who accept without reservation the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice, and who affirm without qualification the confessional writings of *The Book of Concord* as a true and faithful exposition of God's Word. What is prayer, according to the clear and consistent witness of the Holy Scriptures? What is especially noteworthy and unique about the treatment of prayer offered in the Lutheran Confessions? And how do we apply the teaching of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions regarding prayer to the questions and challenges facing God's people today in this area, so that their hearts and lives may be more deeply enriched and strengthened by the gift of prayer? These are the basic questions that form the parameters for this study.

¹⁵ St. Augustine, *Sermo* 56, 6, 9; *Patrologia Latina* 38, 381; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1994) §2559.

Prayer as defined and described in Holy Scripture

We should note, first of all, that the Scriptures themselves do not provide us with a systematic, comprehensive definition of prayer. A wide assortment of Hebrew and Greek terms—both technical liturgical terms and common words for human discourse—is used to denote various aspects of the act of prayer in the Bible.¹⁶ Perhaps most striking is that much of Scripture's description of and teaching about prayer, according to Patrick Miller, "places it in the category of ordinary discourse, often in situations of daily existence, some more critical than others."¹⁷ Commonplace words for "saying" or "speaking," when used in the context of "speaking to God," become part of the vocabulary of prayer in the Bible. The frequent use of this "non-technical language" for prayer in the Bible "presses one toward a broader rather than narrower definition, to a way of speaking about prayer that we use in common parlance in a more popular way, that is *conversation with God*."¹⁸ In a sense, therefore, the "dictionary definition" offered above also fits the Bible's depiction of prayer, which suggests that the critical theological question is not so much "What is prayer?" but rather "Who is the God with whom we seek to converse?"

Definitions of prayer offered by Christian theologians down through the years reflect both the simplicity and profundity of Scripture's treatment of prayer. As early as the second century after Christ, Clement of Alexandria defined prayer succinctly as "conversation and intercourse with God."¹⁹ Most subsequent definitions have echoed Clement's simple yet scriptural description of prayer, including the following by Luther: "All teachers of the Scriptures conclude that the essence and nature of prayer is nothing else than the lifting up of the heart or mind to God."²⁰ "It is altogether Scriptural," says the Lutheran theologian Francis Pieper, "to define prayer as 'the conversation of the heart with God' (Ps. 27:8), whether the heart alone communes with God without clothing the prayer in the words of the mouth or whether the mouth utters the prayer of the heart."²¹ Martin Chemnitz explains that prayer is

... when we pour out our heart before God, and, coming thus to the throne of grace, address, with filial submission and true devotion of heart, God our Father, who is present

¹⁶ Patrick Miller provides a thorough discussion of the terminology used in the OT and the NT for communicating with the Deity, *They Cried to the Lord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 32-42. Cf. fn. 8, p. 9 above.

¹⁷ Miller, 33.

¹⁸ Miller, 33. Interestingly, Miller also notes that "sharp distinctions in terminology between types of prayer—apart from the different sets of vocabulary belonging to petition and praise—do not exist. Intercession, petition, complaint, and confession may all take place under a variety of designations."

¹⁹ See Goetsch, 19.

²⁰ AE 42:25.

²¹ F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 77.

and hears and, both stirred up by his command and relying on his promise, we set before him our troubles and desires, in true faith, through and for the sake of Christ seeking mercy, grace, and help in the things that belong to his glory and are necessary, useful, and salutary for us or give him thanks for blessings received and praise and glorify his name.²²

As helpful as these definitions are, the Scriptures on which they are based seem less concerned with *defining* prayer than they do with urging and moving God's people to engage in the actual *practice* of prayer. From Moses' tantalizing hint of intimate communion and conversation between God and Adam and Eve "in the cool of the day" in the Garden of Eden (cf. Gen. 3:8), to St. Luke's agonizing portrayal of the incarnate God dripping with blood-like sweat as he offered up "prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears" in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44; Heb. 5:7), to St. John's glorious vision of—and fervent pleading for—the promised consummation of the prayers of God's people in the renewed and restored Garden of Eden (Rev. 7:9-17; 8:3-4; 22:1-6; 22:20), God's Word without ceasing invites and incites God's faithful people to pray.

"Pray," says Jesus to his disciples, "so that you will not fall into temptation" (Matt 26:41). "And pray in the Spirit," says Paul, "on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should" (Eph. 6:18-20, NIV). The early Christians, Luke tells us, "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). James assures us that "the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16), and Paul instructs Timothy, "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling" (1 Tim. 2:8). John gives us a glimpse of the "prayers of the saints" rising up to the heavenly throne of the Lamb who was slain for the sins of the world (Rev. 5:8), and Peter soberly reminds us: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers" (1 Peter 4:7).

As this "scriptural sampler" on prayer illustrates, this "pouring out of the heart," this "lifting up of the heart or mind" to God, can take on many forms and can take place in a wide variety of settings. It can occur in the secrecy of one's closet or in the public assembly of the faithful gathered for worship. It can happen in the silence of one's heart or in the swelling chorus of the congregation's song. It can break forth spontaneously or be expressed in the practiced refrains of the church's liturgy. It can take the shape of praise, adora-

²² Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word and Sacraments: An Enchiridion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 138.

tion and thanksgiving, confession (of sin), profession (of faith), intercession (for others), or petition (for one's self). In the Bible,

Holy place and private room, sanctuary and sickbed are all places of prayer. Set times and any time, morning and night are all times of prayer. The Scriptures identify prayer as an act that could be set in particular moments and places and routinized in definite ways. But it was not confined to such settings. Formality and fixity interchange with openness and freedom in the time and place of prayer.²³

Regardless of the type or circumstance of prayer, however, what needs to be emphasized first of all and above all is that *God-pleasing prayer in the Scriptures is always a response of the believer to the grace of God freely given in His Son Jesus Christ.*

The vital relationship between prayer and the Gospel

"If we want to learn to pray we must become like children. For that's who we really are, children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Thus the first step in prayer is to step into the presence of God our loving Father as His beloved children. And there's only one way to do that: in the name of Jesus."²⁴ The Christian recognizes that prayer can never be separated from the incarnate Word and Lord by whom and through whom alone it is possible for sinners to stand in God's presence, to speak to Him and hope to be heard. "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; O Lord," pleads the Psalmist, "hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared" (Ps. 130:1-4). According to Scripture, however, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). Therefore it is only "by the blood of Jesus," by "the new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body," that we are privileged and invited to "draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:19-22). Only by virtue of our adoption as God's children through our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection are we enabled to cry out "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8:15). Only through the reconciling work of our high priest, Jesus, the Son of God, can we "approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

"Abraham believed God," says Paul, "and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). In this righteousness—the righteousness of faith—Abraham and other Old Testament saints prayed and were heard (e.g., James 5:10-11, 13-18). David penned the greater part of the greatest prayer book in the Bible, which proclaims again and again "a blessing upon

²³ Miller, 50.

²⁴ Harold L. Senkbeil, *Dying to Live: The Power of Forgiveness* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 142.

the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon his sin'" (Rom. 4:6-8; cf. Ps. 32:1).

Prayer in the Scriptures, therefore, "has to do with a dawning awareness of God's loving closeness in Christ (Eph. 3:14-21) and with our response to this in a variety of forms (e.g., praise, thanksgiving, petition, intercession, confession, self-offering)."²⁵ It is clearly "God's loving closeness in Christ" that fills the heart and mind of St. Paul as he pours out his soul to God on behalf of his brothers and sisters in Christ in Ephesus:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:14-21)

Paul's words illustrate powerfully how impossible it is to understand, discuss or practice prayer as portrayed in the Scriptures apart from the Gospel of Christ through which the gift of prayer is freely given and to which it freely responds.

It is the claim of the gospel—and it was the discovery of the early church that that claim is true—that everything in our relation to God is and happens through Jesus Christ, in virtue of Jesus Christ, that the one who lived and died as God's tabernacling among us (John 1:14) mediates every dimension of our life and death with God. So, surely, there fore, is every act of thanksgiving, every prayer of blessing, every supplication for others also *through Christ*.²⁶

For Lutherans the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone is central to faith. Luther called it "the chief article of our faith," without which "the church cannot exist!"²⁷—or, as it is often para-

²⁵ John Koenig, *Rediscovering New Testament Prayer* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992), 7.

²⁶ Miller, 318.

²⁷ AE 460: "This [teaching of salvation by grace alone and faith alone] is the chief article of our faith; and if you either do away with it, as the Jews do, or corrupt it, as the papists do, the

phrased, "the article on which the church stands or falls." As such, it is vitally and organically related to every other teaching of Scripture, including Scripture's teaching regarding prayer. The close connection between prayer and the Gospel is strongly emphasized in Luther and the Lutheran Confessions. "[T]rust in the divine promise and in the merits of Christ must provide the basis for prayer," says the Apology. "For we must be completely certain that we are heard on account of Christ and that by his merits we have a gracious Father."²⁸ In his exposition of Psalm 51, Luther reminds us that the God to whom David pours out his heart is not just any god, but the God who

... is dressed and clothed in His Word and promises, so that from the name "God" we cannot exclude Christ, whom God promised to Adam and the other patriarchs. We must take hold of this God, not naked but clothed and revealed in His Word; otherwise certain despair will crush us.²⁹

Non-believers, says Luther,

... speak with God outside His Word and promises, according to the thoughts of their own hearts; but the Prophets speak with God as He is clothed and revealed in His promises and Word. This God, clothed in such a kind appearance and, so to speak, such a pleasant mask, that is to say, dressed in His promises—this God we can grasp and look at with joy and trust.

This is the reason why the Prophets depended so upon God's promises in their prayers, because the promises include Christ and make God not our judge or enemy, but a God who is kind and well disposed to us, who wants to restore life and save the condemned.³⁰

"It is impossible," he says, "for a conscience to expect anything from God unless it first gains the conviction that God is gracious for Christ's sake."³¹

Therefore, as Korby reminds us, "although there is in our creature life an 'instinct' to pray," "there is nothing merely 'natural' about Christian prayer."³² Rather, it is made possible by the divine, faith-creating activity of God's Spirit working through the Gospel. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes:

church cannot exist."³³

²⁸ Ap XXI, 20, KW, 240; emphasis added.

²⁹ AE 12:312.

³⁰ AE 12:312-313.

³¹ *What Luther Says: An Anthology*, Ewald M. Plass (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 1079.

³² Korby, 114.

It is a dangerous error, surely very widespread among Christians, to think that the heart can pray by itself. For then we confuse wishes, hopes, sighs, laments, rejoicing—all of which the heart can do by itself—with prayer. And we confuse earth and heaven, man and God. Prayer does not mean simply to pour out one's heart. It means rather to find the way to God and speak with him, whether the heart is full or empty. No man can do that by himself. For that he needs Jesus Christ.³³

"Only in Jesus Christ," he says, "are we able to pray, and with him we also know that we shall be heard."³⁴ Those who "grope after God" in their instinctual prayers need to be pointed to Christ so that they can truly understand and benefit from God's great and gracious gift of prayer.

As Jesus Christ makes it possible to pray, those who are in Christ are continually at prayer. "Pray without ceasing," wrote Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 5:17). This is not an encouragement to repeat, thoughtlessly and incessantly, rehearsed religious formulas or spontaneous spiritual sentiments in the hopes of "making points" with God or moving him to action. In fact, Jesus explicitly warned against such attempts to manipulate God and impress others (Matt. 6:7), which are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel on which prayer is based. What Paul's words to the Thessalonians mean to encourage is a life and attitude of continual dependence upon God the Father and the regular expression of this dependence in prayerful words, thoughts and deeds. Luther describes it this way:

Where there is a Christian, there is the Holy Ghost, who is always engaged in prayer. For though the Christian does not continually move his lips to utter words, nevertheless the heart is beating and pulsing, like the arteries and the heart in the body, unceasingly sighing: O dear Father, may Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done among us and all people, etc. And as the attacks, trials, and troubles press and crowd harder, also such sighing and begging becomes more urgent, even audible. So, then, you can not find a Christian who is not always praying, as little as a living person is without a pulse, which never rests, but beats continuously, though the person may be sleeping or is occupied otherwise, so that he is not aware of its beating.³⁵

³³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1970), 9-10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁵ AE 24:89.

Common misunderstandings of prayer

If prayer is a gift of and a response to the Gospel, then it is also possible (and necessary) to offer some observations about what prayer is not. In contrast to humanly-devised forms and concepts of prayer (both ancient and modern), God-pleasing prayer in the Bible is never an attempt to merit His favor, or induce Him to action by means of human efforts, promises, persuasion, or through some “magical” or mechanical incantation or formula. Rather, God-pleasing prayer in Scripture always *begins with* and is *rooted in* the unearned grace and favor of God. God’s gracious words, acts, and promises induce those who trust in Him to pray. Prayer is a “sacrifice of praise” in response to God’s grace, “the fruit of lips that confess his name” (Heb. 13:15). Prayer is the response of the repentant sinner who has received the full and free forgiveness of his merciful God and Father, and who is moved by the Spirit to express—inwardly or outwardly, privately or corporately—thanks, needs, and requests. “We have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled,” confesses Daniel in his prayer for Judah and Israel. “To thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame” (Dan. 9:7). Yet for the sake of God’s own holy name, placed by grace upon his people, Daniel is bold to pray:

O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name. (Daniel 9:18–19)

It is also important to emphasize that although prayer in the Scriptures is rooted and grounded in God’s grace, prayer itself is not a *means* of grace. By itself, prayer is not a practice by which we are brought into or maintained in a saving relationship with God. To confuse prayer with the “means of grace”—to place it on par with the Word and Sacraments of Christ—undermines the very confidence that enables a prayerful response to our gracious God. It risks confusion about the essential fact that salvation and Christian life are always dependent on God’s gracious initiative and His ongoing, sanctifying work. To remember that we are adopted as God’s children and preserved in that saving relationship *entirely and only by God* is the sure basis for confident prayer. It frees us to share with Him all our fears, weaknesses, and sins—even sins and weaknesses in our prayer life—as well as our joys and praise. Prayer *responds* to the Gospel by seeking more and more of the Gospel’s gifts, and God answers these prayers by pouring out these gifts through the Gospel itself.³⁶

³⁶ The Lutheran Confessions are aware that the term “sacrament” (literally, “holy thing”), broadly defined, might be applied to many God-pleasing activities, including prayer. Finally, if everything that has the command of God and some promise added to it ought to be counted

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It is common and sometimes helpful to speak about prayer in the context of a “conversation with God,” but this can also be confusing. Some are then troubled because they pray sincerely, and do not “hear” an answer. They long for the Lord to speak directly, apart from any mediation, just as occurred to some biblical saints (e.g., Gen. 7:1; 12:1). The absence of such an unmediated word leaves them desolate. Or, perhaps they sense an answer, but wonder whether it is authentic. It is helpful to remember that prayer is the human side of a “conversation with God.” “Inner voices” may be the word of conscience or a sanctified, Spirit-led heart, but they may also be a voice of confusion or falsehood. What is vital is to know that any answer that we hear or sense cannot stand on its own, but is always subject to the revealed Word of Scripture. There we are assured we hear God’s voice. No inner voice has such authority.

This requires us to keep God’s Word and prayer together. Christian worship in its various forms—from individual to corporate and from informal to formal—inevitably involves both the Word of God *and* prayer. In that way the worshiper really is part of a two-way “conversation.” We speak *and* we listen. We hear God’s Word in unambiguous, authoritative words, and we speak and sing our words as response. Our personal prayer life needs this same dynamic. For good reason, therefore, Christians through the ages have been encouraged to practice a devotional life that involves Scripture and prayer. In such ways our lives, too, may be “made holy by the word of God and prayer” (1 Tim. 4:5).

Moreover, the close connection between the Word and prayer is made most explicit when we pray those prayers which are themselves the very Word of God, the prayers of Scripture. When we use God’s Word in our prayers, of course, this Word in and of itself—without our aid and assistance—continues to function as a means of grace by the power of God’s Holy Spirit. Perhaps the most obvious example of this “praying back to God his own words” occurs whenever we pray the Lord’s Prayer. This prayer, given by the Lord himself, is always and everywhere

... the gracious Word of Christ to us, His work and His gift. This precious thing is not of our own fabrication or design, nor is it anything that we could have thought or imagined. . . . And when we pray in this manner, it does not cease to be His Word and His work in us. Not that our praying is the Gospel

a sacrament, why not include prayer, which can most truly be called a sacrament? For it has the command of God, and it has many promises. Were it included among the sacraments, as though in a more exalted position, it would encourage people to pray” (Ap 13, 16–17, KW, 221). By this definition, many other aspects of the Christian life containing God’s command and promise could also be called “sacraments.” The point of Ap XIII, however, is not to “argue much about the number or the terminology” of the sacraments (17, KW, 221), but to determine what can be rightly called a “sacrament” if this term is defined as rites that “have the command of God and the promise of grace, which is the essence of the New Testament” (Ap XI, 4; KW, 219). According to this “the genuine sacraments . . . are Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and absolution.” While many promises of God are attached to prayer in the Scriptures, God does not promise that on account of our prayers He will forgive us and grant us grace.

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or a means of grace; but the words themselves, with which the Lord has opened our lips to call upon His name, these are indeed a gift of pure Gospel and grace.³⁷

On the other hand, and at the same time, “our praying of the *Our Father* . . . is a genuine good work of faith, a sacrifice of repentance and thanksgiving, and an act of worship in Spirit and Truth.”³⁸ In fact, any act of worship, to the extent that it involves and incorporates God’s own words and promises of grace, becomes both our work (pleasing to God) and God’s work toward us and in us. “Every act of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication is also a work of proclamation to the one who worships.”³⁹ When we sing and pray God’s Word in our worship, we also proclaim to ourselves and others the Gospel that enables us to sing, pray, and worship in the name of Jesus.

If prayer is a response to the Gospel, it follows that prayer is not to be directed anywhere but to the God of the Gospel, the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The individual persons of the Trinity may, of course, be addressed specifically in prayer. At the moment of his death Stephen cries out: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59). Paul pleads directly with Christ “the Lord” (*kyrios*) in his time of intense suffering and need (2 Cor 12:8). The apostle also instructs Christians to “pray at all times in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:18), and many hymns are actually prayers to the Spirit: “Holy Spirit, light divine, Shine upon this heart of mine; Chase the shades of night away, Turn the darkness into day.”⁴⁰

All prayers to the true God, of course, ultimately involve all members of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit moves and teaches us to pray to the Father in the name and for the sake of Christ. However fervent or sincere they may be, therefore, prayers to other so-called “gods” or spiritual intermediaries (including angels) are misdirected and are forbidden by God in his Word (Ex 20:4; Is 44:6–20; Rom 1:25). Even as God warns against such prayers, however, He lovingly pleads with those whose misguided petitions reflect an inner craving for Him who alone can hear and answer prayer: “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. . . . To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Is. 45:22–23).⁴¹

³⁷ D. Richard Stuckwisch, “Lord, Remember us in Your Kingdom, and Teach Us to Pray” in *We Believe: Essays on the Catechism* (Ft. Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000), 70.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ George W. Hoyer, “Worshipping Pastors and Worshipping People,” in *Toward a More Excellent Ministry*, Richard R. Caemmerer and Alfred O. Fuerbringer, eds. (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1964), 136.

⁴⁰ *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 496:1.

⁴¹ To the question whether God “hears” the prayers of those who do not believe in the Triune God, the answer depends on what is meant by the word “hear.” In divine omniscience and omnipresence, God sees and “hears” everything—including all prayers to false gods and all

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It must also be said that those who trust in the one true God are not instructed anywhere in Scripture to pray to Mary or the saints of heaven, or given any promise that such prayers will be heard or answered by them or by God.⁴² Only in the name of Christ do we have access to the heavenly King, whom we call “our Father” through Christ our Brother (John 14:13–14; Heb. 4:14–16; 2:11; Matt. 6:9). And only in the name of Jesus, the name above all names, the name at which every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow (Phil. 2:9–10), does Scripture instruct and invite us to pray.

Emphasis on the saving initiative and gracious work of God may lead us to think that prayer is somehow incidental or optional for the Christian. If the Christian life is a gift of grace, why work at it—why work at prayer? After all, as noted above (in several places), it is God the Holy Spirit who moves us to pray in response to His grace in Christ Jesus. The Bible even speaks of God the Holy Spirit “helping us” in our prayers by “interceding for us with groanings too deep for words” (Rom. 8:26). This is a wonderful, mysterious assurance of God’s gracious presence and assistance in our deepest times of need. Yet, it is *not* an excuse not to concern ourselves with the hard work of prayer. “The fact that the Spirit speaks in us,” says Oscar Cullmann,

... does not mean that we are uninvolved; on the contrary, it is precisely for this reason that we should seek conversation with God. For the fact that the Holy Spirit now already renews us ‘from day to day’ (2 Cor. 4:16) does not excuse us from making our own contributions, so that all our thought and action is influenced by it.⁴³

Scriptural promises and encouragement to pray may also sometimes lead to misunderstandings. Our Lord promises: “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13). Some suggest that Jesus has here promised that anyone who truly believes in Him can name whatever he wants and God will simply give it—as long as the phrase “in Jesus’ name” appears (as if it were a mantra). Such “name it and claim it” teaching is a deception that often leads to doubt in God’s Word and despair of His mercy in those who ask, but do not receive.

To do anything “in the name” of another is never an invitation to claim our will and desires above that person’s will and desires. To pray “in Jesus’

prayers wrongly prayed. However, the word “hear” in scriptural teaching on prayer often denotes God’s favorable reception of prayers and his promise to respond in accordance with his gracious will in Christ Jesus. This promise and assurance can be claimed only by those who have received the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, in whom alone all of God’s promises find their “Yes” (2 Cor. 1:20).

⁴² For further discussion, see the CTCR’s report, *A Response to “The U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Report VII: The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary”* (1994), found online at www.lcms.org/ctcr.

⁴³ Oscar Cullmann, *Prayer in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 80–81.

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name" is to confess Him as Lord. To be invited and urged by Him to pray is an invitation to pray in faith and so to pray as Jesus prays, not in a spirit that is antithetical to Him. It is the prayers of those who abide in Him and in His words that He promises to grant. To pray for evil cannot be done "in Jesus' name," for He will not be a party to our curses (Luke 6:28; James 3:9–10) nor does He encourage our envy and greed (Matt. 16:24–26).

Jesus' well-known story contrasting the proud prayer of the Pharisee with the humble plea of a repentant tax collector (Luke 18:10–14) reminds us that prayer in Jesus' name cannot be an exercise in egotism. Exaggerated claims by those who suggest that they have a special "pipeline to God" which gives their prayers a unique power to work miracles are misplaced at best and arrogant at worst. The "power of prayer" is often viewed and discussed in confusing ways. Whatever else the phrase may mean, this much is certain: Christian prayer seeks the loving power of God, and does so with legitimate confidence because it knows Him as Father through Jesus Christ, the Son. Our confidence in prayer is confidence in God. That God can and does help and heal His suffering children in response to prayer is a fact of Scripture and experience, but He does the healing, not prayer itself, and He does it according to His good and gracious will. Luther warned of prayers that "are concerned more with our honor than with God's."⁴⁴ Athanasius, writing about one of his heroes in the faith who was noteworthy for healings, explained where the power to heal lies: "Antony, then, healed not by giving out commands, but by praying and by calling upon Christ's name, so that it was clear to all that it was not he who did this, but the Lord showing His loving-kindness to men and curing sufferers through Antony."⁴⁵ Note that Athanasius corrects a misunderstanding of the source of healing, and so encourages prayer for such special signs of kindness from God. Similarly, the cautions herein are not intended to discourage fervent and persistent prayers to God for healing and for all other blessings of body, mind, and soul.

Prayer, then, is a solemn and joyous act of worship flowing from true faith in and gratitude for the gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ. It is an ongoing response to God's grace that encompasses a believer's whole life and being and the whole life and being of the church. There are, of course, other responses to the Good News of God's undeserved love in Jesus Christ. Other aspects of the Christian life also flow from the thankful heart of the believer in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the means of grace. But prayer is of such significance as a distinguishing mark of the sanctified life that Luther can say: "After the preaching of the Gospel whereby God speaks to us, this is the greatest and foremost work, that by prayer we in turn speak to God."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ AE, 42:21.

⁴⁵ Athanasius, *The Life of Saint Antony*, tr. Robert T. Meyer, Ancient Christian Writers (New York: Newman Press, 1950), 89 (§84).

⁴⁶ WA 46, 81.

requires of us; it is not a matter of our choice. It is our duty and obligation to pray if we want to be Christians.⁵⁰

These words raise an important question: Is "the first thing to know about prayer" (as Luther argues here) that "God has commanded it," or is the first thing to know about prayer (as was argued in the previous section) that it is a response of faith to God's grace in Christ Jesus?

In seeking to answer this question, we need to pay close attention (first of all) to the context in which Luther offers these comments on prayer in *The Large Catechism*. Luther's discussion of the Lord's Prayer in *The Large Catechism* is placed very intentionally after careful and thorough treatments of the Ten Commandments (part one of the catechism) and the Apostles' Creed (part two). Accordingly, Luther begins the section on the Lord's Prayer by stating: "We have heard what we are to do and to believe. . . . Now follows the third part, how we are to pray."

The Ten Commandments tell us "what we are to do." At the same time, they expose our complete inability—apart from God's power and mercy—to do "what we are to do." Luther concludes his discussion of the tenth and final commandment by emphasizing that "this commandment remains, like all the rest, one that constantly accuses us and shows just how upright we really are in God's sight"⁵¹—how completely lacking we are in true righteousness. Those who regard the Commandments as a set of easy-to-follow rules for attaining favor with God and man "fail to see . . . that no one is able to keep even one of the Ten Commandments as it ought to be kept."⁵² Both the Creed and the Lord's Prayer must come to our aid, as we shall hear later. Through them we must seek and pray for help and receive it continually.⁵³

The first and most important help comes from the Creed. The commandments show us "all that God wishes us to do or not to do." The Creed shows us "all that we must expect and receive from God."⁵⁴ In the Creed "we see how God the Father has given himself to us, with all his creatures, has abundantly provided for us in this life, and, further, has showered us with inexpressible eternal treasures through His Son and the Holy Spirit."⁵⁵ In the Creed we learn how Jesus, our Lord, "has snatched us, poor lost creatures, from the jaws of hell, won us, made us free, and restored us to the Father's favor and grace."⁵⁶

⁵⁰ LC 3, 6, 8, KW, 441.

⁵¹ LC 1, 310, KW, 427.

⁵² LC 1, 316, KW, 428.

⁵³ LC 1, 316, KW, 428.

⁵⁴ LC 2, 1, KW, 431.

⁵⁵ LC 2, 24, KW, 433.

⁵⁶ LC 2, 30, KW, 434.

Chapter Two: Why Do Christians Pray?

Prayer and the "paradox" of Law and Gospel

To answer the question "What is prayer?" is also, in a sense, to answer the question "What is the purpose of prayer?" or "Why should I pray?" For if prayer is, in fact, a Spirit-generated response of faith to God's undeserved love in Jesus Christ, if it is a continual and unceasing sighing and crying out to the Father on whom we depend for every aspect of our existence as God's children, then it is difficult to imagine a believer requesting or requiring a list of "reasons" to explain or justify the activity of prayer. No one ever asks (to use Luther's analogies for prayer), "What is the purpose of breathing?" or "Why should I allow my heart to beat?"

And yet it is to this very question—the question "Why should I pray?"—that we turn our attention in this section. In doing so we have opportunity to reflect once again on the intimate relationship between prayer and the Gospel. The question "Why should I pray?" prods us to probe and ponder the seemingly paradoxical teaching of Scripture regarding the dual nature of the Christian as *simul iustus et peccator*,⁴⁷ and the Christian's continual need to hear the dual (and seemingly paradoxical) voice of God as He speaks to his people in words of both Law and Gospel.

One of the most theologically lucid and, at the same time, practical and pastoral discussions of the purpose of prayer is Martin Luther's introduction to the exposition of the Lord's Prayer in *The Large Catechism*. Before commenting "part by part" (or petition by petition), Luther says, "the most necessary thing is to exhort and encourage the people to prayer, as Christ and the apostles also did."⁴⁸

It should be noted, first of all, that "the most necessary thing" to which Luther refers assumes the relevance of the question, "Why should I pray?" If God's people were not (outwardly or inwardly) struggling with this question, it would not be necessary to "exhort and encourage" them to prayer. And the "first thing to know" with regard to this question "is this: It is our duty to pray because of God's command."⁴⁹ By this Luther refers to God's command against the vain use of his name (Ex. 20:7).

Thereby we are required to praise the holy name and to pray or call upon it in every need. For calling upon it is nothing else than praying. Prayer, therefore, is as strictly and solemnly commanded as all the other commandments. . . . This God

⁴⁷ Both saint and sinner at the same time.

⁴⁸ LC 3, 4, KW, 441. In a footnote, KW lists the following passages for reference and study: Matt. 7:7; Luke 18:1, 21:36; Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:1; James 1:6, 5:13; 1 Peter 4:8; Jude 20.

⁴⁹ LC 3, 5, KW, 441.

In the Creed we learn how God has sent the Holy Spirit "to offer and apply to us this treasure of salvation" through the Word and the sacraments.⁵⁷

For in all three articles God himself has revealed and opened to us the most profound depths of his fatherly heart and his pure, unutterable love. . . . [W]e could never come to recognize the Father's favor and grace were it not for the LORD Christ, who is a mirror of the Father's heart. Apart from him we see nothing but an angry and terrible judge. But neither could we know anything of Christ, had it not been revealed by the Holy Spirit.⁵⁸

It is only at this point—having laid bare the threats and demands of the Law and having exulted in the gifts and promises of the Gospel—that Luther is ready and able to talk about prayer. It is true that when Luther does talk about prayer in *The Large Catechism* he speaks of it as a command of God, "as strictly and solemnly commanded as all the other commandments." But it is also true that Luther clearly and intentionally sets the discussion of this command in the context of the Gospel which he has just (in part two) finished extolling. The very structure of *The Large Catechism* allows (and even requires) us to say, therefore, that for Luther, too, "the first thing to know" about prayer is its relationship to the Gospel, since apart from the Gospel there would and could be no such thing as true, God-pleasing prayer. Without parts one and two of the catechism, there would be no part three. Without the Lord who came to reconcile us to the Father, there would be no Lord's Prayer, no possibility of addressing God as "Our Father." Nor could we ever pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," apart from the manger, the cross, and the open tomb of the only Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, as we will see, Luther in *The Large Catechism* does much more than simply remind us that God has commanded prayer. He also tells us why God commands it, and in so doing he explains how prayer, along with the Creed, is also a gift of a gracious God meant not to burden us or to make our lives more difficult, but (on the contrary!) to "help us"⁵⁹ in ways that we could never help ourselves.

Why God urges us to pray

By graciously and wisely commanding us to pray, God gives us, first, a powerful tool and a weapon in our ongoing struggle—against the devil, the world, and our flesh—to live in obedience to God and his commands (which are themselves intended for our spiritual and temporal blessing).

⁵⁷ LC 2, 38, KW, 436.

⁵⁸ LC 2, 64–65, KW, 439–440.

⁵⁹ LC 1, 316, KW, 428.

We are in such a situation that no one can keep the Ten Commandments perfectly, even though he or she has begun to believe. Besides, the devil, along with the world and our flesh, resists them with all his power. Consequently, nothing is so necessary as to call upon God incessantly and to drum into his ears our prayer that he may give, preserve, and increase in us faith and the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments and remove all that stands in our way and hinders us in this regard.⁶⁰

Luther's words here call to mind the stirring exhortation of St. Paul in Ephesians 6, where fellow-soldiers of Christ are urged to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might," to "put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10-11). Sometimes overlooked in this vivid description of the "panoply of God" is that vital piece of equipment called prayer, which Paul mentions repeatedly in the closing verses of this section, urging the church to:

[Pray] at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph. 6:18-20)

Here prayer is linked to the Gospel in a dual sense: (1) the Spirit who brings us to faith in the Gospel stirs us and moves us to pray (v. 18), and (2) foremost among the petitions which we lay before the Lord in prayer is a plea for courage and boldness on the part of those who are engaged in the task of proclaiming the Gospel (v. 19).

God has given us the gift of prayer, says Luther, so that we may know and have the way to call upon Him for help to do the things He has commanded us to do, and so that, in turn, He Himself may bless us and others in our doing of them. But how can we know for sure that God will accept us and receive our prayer? How can we poor sinners presume to enter into his holy presence? What right do we have to ask or expect God to give us any good thing?

Here again, and in a way that may surprise the reader who is perhaps too easily inclined to expect a simple "Gospel" answer to these questions, Luther finds great comfort in the fact that God himself has *commanded* us to pray. Prayer is not something that we have devised or created as a means of influencing or manipulating God. We do not come to God in prayer on our own initiative or on the basis of our own goodness or worthiness. We come, says Luther, because God has instructed us, urged us, and yes, even *commanded* us

⁶⁰ LC 3, 2, KW 440-441.

to come. And yet his commandments "are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3) when viewed in the context of his grace in Christ.

Indeed, the human heart is by nature so desperately wicked that it always flees from God, thinking that he neither wants nor cares for our prayers because we are sinners and have merited nothing but wrath. Against such thoughts, I say, we should respect this commandment and turn to God so that we may not increase his anger by such disobedience. By this commandment he makes it clear that he will not cast us out or drive us away, even though we are sinners; he wishes rather to draw us to himself so that we may humble ourselves before him, lament our misery and plight, and pray for grace and help.⁶¹

Our problem, says Luther, is that

We allow ourselves to be impeded and deterred by such thoughts as these: "I am not holy enough or worthy enough; if I were as righteous and holy as St. Peter or St. Paul, then I would pray." Away with such thoughts! The very commandment that applied to St. Paul also applies to me. The Second Commandment is given just as much on my account as on his. He can boast of no better or holier commandment than I . . .

This is the first and most important point, that all our prayers must be based on obedience to God, regardless of our person, whether we are sinners or righteous people, worthy or unworthy. We must understand that God is not joking, but that he will be angry and punish us if we do not pray, just as he punishes all other kinds of disobedience.⁶²

In part three of *The Large Catechism*, the command always comes first, as Law comes before Gospel. Thus the command to pray, like all commands, always functions for the Christian both as a "mirror" (showing us our sins and failures) and as a "guide" (showing us how to respond properly and faithfully to God's love in Christ). In both cases, however, this command must also be viewed in its proper relationship to the Gospel: it drives us to the cross of Christ for forgiveness for our disobedience, and at the same time it shows us—in the light of the cross which compels us to live gladly and willingly as God's children—what the good and gracious will of our heavenly Father is in this area of the Christian life. It should not surprise us, therefore, that Luther finds a Gospel promise "hidden" in God's very command to pray: "Nor will he allow our prayers to be frustrated or lost," he goes on to say, "for if he did

⁶¹ LC 3, 10-11, KW, 441-442.

⁶² LC 3, 15, KW, 442.

not intend to answer you, he would not have ordered you to pray and backed it up with such a strict commandment."⁶³

What is "hidden" becomes explicit in the next section of the catechism, where Luther offers a second compelling reason for prayer:

. . . God has made and affirmed a promise: that what we pray is a certain and sure thing. As he says in Psalm 50[15], "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you," and Christ says in the Gospel of Matthew 7[7-8] "Ask, and it will be given you," etc. . . . "For everyone who asks receives." *Such promises certainly ought to awaken and kindle in our hearts a longing and love for prayer. For by his Word, God testifies that our prayer is heartily pleasing to him and will assuredly be heard and granted, so that we may not despise it, cast it to the winds, or pray uncertainly. You can hold such promises up to him and say, "Here I come to Thee, dear Father, and pray not of my own accord nor because of my own worthiness, but at your commandment and promise, which cannot fail or deceive me."*⁶⁴

In an Eastertide sermon on the words of Jesus in John 16:23—"Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you"—Luther maintains that God's promise is "the chief thing" and "the foundation and power of all prayers." In this verse, says Luther, God not only *promises* He will hear and answer our prayers, He actually *swears* that He will do so: "Verily, verily, I say unto you . . ." (John 16:23).

If it were not for this promise, who would have courage to pray? We have hitherto resorted to many ways of preparing ourselves to pray—ways with which the books are filled; but if you wish to be well prepared, take the promise and lay hold of God with it. Then your courage and desire to pray will soon grow, which courage you will otherwise never get.⁶⁵

Alongside God's command and God's promise, Luther adds yet a third reason to pray: God's provision of the "perfect prayer" by which we can obey His command and put His promises to the test. "Furthermore, we should be encouraged and drawn to pray because, in addition to this commandment and promise, God takes the initiative and puts into our mouths the very words and approach we are to use." Luther is, of course, speaking of the Lord's Prayer, which is "far superior to all others that we might devise ourselves." Because this prayer comes from the lips of our Lord Jesus himself, and because He himself has instructed us to pray in this way, we need never think: "I have prayed,

⁶³ LC 3, 17-19, KW, 443.

⁶⁴ LC 3, 19-21, KW, 443, emphasis added.

⁶⁵ *Sermons of Martin Luther*, ed. John Nicholas Lenker, trans. by Lenker and others, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 168.

but who knows whether it pleased him, or whether I have hit upon the right form and mode? Thus, there is no nobler prayer to be found" than the Lord's Prayer, "for it has the powerful testimony that God loves to hear it. This we should not trade for all the riches in the world."⁶⁶

We will speak more of the Lord's Prayer in the next section, where we will discuss how we should pray. At this point, however, it is worth noting that while the Lord's Prayer is indeed the "noblest prayer on earth," it is not the only example of how God has "put into our mouths the very words we are to use" when we pray. There is, in fact, an entire book of Scripture that has rightly been called "the prayer book of the Bible," the book of Psalms. As noted above there is always a close connection between biblical prayer and the Word itself. That connection becomes a complete unity as we pray not only according to, but *in God's very own words*, whether that is the Psalter or the Lord's Prayer. That is the basis of Luther's serene confidence about this "third reason" to pray.

There is, finally, a fourth reason for prayer given in *The Large Catechism*, and if it is not the most theologically sublime reason, it is perhaps the most obvious and even (humanly speaking) the most compelling reason. Prayer "has been prescribed for this reason also," says Luther, "that we should reflect on our need, which ought to drive and compel us to pray without ceasing."⁶⁷ Deeply-felt needs produce deeply-felt prayers, pleasing to God.

[W]here there is to be true prayer there must be utter earnestness. We must feel our need, the distress that drives and impels us to cry out. Then prayer will come spontaneously, as it should, and no one will need to be taught how to prepare for it or how to create the proper devotion.⁶⁸

Spontaneity in prayer does not imply, of course, a spurning of the divinely-prepared and prescribed prayers of Scripture. Indeed, genuine human need,

is something you will find richly enough in the Lord's Prayer. Therefore it may serve to remind us and impress upon our hearts that we not neglect to pray. For we are all lacking plenty of things: all that is missing is that we do not feel or see them. God therefore wants you to lament and express your needs and concerns, not because he is unaware of them, but in order that you may kindle your heart to stronger and greater desires and spread your apron wide to receive many things.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ LC 3, 22-23, KW, 443.

⁶⁷ LC 3, 24, KW, 443.

⁶⁸ LC 3, 26, KW, 444.

⁶⁹ LC 3, 27, KW, 444.

So—why should I pray? What is the purpose of prayer? To summarize, for Luther in *The Large Catechism* it is a four-fold answer. We should pray, first, because God has commanded it. Like all of God's commands, this command is not to be taken lightly, since it is accompanied by serious warnings and threats of punishment for those who disobey. But for the Christian—for the one who knows this demanding God also as loving Father in Jesus Christ—there is also reason to rejoice in this command. We know God really does want to hear our prayer, and accepts it despite our unworthiness, and that He will use it to help us in our ongoing efforts and struggle to live a life that is pleasing to Him and beneficial to others.

We should pray, second, because God has promised to hear and answer our prayers. God does not lie: not once has He broken even one of His many promises. So we can be sure, with Christ as our guarantee, that He will keep this promise as well, regardless of whether His answer to our prayers always corresponds to our human desires or expectations.

We should pray, third, because God has put into our very mouths and hearts the words we are to use: above all, the Lord's Prayer, but along with it and encompassed in it every other God-pleasing expression of praise and thanksgiving, petition and intercession, confession of sin and profession of faith.

And we should pray, finally, because of our many needs (and the needs of others, which, through love, become our needs and burdens as well). In the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer "are comprehended all the needs that continually beset us, each one so great that it should impel us to keep praying for it all our lives."⁷⁰ At the same time, they ought to remind us every day of the tender mercy and abundant grace of our heavenly Father, who has promised to supply our every need "according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

Prayer and the paradox of influencing an immutable God

Even in light of the foregoing discussion, questions remain about the purpose of prayer that stretch and even surpass the limits of human understanding. It is clear that prayer helps and benefits us for the reasons discussed above: it drives us to God's Word and promises in Christ, it reminds us of our dependence on God and our constant need for His help, forgiveness, and deliverance. It provides us with a powerful weapon to use against the devil, the world, and our flesh. It prods us to reflect not only on our own needs but on the needs and burdens of others in the church and in the world. It gives us a means of exercising and expressing our faith in the One who has created, redeemed and sanctified us. Prayer, when we use it properly and faithfully, surely changes us. Does it, however, actually "do something" to influence God's divine will, plans, decrees, intentions, and actions?

⁷⁰ LC 3, 34, KW, 445.

Discussions of God's attributes invariably include reference to His divine immutability, based on scriptural statements such as "I the Lord do not change" (Mal 3:6) and "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind" (Num. 23:19; cf. 1 Sam. 15:29). "Jesus Christ," says the author of Hebrews, "is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (13:8). And yet some of the most moving and memorable accounts of "the power of prayer" in the Bible seem to suggest that God does, at times, "change His mind" in response to the passionate and persistent pleas of the people He loves. In Genesis 18, for example, God is portrayed as sincerely open to the possibility of being dissuaded from destroying Sodom in response to Abraham's intercession on its behalf. Sodom is destroyed not because God is unwilling to consider "changing His mind," but because not even ten righteous persons could be found within its gates. In Exodus 32:7–10, after the golden calf incident, God clearly reveals to Moses His intention to destroy the nation of Israel. When Moses begs for mercy on Israel's behalf, however, "the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people" (Ex. 32:14).

The first part of Joel 2 describes in horrifying detail the destruction that God has planned for Judah on the great and awful "day of the Lord." But the last half of the chapter suggests that sincere pleas for forgiveness may bring about a change of God's heart: "Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him?" (Joel 2:14). The prophet Jonah actually becomes "disgusted" with God (see Jonah 4) because of His failure to make good on his threats of judgment against Nineveh. "When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it" (Jonah 3:10). Through the prophet Isaiah, God tells King Hezekiah: "You are going to die; you will not recover" (Is. 38:1). Hezekiah prays, and Isaiah returns with this message from God: "I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. . . I will add fifteen years to your life" (2 Kings 20:5–6). The prophet Jeremiah speaks repeatedly of Yahweh's willingness to "relent of the disaster that I intended" if only Israel will "return" to Him and "amend" its ways and deeds (Jer. 18:9–11; cf. Jer. 22:1–5). In the New Testament, James summarizes this biblical evidence with a strong assertion about the power of prayer, and adds his own Old Testament example:

The prayer of a righteous person has great power in its effects. Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit. (James 5:16–18, RSV)

In an intriguing and insightful article titled "Pastor, Does God Really Respond to My Prayers?" Reed Lessing reminds us that when the Bible speaks of God "changing His mind," it is making use of metaphorical language to

help us understand the true nature of God.⁷¹ Metaphors convey essential truths about God in the Bible, but "all metaphors have inherent in them continuity with the subject depicted, as well as discontinuity. Thus every metaphor speaks both of a 'yes' and a 'no'—an 'is' and an 'is not.'"⁷² The key is to recognize both the "yes" and the "no" of the metaphor in question.

These texts from Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, 1 Samuel, Jeremiah, Joel, and Jonah affirm two complementary aspects in the Old Testament portrait of Yahweh. First, the unchangeable nature of Yahweh assures us that we are not in the hands of an unstable force. His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob form the backbone of the Biblical narrative. This is an "everlasting covenant" (Gen. 17:7). No one and nothing will separate Yahweh's people from His love. This is the "no" of the metaphor. Yahweh's faithfulness to His people and to His ultimate purposes knows no change. He is "God and not a man."⁷³

On the other hand:

The "yes" of the metaphor indicates that we are not in the hands of an unfeeling ironclad deity. Yahweh is a person and as such enters into a real relationship with His creation in which His love compels Him to be responsive to people. Although He must punish those who do not believe, we may rest in the knowledge that we are in a relationship with a compassionate God who is ready and willing to change prior decisions in order to demonstrate His perfect love. This is particularly clear within texts where Yahweh's change is rooted in His attributes of deep compassion. The "yes" is that Yahweh is a relational God.⁷⁴

Lessing points to Luther's catechisms as evidence that "the Reformer rejects both extremes" in approaching the question of whether and/or how we can speak of prayer as having the potential to "change God's mind." Writing with deep pastoral concern, Luther "is careful not to raise doubts in the minds of those being catechized regarding the goodness of God and His revealed promises that he does hear and answer prayer." Luther insists that "the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16) not because

⁷¹ Reed Lessing, "Pastor, Does God Really Respond to My Prayers?" (*Concordia Journal* 32:3 [July 2006]), 271. Note also Lessing's excursus, "When Yahweh Changes a Prior Verdict," in *Jonah* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 324–341; and Walter A. Maier, Jr. in *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, vol. 68:2 (April 2004) titled "Does God Repent or Change His Mind?" (127–144); and Paul R. Raabe, "When Yahweh Repents," *Logia* 16 (2007), 31–34.

⁷² Lessing, 262.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

it is logically compatible with the doctrines of foreknowledge, predestination, and the like, but because this is what the Scriptures teach." Key to Luther's understanding of this apparent paradox, says Lessing, is "his understanding of *Deus absconditus* and *Deus revelatus*."

Luther teaches that God's foreknowledge is utterly certain and His will absolutely immutable. He places this understanding of God under the title *Deus absconditus*—the hidden God. From this perspective God is beyond dealing with; He is hidden in His majesty. But in grace and mercy this same God comes to us as *Deus revelatus*—the revealed God through Scripture and, climactically, through His Son Jesus.⁷⁵

For Luther—as for us!—this was no mere "theoretical" issue. Lessing refers to the occasion when Luther prayed fervently that his dear friend Philip Melancthon's life would be spared.⁷⁶ In this case, Melancthon was healed. This moving personal story shows that Luther was himself fully convinced that God hears and answers the prayers of His people.

God does not, however, always answer affirmatively, for God's immutable will is "good and gracious."⁷⁷ He knows our need better than we, so He often does not give what we are longing and asking to receive. This does not mean He is unresponsive or that He does not hear our prayers. God is always responsive to His people's prayer and *all of His responses flow from His love*. In a well-known biblical example, Paul prayed for God to relieve a condition that plagued him—"a thorn in my flesh"—and God answered, not with changing his condition, but with the gracious Word, "my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:7–10). In such a way God does His good and gracious will in answer to our prayers also.

Thus, we return to the kinds of questions pastors often hear: "Pastor, should I pray for my daughter to be healed, for this drought to end, and for my employer to increase my salary?" Lessing's suggested answer is a good one:

Dear parishioner, our God loves us so much that we can confidently believe any number of Biblical promises and narratives that prompt us to ask the Father, for the sake of His Son Jesus, to reverse a prior decision (cf. 2 Cor. 12:7–10). And, who knows, perhaps for the sake of Jesus He may reverse a sickness, an infertile womb, a fractured relationship. But if not,

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁷⁶ Letter 290 to Mrs. Luther from Weimar, 2 July 1540, AE 50: 206–210 (WA BR 9:168); AE 4:266; cf. Lessing 272, fn. 51.

⁷⁷ "The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also" (*Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991], 20).

we also pray, "Yet not my will, but Thy will be done" (Mark 14:36).⁷⁸

A final question

The preceding discussion helps us answer—so far as possible—the question of "how" the unchanging God responds to our prayers. But *why* does God desire communication with us? Why is He interested in hearing and receiving our prayers in the first place? God knows even before we pray what we (and others) need and why we (and they) need it. And God Himself needs nothing from us (see Psalm 50:12–15; Acts 17:25). He certainly does not "need" our prayers and worship, either for the "information" they provide or for the "affirmation" they offer. Why is God so interested in hearing our prayers?

In raising this question, we are broaching the question of the mystery of the Gospel itself, the inexplicable nature of God's love and the mystery of His desire for intimacy with those whom he created and redeemed. Peter Brunner writes:

Before [the] fall, the foremost creature actually said with every breath: "Yes, Father." He did not utter this yes of his love as a choice between yes and no, but in unquestioning, unbroken, spontaneous self-evidence, which knows of no choice and which is nevertheless—yes, by that very fact—the manifestation of the true, pristine freedom of man. Here already we are facing the miracle, which can be nothing but an offense to any outsider but comprises for the believer the blissful fullness of God's love, namely, that man's loving turning to God in prayer, praise and adoration is both in one: gift of love from above and personal mental act of a creaturely "I."⁷⁹

When our prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is finally and fully answered, we will again speak our "Yes" "to God in "unquestioning, unbroken, spontaneous" praise and thanksgiving: "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord" (Zeph. 3:9).

Even in our fallenness, however, God continues actively to seek us out—as He sought out Adam and Eve and Cain after the Fall (Gen. 3–4)—toward the goal of delighting in our presence, fellowship, and praise.

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. (Zeph. 3:17)

⁷⁸ Ibid., 273.

⁷⁹ Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 37.

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:1–7)

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. (1 John 3:1)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Rom. 8:35–37)

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? (Ps. 8:3–4)

Ultimately, therefore, our response to the gift and command of prayer (like our response to all of God's good and perfect gifts and commands) must be, with St. Paul, one of sheer doxology:

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11:33–36)

Chapter Three: How Do Christians Pray?

Jesus teaches us to pray

How do Christians pray? The answer depends on who is teaching us to pray. As noted above, genuinely *Christian* prayer can only flow from faith in Jesus *Christ* and the Triune God He reveals. Old Testament believers prayed in the Christ who was to come, revealed beforehand in the Torah, Prophets, and Psalms (Luke 24:44)—the very Psalms which tell of Christ (cf. Ps. 2:7; 110; Matt. 22:44, par.; Acts 2:34), taught Israel to pray, and still teach us today. The Incarnation of the Word means the only way to learn Christian prayer is from Christ, promised and revealed.

Jesus, God's Son in human flesh, not only reveals divinity in His person, He also shows us perfect *humanity*. God's Son, eternally one with the Father (John 10:30), is man and therein models a life of prayer not in some "other-worldly manner," but in authentic humanity. The eternal Word made flesh sets aside time for prayer (Luke 5:16), pleads with His Father in human weakness (Luke 22:42), and commends himself in death to the Father (Luke 23:46).

St. Augustine reminds us of the importance of the Incarnation for Christian prayer:

No greater gift could God have given to men than in making His Word, by which He created all things, their Head, and joining them to Him as His members: that the Son of God might become also the Son of man, one God with the Father, one Man with men; so that when we speak to God in prayer for mercy, we do not separate the Son from Him; and when the Body of the Son prays, it separates not its Head from itself: and it is one Saviour of His Body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who both prays for us, and prays in us, and is prayed to by us. *He prays for us, as our Priest; He prays in us, as our Head; He is prayed to by us, as our God.*⁸⁰

So Christians pray to the Father through the Son—and we pray *by* (or *in*) the Holy Spirit.⁸¹ Faith comes by the Holy Spirit's work. The Spirit's gift of faith is focused on Christ. In Christ we know the Father and are invited to pray to Him as His adopted children. So it is that by the Spirit we are enabled to "cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom. 8:15; cp. Gal. 4:6).

⁸⁰ St. Augustine, "Psalm LXXXVI," §1, in *Expositions on the Book of Psalms in A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, [NPNF], vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 409–410; emphasis added.

⁸¹ "Wherever the Holy Spirit makes his entry into human life, there we find the origin of Christian prayer, since it is the Spirit who moves us to pray and who instructs us in the life of prayer. . . . It is the Holy Spirit who unites us with the living Christ and thereby enables us to enter into a living communion with him. It is the Spirit who prays for us and with us (Rom. 8:15, 16). He teaches us how to pray, for we do not know how to pray as we ought (Rom. 8:26)," Donald G. Bloesch, *The Struggle of Prayer* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 37.

The Spirit's teaching is not by way of merely subjective feelings. We pray as taught by the Holy Spirit in the sacred Scriptures that show us Christ who makes the Father known. Our High Priest, Jesus, teaches us in His words and by His example.

Learning prayer from Christ means, as Luther points out, that the "how" of Christian prayer goes in two directions: "our Lord Christ himself has taught us *both the way and the words*" of prayer.⁸² The way or manner of Christian prayer flows from faith itself. We pray because God has made Himself known to us and worked faith in us. The words and content of Christian prayer flow from the fact that the one in whom we believe leads us to learn words by first repeating His words, as in the Lord's Prayer and psalms. Dietrich Bonhoeffer emphasizes this connection:

In response to the request of the disciples, Jesus gave them the Lord's Prayer. Every prayer is contained in it. Whatever is included in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer is prayed aright; whatever is not included is no prayer. All the prayers of Holy Scripture are summarized in the Lord's Prayer, and they are contained in its immeasurable breadth. They are not made superfluous by the Lord's Prayer but constitute the inexhaustible richness of the Lord's Prayer as the Lord's Prayer is their summation. Luther says of the Psalter: "It penetrates the Lord's Prayer and the Lord's Prayer penetrates it, so that it is possible to understand one on the basis of the other and to bring them into joyful harmony." Thus the Lord's Prayer becomes the touchstone for whether we pray in the name of Jesus Christ or our own name. It makes good sense, then, that the Psalter is often bound together in a single volume with the New Testament. It is the prayer of the Christian church. It belongs to the Lord's Prayer.⁸³

It is by means of the words that God Himself has spoken to us, therefore, that we Christians learn to speak back to him in prayer.

The child learns to speak because his father speaks to him. He learns the speech of his father. So we learn to speak to God because God has spoken to us and speaks to us. By means of the speech of the Father in heaven his children learn to speak with him. Repeating God's own words after him, we begin to pray to him. We ought to speak to God and he wants to hear us, not in the false and confused speech of our heart, but in the

⁸² LC, 3, KW, 441.

⁸³ Bonhoeffer, *Psalms*, 15–16.

clear and pure speech which God has spoken to us in Jesus Christ.⁸⁴

"This is pure grace," says Bonhoeffer, "that God tells us how we can speak with him."⁸⁵

*The way or manner of Christian prayer*⁸⁶

We pray as children of God, "for that is what we are" (1 John 3:1). Consider a child of two or three years, in new command of the gift of speech, and watch how she uses that gift with her mother and father. She relishes this ability, talking sometimes incessantly, never afraid to ask for what she needs or wants. She is confident, though she is also learning that not everything she asks is given. Her courage is in the loving care she receives from father and mother. So she speaks. She asks. She expects (Ps. 4:3).

That is a picture of Christian prayer. If "prayer is nothing else than the lifting up of heart or mind to God," then that is portrayed by believers who, like little children, run to their Father in heaven—lifting up their arms to Him (both figuratively and sometimes literally) for Him to "pick them up" and take them into His secure presence.⁸⁷ This is the very picture of prayer our Lord gives us when He teaches us to "Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven'" (Matt. 6:9). Luther explains: "with these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear Father."⁸⁸

The plea of the little child is not dependent on an ability to articulate. Parents respond to their child's need, not to its careful articulation. So also God's children are not hindered by a failure to understand fully what it is that they need or want to say to God. Our Father does not scorn even impolite, incoherent, halting, or hysterical prayers. His Word is filled with them: "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my groaning" (Ps. 5:1). "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" (Ps. 13:1). God does not turn away from such prayers. "O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted" (Ps. 10:17a; cp. Ps. 38:9). Augustine reminds us that God hears even our longing. "It does not always find its way to the ears of man; but it

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸⁶ Luther also refers to the "mood" of Christian prayer. He speaks of the Holy Spirit's work in the Psalms in this way: "by this book He prepares both the language and the mood in which we should address the Heavenly Father and pray for that which the other books have taught us to do and to imitate." AE 14:286.

⁸⁷ AE 42:25; p. 6 above. The liturgy of communion begins with the bidding, "Lift up your hearts," and the response, "We lift them up to the Lord." In many traditions, pastor and people lift their hands to the Lord as they pray.

⁸⁸ *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, 19.

never ceases to sound in the ears of God."⁸⁹ The Holy Spirit turns even the inarticulate sighs of God's people into prayers (Rom. 8:26).⁹⁰

Children not only weep and plead, they also confidently laugh, play, and sing. So the prayers of God's children are often joyful song and not only mournful pleading. Praise marks their gatherings.⁹¹ "I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord" (Ps. 27:6b).⁹² Such joyful confidence is not misplaced. It, too, is grounded in the word "Father" that Jesus puts on our lips, for "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 1:3) is now our own "God and Father" (Gal. 1:4). The risen Lord Jesus, whose cross was atonement for the sins of the world, says to Mary and to all who believe in His name that His God is *our* God and His Father is *our* Father (John 20:17). We are baptized and therefore "sons of God through faith" (Gal. 3:26–27).⁹³ Justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we are boldly and confidently permitted and even commanded to call the almighty, immutable, omniscient, eternal, ubiquitous holy God our dear and tender Father. If the Son sets you free to call God "Father," then do so confidently (Heb. 4:16; 1 John 3:21, also John 8:36)!

Our confidence only increases—for Jesus, the Son of God, assures us that "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you" (John 15:16). From this comes the commendable custom of ending prayers "in Jesus' name," with its reminder that we can be as certain that God hears our prayers as if we were Jesus Himself. Yet there is more to prayer in the name of Jesus than the use of a customary phrase. We earlier considered some misunderstandings of prayer in Jesus' name. What, then, does it mean? It is, simply, prayer spoken from faith in Jesus our Lord. Hallesby suggests that "to pray in the name of Jesus is the real element of prayer in our prayers. It is the helpless soul's helpless look

⁸⁹ Augustine, "Psalm XXXVIII, 13," *NPNE*, 107. Augustine also notes how this reality should affect our longing and desires so that we are seeking what God wants for us. See also Matt. 6:33.

⁹⁰ "There are times when we cannot pray in words, or pray as we ought; but our inarticulate longings for a better life are the Spirit's intercessions on our behalf, audible to God who searches all hearts, and intelligible and acceptable to Him since they are the voice of His Spirit, and it is according to His will that the Spirit should intercede for the members of His Son." From Henry B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 221.

⁹¹ Luther counts prayer and praise to be one of seven "marks" that identify the church. "Where you see and hear the Lord's Prayer prayed and taught; or psalms or other spiritual songs sung, in accordance with the word of God and true faith. . . you may rest assured that a holy Christian people of God are present." AE 41:164.

⁹² On the "playful" element of Christian worship, see Romano Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 61–72.

⁹³ An emphasis on Baptism as the foundation for our confidence to call God "Father" is present in the earliest Christian reflection on the Lord's Prayer. See Robert L. Simpson, *The Interpretation of Prayer in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), 57.

unto a gracious Friend."⁹⁴ Commenting on John 15:16, Luther emphasizes the connection between being chosen in Christ and the promise that the Father will hear:

This [promise] also belongs; yes, it is the power and the result of His election. For through this grace in Christ we not only become God's friends through Him and acquire God as our Father; but our election also enables us to ask Him for whatever we need and to be assured that it will be given to us. For since we continually encounter trials, opposition, and obstacles, both from the devil and the world and also from our own flesh; since much weakness and frailty still inheres both in us and in others; since everything is imperfect—for all these reasons it is necessary for us to plead for strength, help, and salvation in every distressing situation.⁹⁵

God's encouragement in prayer is coupled with His assurances that He knows our desperate condition, our "weakness and frailty." Though terrorized by Saul, David could nevertheless be certain of a refuge: "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by" (Ps. 57:1). Not even sin can diminish the confident prayers of God's children—our access to God is based on His grace for us in Christ, not on our conduct (Rom. 5:2). Even while "feeble and crushed" by God's judgment against his sins, David could still confidently declare, "O Lord, all my longing is before you; my sighing is not hidden from you" (Ps. 38:8–9). So Jesus assures us: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:28–31).

Rather than be inhibited by our sins, by the austere majesty of the almighty God, or by life's defeats, Jesus "tenderly invites us" to come to God, our Father, with confidence and zeal. Christ's purifying work in our lives results in zeal for good works (Titus 2:14), among which none is more important than prayer.

Yet, zeal for prayer—a sense of eagerness, discipline, and urgency about it—is often lacking in believers. A traditional collect begins with the truthful admission that God is "always more ready to hear than we to pray."⁹⁶ We struggle to pray. Weariness, busy-ness, doubts, temptations, the why-bother-

⁹⁴ Ole Hallesby, *Prayer* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1994), 59.

⁹⁵ AE 24:263; emphasis added.

⁹⁶ The collect for the 11th Sunday after Trinity. See Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book: Prayers of the Day* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 368; also Series C, Proper 25, 281. A collect is a brief prayer which addresses a theme from the Scripture readings for a particular Sunday or festival.

when-God-already-knows attitude discussed above⁹⁷—such things and much more dampen any priority for talking to God. We become lackadaisical, failing to set aside time or to plan and prepare ourselves for prayer. Instead, we pray when it occurs to us or feel like we need it. We pray half-heartedly and semi-consciously, like the disciples who snoozed while Jesus prayed earnestly in great agony (Luke 22:39–46).

We also continually face the doubts of our sinful humanity. Does prayer really matter? Is God there? Are my pathetic needs important to an eternal God? Prayer becomes foolish to the skeptical. It seems contrary to our natural pragmatism which constantly says, "Do something!" and sees prayer as just another form of dithering. Our hearts easily grow cold.

Because such forces constantly distract our prayers, we can only pray in our Lord Jesus. Only He—by His power, His love, His truth, His Word—can break through our doubting, dispirited hearts again and again. "Lord, teach us to pray," is not a one-time request, it is the constant petition of Christ's sinner-saints. Only He can spark our faith to realize anew the great treasure that we have in the invitation from the Lord of heaven and earth to come and talk to Him. The manner and way of prayer that we learn from Christ is zealous to the core—it is passionate, eager to call on God, urgent and constant in petition, for it is such prayers that Christ Himself offers and encourages. Jesus shows that prayer makes fasting and sleepless nights worthwhile (Matt. 4:2; Luke 6:12; Acts 14:23). Prayer is worthy of disciplined perseverance, like that of the persistent widow in one of Jesus' stories (Luke 18:1–8), because He assures us that His Father is never deaf to us, even if His answers seem long in coming. The zeal of Christ produces zealous Christian prayer. Only His constancy, not ours, can aid us in our struggle to pray. He continually invites, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7). As we alternate between the struggle to pray and earnest striving in prayer (see Rom. 15:30–31; Col. 4:12–13), Jesus has given His Spirit to sustain us (Rom. 8:26).

Another thing is clear about the way or manner of Christian prayer. We do not pray alone. We pray as members of the Body of Christ, and so, first, with Christ our Head. He told us to pray with Him—"Our Father"—so we pray in plural, but not simply because there are other Christians. We pray first with Him, who enabled our adoption as sons and daughters who say, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:4–7; cp. Rom. 8:15, 23; Eph. 1:3–6). Then, in and with Christ, we pray as part of the entire family of faith, His body—the one, holy, catholic,⁹⁸ and apostolic church. The life of prayer given to *each* who believes

⁹⁷ See above, pp. 27ff.

⁹⁸ "Catholic," the original term used in the Nicene Creed, should not be scorned. The root of the term is the Greek word for "whole" or "wholeness." It is not a reference to the Roman Catholic Church, but to the church's universality and completeness—that the church of Christ exists across human, geographic, and temporal boundaries.

in Christ, is given to *all* who believe in Him, so the concern of such Christian prayer is never for self alone. None who prays in Christ can pray without concern for the whole Body of Christ (Luke 9:28; Matt. 19:13; Col. 4:2-3; 1 Thess. 5:25; James 5:16; Acts 12:5).

While Jesus invites us into an intensely personal manner of prayer, He never encourages a self-absorbed preoccupation with “my desires”—something so evident in sinful humanity.⁹⁹ It is therefore inherent to baptismal life that Christians not only pray alone, but also gather with other believers at set times and places for prayer. In corporate settings, the prayers may be somewhat different in that one person speaks for many, emphasizing the concerns of the assembly and the church as a whole more than private or individual worries. Yet, the essential manner of such prayers will not differ from the most private prayers of individuals, for the church’s corporate prayers also address our Father in heaven with earnest confidence as those who come to Him in Jesus’ name.

The words or content of Christian prayer

To pray is to speak to God, so it becomes important to ask about the actual words we might use. We might answer, “It doesn’t matter! Say anything you want.” And, certainly, we are not restricted in what God allows us to say to Him. Consequently, daily life often “sets the agenda” for our prayers. One who is suffering cries out to God for relief—little else can even enter his mind. The terrified person can pray for nothing but rescue. The Christian alienated from his or her spouse or loved ones can think and pray about nothing else. Such prayers, although exclusively personal and concerned only with the very moment, are godly, Christian prayers. Our Lord’s prayers in the garden were such (Luke 22:41-45), and the Word of God never discourages such prayers: “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.” (Ps. 50:15; cp. Ps. 86:7). Such prayers come almost “automatically” for we know we have a gracious God who has revealed His love in Christ Jesus, His Son. Given His Holy Spirit in Baptism, we are freed for such prayers, knowing that nothing that concerns His children is trivial to our Father, who is always ready to listen.

Yet, if all we think and pray about is personal and individualistic—“what occurs to me and what I desire”—our prayers are impoverished. Jesus does not leave us without guidance for a richer life of prayer. He leads us away from empty selfishness in our prayers. Nowhere is this more evident than in the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:7-15; Luke 11:1-13). He gives us *specific words to pray*. Even as He assures us that we can boldly pray about all

⁹⁹ Timothy J. Wengert notes that Martin Luther’s focus on the Lord’s Prayer kept him from such solipsism; “Luther on Prayer in the Large Catechism” in *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther’s Practical Theology*, Timothy J. Wengert, ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 181.

our concerns, He also shows us vital things for which to ask Him in prayer and does not leave us to try to discover our Father’s prayer priorities.

It is also important to know from the example of Christ that He also prayed the psalms and knew them from memory (e.g., Matt. 27:46 [Ps. 22]; Luke 23:46 [Ps. 31]; Matt. 21:16 [Ps. 8:2]; Matt. 22:44 [Ps. 110]; John 10 [Ps. 23, Ps. 95]). The “hymn” that Jesus and his disciples sang at the conclusion of the Passover before going to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30) was quite likely Psalms 115-118.¹⁰⁰ Therefore from its beginning, the church followed this pattern of praying the psalms (e.g., Acts 4:23-31 where the church prays Psalm 2). Paul describes the worship life of the early church as involving “singing psalms” (Col. 3:16) for in the Psalter we also have divine content for our prayers.¹⁰¹

What a gift! Little children cannot mature if they speak only about their own concerns. Interactions with adults gradually stretch and expand their hearts and minds. The same is true for the children of God. “By means of the Father in heaven his children learn to speak with him. Repeating God’s own words after him, we begin to pray to him.”¹⁰² We grow and mature as we begin to think *and pray* about God’s purposes and not only our own. For this reason, throughout the history of God’s people believers have not only prayed in their own words, but also in the words of others. They have prayed in the words of the Psalms and canticles of Scripture and the hymns of other composers.¹⁰³ They have prayed in the words of written prayers from service books and other resources. They have prayed with pastors who speak in and for an assembly of believers, even when the only word the assembly speaks is “Amen.” Such praying is every bit as important as the personal prayers we speak privately to God, for in this way our hearts are open to the whole of God’s people and their needs and to the concerns that God Himself places into our prayers.

¹⁰⁰ The “Great Hallel,” which includes: “The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: The right hand of the LORD does valiantly; the right hand of the LORD exalts, the right hand of the LORD does valiantly: I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD. The LORD has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.” Ps. 118:14-18. See Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew* (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000, 277; W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Matthew: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1971), 326.

¹⁰¹ “Properly to pray the psalms is to pray them in Jesus’ name, because the voice in the Psalter is Christ’s own voice. Christ is the referential center of the Book of Psalms.” Patrick Henry Reardon, *Christ in the Psalms* (Ben Lomond, CA: Conciliar Press, 2000), xvii. Reardon’s book is a helpful tool, designed to aid in a prayerful use of the psalter which recognizes Christ’s presence there (Luke 24:44).

¹⁰² Bonhoeffer, *Psalms*, 11.

¹⁰³ Note the example of Ezra, who prays by means of the Psalms in 9:6 (Ps. 38:4), 9:7 (Ps. 106:6), and 9:8 (Ps. 13:3).

Christians in every era have prayed the Lord’s Prayer in the simple faith that, since Jesus gave it to teach us how to pray, we should use it.¹⁰⁴ No prayer is better known, but its value is lost when we simply rattle it off thoughtlessly. Luther recommends not only that we speak the prayer word for word, but also that, in our daily prayers, we dwell on the prayer one petition at a time, praying about the area of Christian faith and life on which that petition focuses.¹⁰⁵ The following pages therefore provide a meditative look at how our prayers may be shaped by the priorities of the Lord’s Prayer.¹⁰⁶

The First Petition: “Hallowed be thy name”

The first three petitions of the *Our Father* are inseparable, bound together by the final clause of the third petition, “on earth as it is in heaven.”¹⁰⁷ Luther’s explanations of these petitions strike a repetitive note, emphasizing our need for something God has promised. God’s name is holy, His kingdom comes, His will is done—all regardless of our praying—*yet*, we pray that all of this would be true *among us*. We pray precisely because “on earth,” unlike “in heaven,” God’s name is regularly profaned, His kingdom faces constant rebellion, and His will is denied in favor of the sinfully bound will of humanity.

To pray these petitions is to beg God to be *our God*. God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4), yet we cannot save ourselves or reason our way to such truth. To pray as Christ teaches is to know that nothing else is important, so we plead for God to stop at nothing to make us His own. John Donne captured this desperate need in stark verses, begging God to “batter my heart,” to overthrow the human will, which is “betrothed” to Satan, and imprison him, for only one who is captive to Christ is free.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ “As He [Christ] has said, *whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in His Name, He will give us*, how much more effectually do we obtain what we ask in Christ’s Name, if we ask for it in His own words?” Cyprian, *The Lord’s Prayer*, §1 in *The Treatises of S. Caecilius Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and Martyr* (Oxford: James Parker and Co. and Rivingtons, 1876), 178.

¹⁰⁵ AE 42:194-195.

¹⁰⁶ These remarks on the seven petitions offer nothing new or profound. They neither can replace nor should they distract confessional Lutherans in particular from the far more important comments of Luther (in the *Large Catechism* especially), to say nothing of countless other commentators (e.g., Cyprian, whom Luther references).

¹⁰⁷ On the structural and theological connections of the first three petitions and the prevalence of this understanding, see Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1-11:1* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 325-326.

¹⁰⁸ BATTER my heart, three person’d God; for, you As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend; That I may rise, and stand, o’erthrow mee, and bend Your force, to breake, blowe, burne and make me new. I, like an usurpt towne, to another due, Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end, Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend, But is captiv’d, and proves weak or untrue. Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved faime,

Regarding the first petition, Luther says, “In this petition God becomes everything and man becomes nothing.”¹⁰⁹ “Hallowed be thy name” echoes throughout Scripture. The Old Testament’s ceaseless praise of “the LORD” (Yahweh) hallows His name (e.g., Ps. 30:4; 97:12; 105:3; 106:47). In the ancient world, where a pantheon of gods by various names were given worship, sacrifice, and prayers, one true God made Himself personally known, revealing His name and His identity. The God who created heaven and earth “introduced” Himself personally to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as “Yahweh.”¹¹⁰ He showed Himself in many ways—so that His name would mean something real and wonderful. Those who heard in faith came to know that “the LORD,” Yahweh, was the one true God of power and might, mercy and grace.

The Old Testament also reveals that the Lord’s holy name is profaned, not only by the Gentiles, but also by Israel. He warns anyone who would profane His name: “I will set my face against that man. . .” (Lev. 20:3). Israel profaned Him by joining in the worship and sacrifices of pagans (Lev. 18:21), swearing dishonestly in His name (Lev. 19:12), and violating His commands (Lev. 22:31-32). Even those who brought sacrifices to “the LORD” were guilty of profaning His name if they did not also listen to His words (Ezek. 20:39).

The One who said, “I am who I am” (Ex. 3:14), has revealed His identity in Holy Scripture and, pre-eminently, in the person and work of Christ (Heb. 1:1-2). Our Lord both defines and hallows God’s name and reveals what it means for our lives to hallow the divine Name.¹¹¹ How little we reflect these virtues and this name! The triune God’s name, given to us in Baptism, is instead demeaned daily, so God must hallow His name ever anew. Only then will we be enabled again to use it rightly in prayer and praise.¹¹²

But am betroth’d unto your enemy: Divorce mee; untie, or breake that knot againe; Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I Except you’enthrall mee, never shall be free, Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee. “Batter My Heart, Three-Personed God,” in Grierson, Herbert J.C., ed. *Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the 17th c.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1947), 88.

¹⁰⁹ AE 42:27.

¹¹⁰ Most English translations render the personal name of God, יהוה (Yahweh), as “the LORD,” using small caps to distinguish it. See Gen 12:1-7; Gen 26:24; Gen 28:13 where the LORD reveals Himself in turn by name and by deed to the patriarchs. See also Gibbs, 327.

¹¹¹ Luther reminds us that our Lord’s virtues are aspects or “names” of the holy God. “Since we are baptized into these names and are consecrated and hallowed by them, and since they have thus become our names, it follows that God’s children should be called and also be gentle, merciful, chaste, just, truthful, guileless, friendly, peaceful, and kindly disposed toward all, even toward our enemies.” AE 42:28.

¹¹² Note the meaning of the second commandment in Luther’s *Small Catechism*.

How is this prayer answered? Psalm 29 commands the angels¹¹³ to “ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name”—that is, to worship Him or “to praise His glorious name.”¹¹⁴ On earth (unlike heaven) our only hope for the name to be hallowed is, as Gibbs notes, God’s determination to sanctify His own name: “I will hallow my great name, which has been profaned. . . .” (Ezek. 36:23).¹¹⁵ He does this through His Word. We therefore ask that His sanctifying Word be proclaimed purely, “on earth.” We pray for preachers, teachers, missionaries, and all who tell of Christ. We pray for a faithful, daily witness in the lives of God’s people so that a renewed humanity may hallow the divine name.

To hallow the name is also to use His name rightly in prayer and worship. In obedience to the second command we are not to “misuse the name of the Lord your God”—but to call on Him in prayer and thanksgiving.¹¹⁶ Throughout the Psalter the Holy Spirit guides the prayers of God’s people in hallowing the divine name. Prayer and praise are twin elements of “hallowing the Name,” so that many psalms—Psalm 18 for example—move back and forth between speaking to God (prayer) and speaking about God (praise).¹¹⁷

Above all else, then, God’s name is hallowed when Jesus is confessed as Lord and His grace is proclaimed. To know God’s name is to know the Gospel, centered in God’s very identity—who He really is, what He has done.¹¹⁸ So Basil rightly says “that when we remember His mighty works, we find the proper means of praise.”¹¹⁹

¹¹³ The Hebrew is difficult here, but most recent translations take this to be a reference to the angels or heavenly beings, while earlier commentators (e.g., Augustine or Basil), using either the LXX or Vulgate which parallel “sons of God” with “sons of rams,” took the first verse as a command to the church. See Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, eds., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Psalms 1–50*, vol. 7 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 214–215.

¹¹⁴ Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 1, in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 368.

¹¹⁵ Gibbs, 327, author’s translation.

¹¹⁶ Luther notes that this is the opposite of the sin forbidden by the second commandment: LC 3, 5–6, KW, 441 and LC 3, 45, KW, 446. See also Wengert, 185.

¹¹⁷ Psalm 34 is a paradigm for this sanctifying of God’s Name. Sixteen times David repeats the name of “the Lord.” As Paul boasted in the Lord about his own weakness (2 Cor 10:17; 11:30; 12:9; cp. Rom 3:27; Gal 6:14), David’s soul also boasts in the Lord (Ps 34:2), exalting the name of the Lord who saved the poor and troubled, the fearful and hungry, the broken-hearted and crushed in spirit. “The LORD,” therefore, is the name of the true God who “redeems his servants” who take “refuge in him” (v. 22).

¹¹⁸ Note Tertullian (cited in Simpson, 44) who says the Lord’s Prayer is “an epitome of the gospel.” Cp. above p. 8.

¹¹⁹ On the Holy Spirit, 8.17 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980), 35. Basil goes on to reflect on how the many names or titles given to God in Scripture illumine His majesty and nature.

deceits of earthly rule (Rom. 8:38–39). God’s kingdom is never far because of Christ’s presence among those with faith in Him (Luke 10:9, 11; 17:21; 21:31; Col. 1:13–14), even as it will come in all its visible power in the day of Christ’s return (Mark 9:1; cp. 1 Cor. 15:24). His kingdom means safety in His presence and promises. His kingdom and rule are above all other rulers and authorities (1 Tim. 6:15, cf. Dan. 2:37). No wonder our Lord teaches us to plead for our place under Him.

Yet, in a sinful, rebellious world, God’s rule often seems alien and repressive. To “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33) is no onerous bid for dictatorial oppression. In Christ we know the goodness of the Kingdom. In Him, despite the dangerous rulers and authorities of the present age, we know the salutary goodness of this “pearl,” this “treasure,” this “seed”¹²⁰ (cf. Matt. 13:44–46; Matt. 13:31; Mark 4:26–29) for which we long and pray.¹²¹

The second petition teaches us to pray that Christ’s kingdom would grow and expand, like a widening net (Matt. 13:47–48). We pray for open hearts and doors to the Gospel (Col. 4:2–4) and for its rapid spread (2 Thess. 3:1). This disallows a narrow view of the kingdom coming to a favored few of “us.” We pray for the “us” of the whole (catholic) people of God, to all whom the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:39). “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2, emphasis added). “This Second Petition is therefore our missionary prayer.”¹²² With this petition “we desire that the whole world, which so evidently lies in evil and longing, in fear and in striving, would see and receive this light, which entered the world some two thousand years ago, when on the outskirts of the Roman empire was heard that lonely, yet still resounding voice: “Repent . . . for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matt. 3:2).¹²³

The second petition, like the first, sounds a clear note of Gospel—pure, undeserved grace. “To emphasize more the free gift of God, we do not say that we come to the kingdom of God, but rather pray that it may come to us.”¹²⁴ The very content of the kingdom is the Gospel. Luther: “What is the kingdom

¹²⁰ See Guardino, 38: “. . . we soon notice that the ‘kingdom of God’ cannot be reduced to a single concept. It is something mighty, pervasive, penetrating, operative, multiform.”

¹²¹ The OT is rich with this emphasis: “Thy kingdom come” echoes songs like Psalm 2, where we learn to pray for the rule of the Lord and His Anointed. To pray this is also to pray against the raging nations and their kings (vv 1–4, 8). We seek Zion’s King in the Son the Lord has begotten (v 7), “kissing the Son” in familiar homage rather than setting ourselves against Him (v 12).

¹²² Theodore Graebner, *The Lord’s Prayer and the Christian Life* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1937), 17.

¹²³ Alexander Schmemann, *Our Father* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002), 40–41.

¹²⁴ Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord’s Prayer* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 48.

The Second Petition: “Thy kingdom come”

It is true to say that “The Lord’s Prayer is the gospel turned into prayer.”¹²⁰ The Lord’s Prayer begins with the Gospel—even the Gospel in the sense of justification by grace through faith—in that our Lord’s first teaching on prayer is that we can do nothing unless God is *our God* by hallowing His name in the Word made flesh. By such revelation He draws us into His kingdom by His Spirit through faith. So the first petition leads directly to the second where “We pray for the coming of that kingdom, which has been promised to us by God, and was gained by the Blood and passion of Christ.”¹²¹ Luther notes that the second petition is that God’s kingdom “may come to us also” by the Holy Spirit’s work of instilling faith in “His holy Word” and godly obedience to our King.¹²²

God makes Himself known in order to rule us—to be our Lord and King. “Rule” may sound oppressive and harsh to our ears, but it is nothing less than a gracious, saving work. Only in God’s rule and kingdom can we be truly free. During World War II Helmut Thielicke preached on the second petition in the ruins of a recently-bombed church:

In these fearful, fateful weeks many people appear to have become alienated from their faith in God; they begin to ask how he can “permit” such things to happen. It would be better, however, if they were alienated from their faith in *men*.¹²³

The rule of sinful men (under the evil one) continually challenges the rule of God.¹²⁴ The sinner in us rebels against God, preferring another lord or ruler (Is. 26:13). We fail to see the oppressive results when we substitute an alien power/authority for the triune God. Political, economic, and social movements lead us to seek yet another kingdom/authority and its “righteousness.” How content should we be with such human kingdoms over the past century? Even more, how content *could* we be when we realize that the ultimate alternative to the kingdom of God is not mere earthly rule and authority, but the rule of Satan?¹²⁵

Our Lord invites us to echo His wise petition: “Thy kingdom come.” God’s rule will not, for now, simply replace any earthly kingdom. God gives Caesar his say (Matt. 22:21). But only God’s rule will protect us from the

¹²⁰ Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 114.

¹²¹ Cyprian, *The Lord’s Prayer*, §8, 183.

¹²² Luther’s *Small Catechism with Explanation*, 183–184.

¹²³ *Our Heavenly Father: Sermons on the Lord’s Prayer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 58.

¹²⁴ This does not deny that, as the doctrine of “two kingdoms” teaches, God also rules through sinful men in earthly institutions like government (Rom 13:3–4), maintaining some level of order despite the chaos of sin and Satan.

¹²⁵ Cf. AE 42:38.

of God? Answer: Simply what we heard above in the Creed, namely, that God sent His Son, Christ our LORD, into the world to redeem and deliver us. . . .¹²⁶

This prayer is granted only as gift: “To this end he also gave his Holy Spirit to deliver this to us through his holy Word and to enlighten and strengthen us in faith by his power.”¹²⁷ Since “The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17), Luther rightly emphasized that the second petition teaches us to pray for the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit Christ cast out demons and brought those He now possessed into His kingdom (Matt. 12:28). In the *Holy Spirit* and not in the ruling human spirit the kingdom is given, and apart from the Spirit’s washing none can enter the kingdom (John 3:5; cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Titus 3:5). This is, of course, because only the Spirit can work faith in a humanity ruled by sin and death: “. . . no one can say that Jesus is Lord [or King], but by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). By the Holy Spirit sinners become sinner-saints who seek to be obedient subjects of the kingdom, loving the rule of Christ and seeking to honor Him with their lives.

The Third Petition: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

The third petition is challenging in two ways. First, there is a textual matter. Jesus teaches the “Lord’s Prayer” in both Matthew 6:9–13 and Luke 11:1–4, but in the briefer version of Luke 11, there is no “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” This led Luther to explain “Thy will be done” as a summary of the first two petitions in his reply to the question, “How is God’s will done?” He explains that God’s will is for “us to hallow God’s name” and “let His kingdom come.”¹²⁸ *The Large Catechism* also explains that the third petition shows our need “to keep firm hold on these two things,” namely, the holiness of God’s name and the need for His kingly rule.¹²⁹ This simple insight helps us to recognize that the third petition is not primarily about what God causes or permits to happen. Rather, Christ leads us to pray for God’s saving work of redemption and sanctification to continue in us.

Second, Luther’s answer to the first catechism question on the third petition, “What does this mean?” helps us see an even greater challenge in this petition—the meaning of “the will of God.”¹³⁰ That challenge is deepened by the final clause, “on earth as it is in heaven.” If God is almighty, isn’t His will an automatic? Cyprian had earlier asked: “For who resists God, so that

¹²⁶ LC 3:51, KW, 446.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* Cf. also Bloesch: “We can approach the throne of God only on the basis of the righteousness of Christ communicated to us by the Holy Spirit” (56).

¹²⁸ Luther’s *Small Catechism with Explanation*, 186.

¹²⁹ LC 3:61, KW, 448.

¹³⁰ Often referred to as God’s “causative” or “permissive” will. Chemnitz has a helpful discussion of various ways to think of God’s will in *The Lord’s Prayer*, 51–55.

He cannot do His own will?¹³⁶ Many ask this very question, look at history's horrors and at natural disasters, and then conclude that such events prove that both the idea of God's will and God's very existence are simply untenable.

That Jesus teaches us to pray for God's will to be done helps us to think more deeply. Here as in the previous two petitions, he reminds us of the great gulf between earth and heaven. Unlike heaven, where nothing hinders God's bright and gracious will, on earth we pray "before the dark backdrop of a world in which, notoriously, this will is not done."¹³⁷ David Crump reminds us that "Prayer is the language of eschatology." We live "between the times," that is, "while Christian prayer occurs in this life, its priorities and values are dictated by the next."¹³⁸

The paradox of prayer itself is highlighted in this petition. Prayer always seeks changes. "God's will" is too deep for us to fathom. "I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things" (Is. 45:7). An earthquake is in some fashion God's will, yet we pray that no one will die from it. Prayer "involves not only submission to the will of God but seeking to change his will."¹³⁹ Like Jacob, we are "striving with God" (cf. Gen. 32:28) to seek His blessing, but not in some attempt to manipulate or coerce God to do what we want, because we know that we are better off in God's hands than ours. This is so because faith sees that in Christ God *wills* our salvation (1 Tim. 2:4), no matter how much other aspects of His will befuddle us. There is indeed much that is mysterious about God's will, but what is completely unambiguous is His desire to bring life and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Ez. 18:23; 1 Tim. 2:4; John 6:39–40). For this we pray.

This petition also forces us to acknowledge the paradox that the almighty God does not "get His way" in all things even though His good and gracious will is accomplished in the end. The third petition recognizes forces that are contrary to the intention and will of God. Jesus teaches us to strive earnestly in prayer against all that makes earth inferior to heaven. The Scriptures show us the real problem against which we struggle: the evil one exerts a will of his own and our own fallen will is a party to his rebellion.

Luther is graphic: the "furious foe" rampages upon the earth; he "rages and rages with all his power and might, marshaling all his subjects and even enlisting the world and our own flesh as his allies."¹⁴⁰ War rages and evil's power must be broken. Yet, Luther also cautions us, lest our striving against

¹³⁶ Cyprian, *The Lord's Prayer*, §9, 184.

¹³⁷ Thielicke, 69.

¹³⁸ David Crump, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: A New Testament Theology of Petitionary Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 299.

¹³⁹ Bloesch, 72. Note also the section above, "Prayer and the Paradox of Influencing an Immutably God."

¹⁴⁰ LC 62, KW, 448.

the sinful world stand in opposition to God's love for that same world. Cyprian comments: "It may moreover be thus understood, dearest brethren, that as the Lord commands and admonishes us, to love even our enemies, and to pray too for those who persecute us, we should make petition for those who still are *earthly*, who have not yet begun to be heavenly, that in their instance also that will of God may be done, which Christ fulfilled, in the saving and renewing of man's nature."¹⁴¹

How deeply we need God's will to be done amid our confusion and rebellion! No wonder that in this petition our Lord has us praying against ourselves. We sinners pray with Him: "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). This petition "presupposes willingness on our part to have our own will broken."¹⁴² It seeks the new, right, holy, and free spirit, or will, of Psalm 51:10 where the Holy Spirit teaches this paradox: "A free will does not want its own way, but looks only to God's will for direction. By so doing it then also remains free, untrammelled and unshackled."¹⁴³ Bloesch notes:

Because God's ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts, God's answer will usually be somewhat different from what we request. This is why Luther could say, "It is not a bad but a very good sign if the opposite of what we pray for appears to happen. Just as it is not a good sign if our prayers eventuate in the fulfillment of all we ask for."¹⁴⁴

In that same context, Luther added:

By this His most blessed counsel He renders us capable of receiving His gifts and His works. And we are capable of receiving His works and His counsels only when our own counsels have ceased and our works have stopped and we are made purely passive before God, both with regard to our inner as well as our outward activities. . . . What is said in Is. 28:21 takes place here: "He does a strange work in order to do His own work," and in Ps. 103:11: "As the heavens are high above the earth (that is, not according to our thoughts), so great is His steadfast love toward us, etc."¹⁴⁵

Rather than going too far into such paradoxical complexities, Melancthon reminds us that the third petition is also a simple prayer for obedience to

¹⁴¹ Cyprian, *The Lord's Prayer*, §12, 186.

¹⁴² Graebner, 26.

¹⁴³ AE, 42-48.

¹⁴⁴ Bloesch, 92, quoting Luther from *Lectures on Romans* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 240.

¹⁴⁵ AE 25:365.

God.¹⁴⁶ In His commands God has revealed His will in a form that is not too high for us (Ps. 131:1; 139:6). He tells us what is good and bad, what He wants for us and what He wants to spare us (cp. Luke 12:47) and teaches us to pray to be His faithful disciples, doing God's will as He reveals it.¹⁴⁷ In Psalm 40 the Spirit moves the Christian to pray: "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (v. 8), though "evils have encompassed me" (v. 12).

Humble acquiescence toward God smacks of fatalism for some, but this is a petition of quiet hope. Christ's prayer in the garden ends in the presence of a strengthening angel, not in grudging submission (Luke 22:43).¹⁴⁸ And David leads us into serene certainty: "My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forever" (Ps. 131, NIV).

The Fourth Petition: "Give us this day our daily bread"

In the first three petitions Jesus reminds us that on earth God's name is profaned, His kingly rule faces rebellion, and His gracious will must crush the raging opposition of sin and Satan. The last three petitions address equally grim truths of sin, temptation, and evil.¹⁴⁹ We might conclude that "earth is a desert drear" and that we should pray of nothing but heaven. Instead, the Lord's Prayer next leads us into confident prayer about today. Christian "spirituality" is not disembodied, nor does it neglect physical creation. The tradition of beginning the day with Psalm 95¹⁵⁰ invites us to "sing to the Lord" and gives this reason for our praise: "In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!" (vv. 4–6). Christian spirituality is anchored in creation.

Earthly, "daily bread" is the object of the fourth petition. The phrase "daily bread" is both familiar and challenging. Scholars debate the meaning of the

¹⁴⁶ Philip Melancthon, *Melancthon on Christian Doctrine*: Loci communes 1555 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 303. So also Luther: "That God's will be done means undoubtedly nothing else than that his commandments are kept, for through these God has revealed his will to us" (AE 42:43).

¹⁴⁷ See also Cyprian: "The will of God, is what Christ has done and taught." *The Lord's Prayer*, §11, 185.

¹⁴⁸ See Thielicke, 73: "It is the hour of angels, the hour of communion with the world of glory, the hour of deep, mysterious, hidden happiness."

¹⁴⁹ See Ebeling, 55: "The prayer for our daily bread stands unpretentiously in between with its face towards natural, everyday, matter-of-fact things."

¹⁵⁰ Psalm 95 is the chief psalm in the office of Matins (Morning Prayer).

word translated "daily."¹⁵¹ Yet, the petition is not unclear. Jesus teaches us to pray for bread—not steak or cherry cheese cake. And, no matter how we take "daily," Jesus is clearly teaching us to pray for bread that is needed at present and not for some far tomorrow. His focus is not on luxury or future desires, but the bread on our plate today.

To pray for bread may seem too small a thing after praying at the expansive level of the eternal name, kingdom, and will of God. But God, much more than the devil, is in the details of life. We may forget that by food came the Fall, but God remembers such a small detail. The God of highest heaven is not above lowly bread. "The very greatness of God lies in the fact that he condescends so low."¹⁵²

God-with-us shared our flesh and broke bread. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He noticed the hunger of the crowds before His disciples did (Mk. 8:1–3). Here He invites us to entrust ourselves to the Father's daily miracles of gracious provision, as He sends rain from heaven and causes earth to feed man and beast (Ps. 72:6; 147:8; Matt. 5:45). To pray for daily bread is to pray for this promised provision. We pray with confidence, knowing that our Father saw our need before we could ask (Is. 65:24). To pray for bread with Jesus is therefore also to learn thanksgiving, because life is sustained according to the gracious will of our heavenly Father. "In this petition, therefore, we are admonished and taught that men's affairs in this common outward life do not unfold rashly and occur by chance."¹⁵³

This petition wars against both anxiety and avarice. It teaches contentment and to wield prayer against life's worries. In Matthew 6 this petition parallels a warning that follows: "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matt. 6:34). Paul echoes this: "But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content" (1 Tim. 6:8). He urges us: "[D]o not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6). Worry recedes as we "receive our daily bread with thanksgiving."¹⁵⁴ Table prayers are spiritual weapons!

¹⁵¹ See Gibbs, 331. The Greek word ἐπιούσιος, -ov occurs only here in the NT. Scholars are uncertain about which two or more Greek words have been combined to form it. "Bread necessary for existence" assumes a derivation from *epi plus ousia*; "bread for the current day" derives from *epi ten ousian*; "bread for tomorrow" derives from *he epiousia homera*; and "bread that is coming" assumes that the present infinitive of *epimi* lies behind the word in the text. Gibbs endorses the fourth understanding of the phrase: "it emphasizes that Jesus' disciples cannot procure or provide today's bread for themselves; it must be the bread that is drawing near to them from the Father's provision." See Chemnitz for the various understandings of "daily" in the Fathers, *The Lord's Prayer*, 58–61.

¹⁵² Thielicke, 86.

¹⁵³ Chemnitz, *The Lord's Prayer*, 62.

¹⁵⁴ *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, 189.

We also need a weapon against greed. Consumer culture sucks us into a whirlpool of desires that make us petulant amid prosperity. Gourmands demand the exotic and fuss about presentation. But a child of God who prays this Word can delight in a morsel of bread. Who is happier? And who is more generous—one who has learned to pray confidently for daily bread or one who is longing for more and better?¹⁵⁵ Recognition of a generous God, not comparative wealth, creates generous people. In this petition our Lord returns to the plural: “give us this day our daily bread.” I may have all the bread I need, but I am not praying only for myself in this petition. I pray with those who are hungry, and gratefully realize that my plenty is the very means by which some of them may be filled. There is enough for all in most times. Hunger is less often due to a lack of God-given resources than it is to hoarding and greed.

If I may be the instrument by which another receives daily bread, then my own daily bread also comes by means of others. The farmer, the miller, the baker, the trucker, the merchant—all of them and others are God’s daily instruments for feeding me and the world. To see this is to realize that the fourth petition cannot be narrow in scope, dealing only with a slice of bread or the body’s need for food. Luther rightly explains “daily bread” to mean “everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body.”¹⁵⁶ So, while the simplicity of bread compels our prayerful meditation, this petition also rightly leads us into prayers for other needs, from things to the people whose lives touch our own.¹⁵⁷ To pray the fourth petition with Jesus is to pray for the world, *this world*, where neither laziness nor selfishness is a godly option (Ps. 128:2; Eph. 4:28). So it is that “the breaking of bread and prayers” (Acts 2:42¹⁵⁸) always accompany one another, that we pray “for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions” (1 Tim. 2:1–2), and we recognize that by the Word and prayer, all that God has created is made holy (1 Tim. 4:4–5). With Luther we pray for all that daily life requires.¹⁵⁹ By such means God provides for us.

Cyprian suggested that daily bread “may be understood, both in the spiritual and in the simple meaning, seeing that either purport contains a divine aid, for the advancing of our salvation.”¹⁶⁰ By a “spiritual” meaning, Cyprian

¹⁵⁵ Perhaps this is one reason that those who make more money actually give a lower percentage of income to charity than those with less. Rachel Gardyn, “Generosity and Income,” *BNET: The CBS Interactive Business Network*, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m4021/is_11_24/ai_95309979/. See also facts from the 2000 census at http://www.allcountries.org/usensus/638_charity_contributions_average_dollar_amount_and.html.

¹⁵⁶ *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*, 189.

¹⁵⁷ In Hebrew (bread) refers to food in general as well as to bread in specific, as Chemnitz, *The Lord’s Prayer*, 57, points out, noting that in various passages, “bread” is goat’s milk (Prov. 27:27), cattle feed (Ps. 147:9), and fruit (Jer. 11:19).

¹⁵⁸ This applies whether we consider “breaking of bread” to refer to sharing of food or to the Holy Sacrament.

¹⁵⁹ See “What is meant by daily bread?” SC 3:14, KW, 357.

¹⁶⁰ Cyprian, *The Lord’s Prayer*, §13, 187.

Only God’s humbling work can prevent such pride that assumes that “my sins are forgivable,” but not those of another. Yet, there is more here than a lesson in humility. These words are a promise. “God’s promise is that he will hear our prayers. This promise implies the remission of sins, for nothing entitles us to be heard except the mercy of God in Christ. Therefore we can pray only in the confidence that God is willing to overlook our sins.”¹⁶¹ In a beautiful irony, we are doubly assured of God’s forgiveness by the fact that God actually *commands* us to pray to be forgiven: “by this commandment [God] makes it clear that he will not cast us out or drive us away, even though we are sinners; he wishes rather to draw us to himself so that we may humble ourselves before him, lament our misery and plight, and pray for grace and help.”¹⁶² When God so graciously commands this, it’s as if a wealthy man *insisted* on giving a feast to a beggar who only dared to hope for a morsel.

This astounding generosity provides the only weapon against our unforgiving hearts. Every pastor, sooner or later, will hear someone confess that the hurt caused by another’s sin is so deep that the individual wants to forgive, but cannot. “Pastor, I just can’t forget it.” The person molested as a child, someone unjustly fired, the family of a murder victim—these and similar situations have often left Christians struggling and tearfully admitting that they cannot forgive from their own hearts. Such raw honesty we dare not trivialize. But it can be addressed by the strong love of God in Christ.

In the command and promise of the fifth petition, our Lord gives an all-encompassing plural pronoun: “forgive us!” Consider, first, that Christ, who became sin for us “that we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21), leads us in this prayer for our own forgiveness even as He also prayed “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34) from the cross for us. That He “becomes sin” for us results in atonement even for our sins of pride and “unforgiveness.” Here, too, His redeeming work is greater than our sin. He who atones for our sin joins Himself to us in order to free us also from this sin.

Second, the “forgive us” of the fifth petition is placed on our lips so that we are praying for all sinners, including the ones for whom we can feel no heartfelt forgiveness. It is not hypocrisy to pray against my feelings—it is my only hope for victory against those feelings which, left unchecked, would drive me from Christ. In so doing, I pray for an absolution far greater than any I could give by myself—I pray with Christ and His church for us and the forgiveness of our sins. This isn’t for “me” alone, rather it assures me of forgiveness for me and my neighbor—including the one who gravely wounded me. Such grace extends to all, even to me when, in pride or trauma, I am blinded to my own

You would excuse him, cover up his wrongdoing, bid others to be silent, pray to God on his behalf, admonish him as a brother, and help him to rise again.”

¹⁶¹ Vilmos Vajta, *Luther on Worship* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 162. See SC, III, KW, 16.

¹⁶² LC 3:11, KW, 442.

has in mind the One who said, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). Having been graciously given Christ, that Bread by which we never fear hunger, all fears of body or soul are vanquished. Instead, with God’s people of old we praise the Lord.

From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
You cause the grass to grow for the livestock
and plants for man to cultivate,
that he may bring forth food from the earth
and wine to gladden the heart of man,
oil to make his face shine
and bread to strengthen man’s heart [Ps. 104:13–15].

The Fifth Petition: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”

Jesus teaches penitent prayer: “Forgive us.”¹⁶³ This is not provisional, as in “If we have sinned in any way, please forgive.” No, we *have* sinned and Jesus compels us to admit it. We are God’s children, justified by grace through faith in Christ alone. His cross is at the heart of this petition and of all Christian prayer. Pride wilts in the face of the clear identification of our need for forgiveness. Cyprian draws the obvious conclusion: “That no man may plume himself with the pretence of innocence, and perish more wretchedly through self-exaltation, he is instructed and taught that he commits sin every day, by being commanded to pray every day for his sins.”¹⁶⁴ Humility prevents us from praying “as we forgive those who trespass against us” as hypocrites. Luther warns those who “are blind to their own sin and so magnify that of their neighbor that they can declare: ‘I will not and cannot forgive him. I will never be reconciled to him.’”¹⁶⁵ It may be true that a refusal to forgive harms the unforgiving individual psychologically, but a far greater danger is the potential judgment that comes of a proud refusal to forgive others, as Luther reminds us.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ The most common English form of the fifth petition is “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” But the less commonly used version, referring to “debts,” follows the Greek more closely. A debt indicates a failed obligation, not a mere misstep (“trespass”). The word “debt” will not allow us to quibble or trivialize, for we owe God and our neighbor nothing less than the obligation of love. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). See Thielicke, 91–93.

¹⁶⁴ Cyprian, *The Lord’s Prayer*, §15, 189–190.

¹⁶⁵ AE 42:65.

¹⁶⁶ “Beware O man! Not he who offends you but you who refuses to forgive inflicts a harm on you greater than the whole world could do.” AE 42:66. Luther adds (p. 67) that gossip is a frequent mark of unforgiving pride toward another: “O you hypocrite and charlatan! If you really were your neighbor’s friend you would keep silent and not spread his misfortune with such delight and relish. Your accursed displeasure would change into pity and compassion.”

serious guilt. Such grace that forgives the world cannot exclude me or my neighbor. Instead it leads us all to pray together, “Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.” With David we pray that God, who might justly condemn us, would instead create and renew “a clean heart” and “a right spirit” within us (Ps. 51:10).

The Sixth Petition: Lead us not into temptation

Luther says, “This petition brings to our attention the miserable life that we lead here on earth. It is nothing more than one great trial.”¹⁶⁷ His comment might seem an exaggeration if not outright nonsense to many. After all, one does not have to be delusional to recognize the blessings of this created world and to say, “Life is good.” Yet, Luther also points to another fact: “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Satan’s roar may often be drowned out by the relative ease of our age and our droning complacency, but our Lord gives a petition to shake us out of any deceit, one that He repeated just before His own testing in Gethsemane. “Pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Luke 22:40).

A question arises: Why do we ask our heavenly Father not to lead us into temptation? There is something frightening in such language. It suggests that, in some way, God is connected with temptation. James tells us that “God himself tempts no one” (1:13), which Luther’s catechism strongly affirms.¹⁶⁸ Yet, the petition Jesus gives us is addressed to the Father and it addresses *Him* saying, “Lead us not into temptation.” It does not say, “Do not let *Satan* lead us into temptation.”

We rightly soften this by speaking of what God “allows” rather than what He “purposefully wills,” but even then we need to ask: Is God somehow connected to the temptations we face?¹⁶⁹ Luther helps us to remember that God’s grace is experienced in a world of sin, death, and Satan. Though these enemies assault us, they are really Christ’s enemies. We face them as He leads us in the battle of life, yet we also pray for relief from such conflict.¹⁷⁰ Life here and now is such that we do face the reality that is translated into English as “temptation.” Jeffrey Gibbs helps us understand this reality without softening it by noting that the sixth petition *must* be understood together with the seventh, “but deliver us from evil.” Noting that the Spirit led Jesus to be tempted in

¹⁶⁷ AE 42:71.

¹⁶⁸ “It is true that God tempts no one. . . .” SC, III, 18.

¹⁶⁹ Note the question as Guardini, 78, puts it: “Can God permit temptation to become so severe that we *must* fall? If we deny that He can, and that, in view of His divinity, He may, we are making God innocuous.”

¹⁷⁰ See Luther’s comments on Psalm 110:2b: “We must live in the midst of Christ’s enemies . . . They are not especially our enemies but His, and they plague us because of Him. He will rule and conquer in this manner: even though His Christians feel themselves in deepest anxiety, weak, and the victims of death and hell, He will nevertheless be mighty in them against the devil’s fright and terrors of sin and death by means of His comfort, power, victory, joy, and life.” AE 13:279–280.

the wilderness (Matt. 4:1), he identifies the connection of temptation to battle with Satan. This prayer then reflects "Jesus' wilderness combat with Satan, in a sort of grim-faced, realistic fashion. It will be the Father's purpose at times to bring Jesus' disciples into confrontation and conflict with Satan and his temptations."¹⁷¹

The sixth petition reflects an "alien work" of God who kills and makes alive (Deut. 32:39), and who

... does not want us to follow the example of the Manichaeans and imagine that there are several gods: one, the source of all good; the other, the source of all evil. God wants us to regard the evils that we experience as coming to us with His permission. If He had not permitted it, the devil would never have afflicted Job so fearfully (Job 1:12). God permits evils to come to us; for it is His will that, when we have been chastened, we cast ourselves on His mercy.¹⁷²

Even God's good Law is a temptation of sorts to us. It is too good for us sinners. As God leads us to know His truth about how we are to live, we are easily intimidated because He is too high and holy—His Law is too pure for us sinners. Like Adam and Eve, we want to flee from His overwhelming holiness, only compounding our unholiness. This paradox influenced Luther to understand the strange twelfth verse of Psalm 2, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry with you," as an invitation to flee toward God's forgiving embrace in the person of the Son, rather than away from His just judgments. "There is great force, then, in the word 'kiss'; for it indicates that we should embrace this Son with our whole heart and see or hear nothing else than Christ, and Him crucified."¹⁷³

We will face temptation of every sort, and we are no match for any of it. Our Lord has us pray in light of our weakness and not from foolish bravado.¹⁷⁴ We "cast ourselves on His mercy" because we are helpless by ourselves against temptations even to obvious sins—disrespect toward authority, violence, lust, greed, dishonesty, envy, and jealousy. How much more are we utterly hopeless in the face of temptation to sins we do not even recognize: remaking God according to our desires, ignoring His Word, profaning His name, and despising His Gospel and the means by which the Spirit makes His truth known to us? These are the sins that lead to the "great shame and vice"

¹⁷¹ Gibbs, 344. His discussion of the sixth petition is on pages 337–345.

¹⁷² AE 13:135.

¹⁷³ AE 12:88.

¹⁷⁴ Cyprian: "When we thus pray that we may not enter into temptation, we are cautioned by this prayer of our own infirmity and weakness, lest any presumptuously exalt himself. . . ." *The Lord's Prayer*, §17, 192.

of "false belief" and "despair"¹⁷⁵ and would separate us from faith in our only Savior. These are the greatest dangers humanity faces. "For this is exactly what temptation means: to allow oneself to be torn away from God."¹⁷⁶

We learn to pray "Lead us not into temptation" from the only one who has both faced and withstood every temptation (Heb 4:15). We pray with the faithful: "Set a watch before my mouth, O Lord, and guard the door of my lips. Let not my heart incline to any evil thing. Let me not be occupied in wickedness with evildoers" (Ps. 141:3–4a).¹⁷⁷

*The Seventh Petition: But deliver us from evil*¹⁷⁸

The first word of this petition, "but," means the sixth and seventh petitions are inseparable. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."¹⁷⁹ We are not defenseless in the face of temptation's traps and snares, for a final deliverance from all evil is promised—such confidence is ours as we pray in and with Christ. "Evil" is left undefined by our Lord in His prayer. It can be personal, as "the evil one, Satan,"¹⁸⁰ or viewed in the context of sin, or generalized as all that is contrary to good. Rather than quibble about a specific sense of "evil," it seems wisest to accept with simplicity Christ's invitation to cry out for help in the face of a life where evil of one kind or another is never absent.

Death is the surest sign of evil's presence. As such, "Deliver us from evil" echoes the prayer from the cross: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). So *The Small Catechism* reminds us that we are asking our Father to "give us a blessed end."¹⁸¹ Yet, even when death seems far off, this petition condenses all of Christian prayer into a phrase. We pray because evil surrounds us and invades us. The sunniest day is fraught with the power of sin, death, and Satan. Unlike the optimists of every age, there is no illusion in the Christian faith about everyone and everything being "basically good." There is no one, no time, no place exempt from the evil one and his power. Evil

¹⁷⁵ *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Thielicke, 119.

¹⁷⁷ Translation is from *Evening Prayer, Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), 145. The office and same translation are also found in *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 254 and *LSB*, 246.

¹⁷⁸ The brief version of the Lord's Prayer, from Luke, does not include this petition. Just as the SC treated the third petition of a summary of the first and second petitions, Luther treats the seventh as a summary of the whole prayer.

¹⁷⁹ See comments on the sixth petition and Gibbs, 344. Chemnitz points out that the adversative can rightly be understood to connect the last two petitions into one central thought, presented negatively and then positively.

¹⁸⁰ The use of the definite article in the original Greek may indicate that "the evil [one]" is intended.

¹⁸¹ *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, 22. Chemnitz (*The Lord's Prayer*, 93) adds: "We ask that we may not die carelessly in our sins, unprepared without repentance (John 8:24), but that he would grant us a godly and saving end of this life. We ask to die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13)."

poisons even our best, Spirit-given intentions: "the evil that I do not want is what I keep on doing" (Rom. 7:19).

This is not the way our culture ordinarily thinks of evil. Our era tends to see evil only in other forms: environmental degradation, warfare, terrorism, corporate misbehavior, and political opponents. We are less able to see the sub-surface of evil: rebellion against God and His Law, spiritual deceit, and Satan. Often such things are viewed as nothing more than the left-over relics of unenlightened medievalism. Yet, "Just because we do not see a thing or have forgotten how to see it does not mean that it no longer exists."¹⁸² The evil that compels our prayers is surely both the grim realities that we see and also those we do not see. In the historic Litany the church rightly prays to be delivered from "all evil," everything from "pestilence and famine" to "everlasting death."¹⁸³ None of our human systems has resolved economic evils; how much less have we defeated the ultimate evils of sin, Satan, and hell!¹⁸⁴

Our weakness compels our prayers; it does not constrict them. To pray for God's deliverance is bigger and richer than our imagination. It certainly is not escapist in tone. Paul reminds us that the force of evil is so great that it can be faced only by those who are "strong in the Lord and the power of his might," protected by "the full armor of God" (see Eph. 6:10–17). Note how Paul's urgent appeal ends:

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.¹⁸⁵

Because of evil we pray with fellow saints and for them—for the Gospel to be fearlessly proclaimed. Evil's depth is great, but so is its breadth. We pray in plural, "deliver us from evil," praying for all the church and for the world that needs to know "the mystery of the gospel." "My situation is not the only situation covered by this prayer. I suddenly find myself confronted by an infinite society of sufferers in which I am but a drop in the ocean."¹⁸⁶ Here again praying the psalms enriches the content of our prayers. There

¹⁸² Thielicke, 93.

¹⁸³ *LSB*, 288.

¹⁸⁴ Evil is so great that Luther rightly calls the seventh petition the "summary" of prayer, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, 22. He also argues that this petition rightly comes at the end, not the beginning of prayer, lest we seek merely a deliverance of our own definition and forget "God's honor, his name, and his will." AE 42:75.

¹⁸⁵ Eph. 6:18–20 NIV. Commenting on these verses, John Koenig suggests that praying in the Spirit means "praising and thanking God in the name of Jesus." Koenig, 157.

¹⁸⁶ Ebeling, *The Lord's Prayer*, 105.

we learn to pray not only "O Lord, how many are my foes. . . . deliver me, O my God" (Ps. 3:1, 7, NIV), but also, "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake!" (Ps. 79:9, emphases added).

Evil is all too overwhelming, and yet we are not overcome. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). Not our paltry personal good, but only the good that is Christ and is ours in Him. Christ, and Christ alone, is the good who overcomes evil and so is our courage and confidence. "But having said, *Deliver us from evil*, there remains nothing beyond for us to ask for, after petition made for God's protection from evil; for that gained, we stand secure and safe, against all things that the Devil and the world work against us."¹⁸⁷ Even in the face of evil's awesome power, our prayers are confident. He who did no evil (Luke 23:22) has overcome it for us. Christ is our confidence for He "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1:4, emphasis added). In such a way the Lord's Prayer takes us from the ebullient confidence of a little child whose heavenly Father is listening, to that seasoned serenity of aging saints whose confident, "Deliver us from evil," means that they are also ready to "depart in peace" because they have seen the Father's salvation in the face of Jesus Christ (Luke 2:29; 2 Cor. 4:6).

¹⁸⁷ Cyprian, *The Lord's Prayer*, §18, 192.

Conclusion

It has become so customary at the end of prayer to say, “Amen,” that it is often meaningless. Both children and adults frequently understand the Amen to mean, essentially, “The end.” That the word actually means, “surely” or “truly,” is worthy of emphasis.¹⁸⁸ It calls to mind the importance of earnestness and sincerity in prayer. To add our Amen when another prays or to affirm it after the Lord’s Prayer or a psalm is a claim of personal involvement and affirmation—this is also *our* prayer, *our* confession, *our* earnest and sincere desire. Its usage in Scripture is no mere formality, but a reminder that nothing in the true faith is our invention or entirely individual in nature. God declares the truth, He directs our lives and our prayers, and He bids us to affirm that all His Word and work is “surely” and “truly” good (see Deut. 27:15–26, where Israel is commanded to affirm God’s Word with their “Amen.”). As we pray in worship, only one may speak aloud, but the Amen of the assembly ought to mean nothing less than our wholehearted affirmation. Similarly, when we pray with Christ, using His words, the Amen makes His prayer our own.

All this affirms certain aspects of what may be called both “Evangelical” and “Catholic” emphases about Christian prayer. On the one hand, Evangelical Christians are noted for often insisting that prayer should be personal and meaningful—a legitimate priority. Luther had long before expressed that very concern: “You should also know that I do not want you to recite all these words in your prayer. That would make it nothing but idle chatter and prattle, read word for word out of a book as were the rosaries by the laity and the prayers of the priests and monks. Rather do I want your heart to be stirred. . . .”¹⁸⁹ Sincere, devout prayer alone is genuine prayer.

On the other hand, many Christians assume that such a concern means that one can never make use of another person’s prayer—“reading from a book.” Such a perspective criticizes liturgical or memorized prayers, the prayers of church tradition in the daily offices, and even praying the Psalter or Lord’s Prayer, saying such practices are “too Catholic.” Luther’s criticism of prayers that are “word for word out of a book” might seem to endorse this view at first. Yet, in the quotation from the previous paragraph, Luther goes on to complete the final sentence in this way: “Rather do I want your heart to be stirred *and guided* concerning the thoughts which ought to be comprehended in the Lord’s Prayer.”¹⁹⁰

That Jesus teaches us to pray, providing actual words and content, that the Bible includes the prayers of the Psalter, and that the Word of God calls us to

¹⁸⁸ See 128, defined as “surely!” in William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1971), 20. The root of the term is “to believe.”

¹⁸⁹ AE 43:198.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

speaking a sincere Amen to His truth—all of this clearly indicates that Christian prayer is both free *and* disciplined. It is heartfelt, *and* mindful. It is subjective *and* objective. It is joyful *and* tearful. It is individual *and* corporate. It is words unique to each individual *and* words common to every believer. It is both the utter simplicity of the infant’s cry, *Abba*, *and* the challenge of praying with saints of the past, present, and future. We pray as individuals, pouring out the secret things known only to us and God, *and* we pray as Christ’s body, the church, speaking the common needs of all humanity.

What is Christian prayer? It is the response of the redeemed child of God to his heavenly Father. It is the cry of the justified—tearful or joyful (Ps. 28:2, 7)—but always springing forth from faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Why do we pray? Because God the Holy Spirit opens our lips and fills hearts and mouths with praise (Ps. 51:15)—because of command and promise, because of words God has given and burdens we cannot bear. How do we pray? With Christ. Always, ever, only in Him, in His words, in the confidence only He can give.

We pray in a thousand tongues and a thousand ways. But, most of all, we just cannot stop praying, for we pray by the Spirit of Christ who has brought us to faith in our Father.

. . . a Christian always has the Spirit of supplication with him, and his heart is continually sending forth sighs and petitions to God, regardless of whether he happens to be eating or drinking or working. . . . Nevertheless, I say, outward prayer must also go on, both individual prayer and corporate prayer. In the morning and in the evening, at table and whenever he has time. . . . Such prayer is a precious thing and a powerful defense against the devil and his assaults. For in it, all Christendom combines its forces with one accord; and the harder it prays, the more effective it is and the sooner it is heard. . . . Thus it is certain that whatever still stands and endures, whether it is in the spiritual or in the secular realm, is being preserved through prayer.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ AE 21:139–140.

IMMIGRANTS AMONG US

**A Lutheran Framework
for Addressing
Immigration Issues**



**A Report of the
Commission on Theology and Church Relations
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
November 2012**

Immigrants Among Us: Abbreviations

AE *Luther's Works*. American ed. 55 vols. St. Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955–1986

Ap Apology of the Augsburg Confession

KW *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.

LC The Large Catechism

SA Smalcald Articles

SC Small Catechism

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Immigrants Among Us

A Lutheran Framework for Addressing Immigration Issues

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Immigrants Among Us

A Lutheran Framework for Addressing Immigration Issues

Preface

The following report is no more or less than the subtitle suggests: a *Lutheran framework* for considering the complex and challenging topic of immigration in the United States. To be clear, the document does not present the "official position" of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on current debates in the United States regarding immigration. This is true for several reasons: (1) The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) does not determine the official position of the Synod. Our reports are published for the purpose of study and discussion, not as a final statement on doctrine and practice. (2) The Synod did not ask for a perspective on immigration that would attempt to settle all discussions or end debate in the LCMS (much less the U.S. itself!). (3) In taking on an assignment from the Synod, the CTCR attempts to address the assigned issue(s) on the basis of scriptural and confessional truths that are not limited to the fluid, constantly changing realities of particular social, political, legal, or cultural circumstances. A document that was determined, above all, to be "relevant" to current debates on this issue would quickly become irrelevant. (4) As the document itself seeks to explain, there are social, political, and legal issues that are not decisively addressed by the Word of God and about which, therefore, Christians committed to the same understanding of scriptural authority may disagree.

At the same time, the Commission does seek to provide here a helpful resource for Christians—particularly Lutherans—to consider the challenging issue of immigration. One of our goals is to help individuals with very strong opinions to consider how and why there are conscientious, thoughtful Christians who have come to different conclusions about immigration. Above all, the Commission wishes to remind readers that both the immigrant and the fellow citizen are our neighbors—individuals we are called to love. Therefore, the following report includes not only a theological discussion of some of the questions raised by Christian citizens regarding immigration, but also two Appendices. Appendix I provides a series of case studies. Appendix II consists of two brief lists of terms, the first legal and the second theological, explaining how these terms are used in the document. The "immigration terms" occur frequently in national debates, while the listed "theological terms" are important for understanding the theological perspective of this document. You may wish to review Appendix II before reading the report.

5

I. Immigrant Neighbors Past and Present:

How Should Scripture Inform Attitudes Towards Immigrants Today?

When dealing with the narrow topic of illegal immigration, we must come to terms with a basic problem of interpretation, namely, that Scripture does not deal specifically with the narrow question of the church's attitude towards "illegal" or "undocumented" immigrants. Scripture deals with the church's basic attitude towards immigrants (aliens, sojourners, strangers) who live in the midst of God's people without qualifying its teachings on the basis of the legal or illegal status of these immigrants. While this problem might puzzle us at first, its recognition allows us, on the one hand, to avoid giving absolute biblical answers to an issue Scripture does not address directly, and, on the other, to appreciate fully the foundational biblical values that, as a starting point, must inform the church's actions among immigrants regardless of their status in society.

Immigrants are, quite simply, neighbors. As neighbors, immigrants fall under the law of God, which calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves. While the Hebrew word Hebrew *rea* (רֵעַ) in God's mandate to love the "neighbor" applies first and most immediately to the people of Israel, the term also includes those outside of the covenant community—including the *ger* (גֵּר) or stranger.¹³

"When a stranger sojourns with you in the land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:33-34, cf. Lev. 19:18, italics added).

This representative text offers the basic narrative and guide in the Old Testament for a biblical consensus on God-pleasing attitudes towards immigrants, aliens, or sojourners as "neighbors" whom we ought to love as ourselves. The New Testament assumes the Old Testament teaching and values in this regard, highlighting the broader use of the term *plesion* (πλησιον) to include relationships characterized by a concern for the well-being of those who stand outside of the religious, cultic, political, and ethnic ties that bind the people of Israel to one another (e.g., enemies, Samaritans).¹⁴

¹³ According to Lev. 19:18 the command to love one's neighbor applies unequivocally towards members of the covenant of Yahweh and not self-evidently towards all men. It is true... that Lev. 19:34 also imposes an obligation towards the *ger* who dwells in the land (cf. Dt. 10:19), and the same words are used in this connection as Lev. 19:18 uses [them] with reference to Israelites... The commandment is thus given a decisive extension." Johannes Fichtner, *πλησιον*, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [hereafter TDNT], vol. 6 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1968), 315.

¹⁴ In Mt. 22:39 and Mk. 12:31 ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself"), Jesus makes reference to Lev. 19:18. Making *πλησιον* a term that includes love of one's enemies and persecutors (Mt. 5:43-48), or a few helped by an unlikely good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37), Jesus defines "neighbor" more universally or in a way that transcends relationships among the people of

The Hebrew word *ger* can be translated in any number of ways: alien, foreigner, immigrant, sojourner, or stranger.¹⁵ When looking at these texts and their call to love the sojourner or alien, however, one must be careful not to transfer to them a contemporary interpretation or read them in an anachronistic manner. A common approach to such scriptural texts today would tend to argue that love for the immigrant neighbor in Scripture trumps important concerns related to immigration law.¹⁶ It must be noted, however, that immigrants in Old Testament times did not live in our modern era of sovereign nation-states where immigration of foreign nationals is arguably much more regulated according to state law.¹⁷ While biblical mandates to love and welcome the stranger in our midst as our neighbor stand as God's law, we cannot ignore the demands that civil laws place upon citizens and immigrants alike in the contemporary U.S. and international contexts. Moreover, we must affirm the right of the state to establish laws and policies concerning a matter such as immigration, including laws that limit immigration in various ways for the protection and welfare of its citizens. Matters such as national security and human trafficking, for example, are legitimate and necessary areas of governance, which seeks to restrain evil and promote good (Rom. 13:3-4).

It must also be acknowledged that in Old Testament times the law of God governed both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the people of Israel. In such a state of affairs, aliens were not *ipso facto* or automatically the recipients of the spiritual and temporal benefits of God's people. A more comprehensive look

Israel—seen as a people sharing either a common religion or a common political identity—in order to include all kinds of neighbors who need our prayers and help. See Heinrich Greeven, *πλησιον*, in TDNT, vol. 6 (1968), 316-317; Fichtner notes that, already in the choice of the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) to translate *ger* as *πλησιον*, we have the use of "a term so broad and general, and which is not in any way restricted to the fellow-member of the covenant." Ibid., 315.

¹⁵ See also Ex. 22:21, 23:9, Dt. 10:18-19, 24:14-15, 24:17-22, Ps. 146:9, Jer. 7:5-7, Zec. 7:8-10, Mal. 3:5.

¹⁶ Amstutz and Meilaender argue that many high-profile public church statements on immigration, which stress love for the immigrant over against the concern for the rule of law, typically do not deal adequately with "middle" level considerations such as "the purposes of politics, relationships between insiders and outsiders, and the foundations of international order." Mark Amstutz and Peter Meilaender, "Public Policy & the Church: Spiritual Priorities," *The City* (Spring 2011), 13. The authors offer as examples of a "one-sided" view the 2009 resolution on immigration issues of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the 2003 joint pastoral letter issued by the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States concerning migration, and the 2009 social policy resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) on immigration reform (pp. 4-5).

¹⁷ "Unlike either the world of Exodus and Leviticus, or that in which Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt, the contemporary world consists of independent nation-states, recognized as sovereign entities under modern international law, among whose sovereign rights (and duties) are to control the flow of persons across international borders and regulate the distribution of national citizenship." "Public Policy & the Church," 8-9; Hoffmeier argues, on the other hand, that "nation states large and small in the biblical world were clearly delineated by borders and were often defended by large forts and military outposts." See James K. Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens, and the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 153. His argument is laid out in the second chapter of his book (pp. 39-57).

at the use of *ger* in Deuteronomy shows a mixed picture concerning the relationship of sojourners to Israel. While the representative text from Leviticus 19:33-34 and other similar texts show God's consistent call to Israel to love and care for the strangers in their midst, other texts can be read as showing that not all foreigners have the same status as Israelites.¹⁸

This state of affairs, where strangers are not full recipients of the temporal benefits held by members of an established group, is due partly to the link between kinship and the inheritance and ownership of land that characterized Israelite and other Near Eastern societies—a network no longer available to immigrants who moved to Israel and thus depended in part on the mercy of God's people.¹⁹ Yet another reason for not incorporating sojourners into the temporal (and even spiritual) benefits of God's people at times may simply lie in the hardness of Israel's heart towards vulnerable and disadvantaged neighbors even among their own people—a problem not unheard of in the history of God's people and one condemned in Scripture.²⁰

Even by Old Testament standards, God's call to Israel for welcoming and loving the alien does not necessarily translate into equal temporal privileges for the alien under the laws that govern the affairs of God's people. Similarly, lack of equal status is assumed in the present context of nation-states where responsibilities towards citizens have a higher priority than those towards foreign nationals.²¹ We know, for example, that a foreign national on a tourist visa is allowed to visit the U.S. for a limited time, but may not seek gainful

¹⁸ See Luis R. Rivera Rodríguez for an example of an author who overstates the significance of the biblical distinction in status between Israelites and foreigners. He views the laws of Deuteronomy as biased and harmful to the foreigner; "Immigration and the Bible: Comments by a Diasporic Theologian," *Perspectives: Occasional Papers* 10 (2009): 23-36, especially 31. For a more positive approach in general to Israel's ways of dealing with sojourners in their midst, compare the comment by M. Daniel Carroll R.: "Help for the needy had to occur at several levels: individual families (giving rest on the Sabbath, including sojourners in celebrations), the community (gleaning laws), workplaces of whatever kind (payment of wages), religious centers (collecting the tithe), and at the city gate with the elders or other legal gatherings (fairness in legal matters)." See *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 105.

¹⁹ "The challenge that sojourners—those immigrants or refugees who had moved to Israel—faced when arriving in the land was that they had left behind their kinship network. As a result, they were without the help that only an extended family could offer. As foreigners, they were also excluded from the land tenure system. Sojourners, therefore, could be particularly vulnerable to the unexpected and sometimes harsh vicissitudes of life. Without land and kin, many sojourners would be dependent on the Israelites for work, provision, and protection... Apparently, a few became successful, but these seem to be the exception to the rule (Lev. 25:47)." *Christians at the Border*, 103.

²⁰ "The prophets thundered against those Israelites who did not accept responsibility to care for these folk. It was a breach of their faith in the Lord, and he would not tolerate this disobedience (Jer. 22:3; Ezek. 22:7; Mal. 3:5; cf. Ps. 94:6). True religion was inseparable from an ethic of charity toward the disadvantaged (Jer. 7:4-8; Zech. 7:8-10)." *Christians at the Border*, 103-104.

²¹ Mark Amstutz and Peter Meilaender argue that, in a representative democracy, the very existence of immigration laws assumes "a preference for the interests of our fellow citizens over those of outsiders"; "Public Policy & the Church," *The City* 4 (2011): 8.

employment in the country. Moreover, a lawful permanent resident²² of the U.S. is given the privilege to work and make a living in the land, but may not vote in state and national elections or serve in juries. However, should we assume that these distinctions made in our day and age between citizens and foreign nationals ultimately find their biblical basis in Old Testament distinctions between Israel and the strangers in their midst? Just as there is a danger in using the Old Testament data anachronistically to argue for love of the stranger without concern for civil law today, there is also a danger of using distinctions between Israel and sojourners in the Old Testament to defend similar distinctions in immigration law and enforcement of borders today.

Given the context of the New Testament era, where "Israel" refers to the church and not to a particular political entity, we must be careful not to use the temporal and political laws of Israel as "a" or "the" biblical blueprint for defending or designing modern nation-state policies or laws.²³ In the New Testament era, for instance, it is quite possible to speak of Christian immigrants as belonging to spiritual "Israel," and therefore, as our brothers and sisters in Christ and as heirs of all the spiritual rights and benefits of being children of God. At the same time, in terms of the temporal state today, we can acknowledge that these same immigrants may reside in the nation legally or illegally. On the one hand, as spiritual Israel, Christian immigrants participate in all the spiritual blessings of God's people through faith in Christ. At the same time, one can admit that under the temporal state and its laws these same brothers and sisters do not share with Christian citizens of the state the same temporal rights and privileges under the civil law in every case.²⁴

As stated above, when using biblical mandates in the church to love and welcome the stranger, we cannot ignore the distinction between spiritual and temporal realms. It is also the case that, in drawing distinctions between Israel and sojourners, the Old Testament does not offer binding positions or policies on immigration law broadly speaking or "illegal" immigration narrowly speaking. Some approaches to the scriptural texts dealing with immigrants might attempt to use the biblical data to defend or justify particular forms of

²² See Appendix II for a legal definition of this term.

²³ For a representative example of a discussion concerning Old Testament Israel as a type of Jesus (New Israel reduced to one) and the Christian church (New Israel through faith in Christ), as well as of the spiritual (and thus non-temporal) nature of the church in the New Testament, see CTCR, *The "End Times": A Study on Eschatology and Millennialism* (1989), 13-17; online in English and Spanish at <http://www.icms.org/page.asp?pid=683>.

²⁴ Drawing on the distinction between the two kingdoms, Amstutz and Meilaender offer examples where biblical ethics and state policies are not synonymous: "All persons, for example, bear the image of God and therefore possess equal and innate human dignity. But this equal dignity does not automatically create membership entitlements. The colleges where we teach admit only some students out of a large pool of applicants. A person may wish to work for a particular company, but the decision on whether to offer him a job rests with the employer, not the applicant. Membership in states is carefully regulated, requiring passports, visas, and other documentation before an alien may cross national borders" ("Public Policy & the Church," 11-12).

immigration enforcement today.²⁵ Christians should not use the Old Testament, however, to argue for love of the immigrant in ways that diminish the significance of the rule of law as it functions in nation-states today. Similarly, Christians must be cautious about using particular distinctions between Israel and aliens made in the Old Testament to advocate for particular forms of immigration law or law enforcement today, or to argue that such ancient biblical distinctions can or must be replicated in terms of the relationship between citizens and foreign nationals in contemporary nation-states.

How then should the Scriptures inform our attitude towards immigrants today? The biblical data invites us to see immigrants as our neighbors. Scripture tells us what motivates Israel's love for its immigrant neighbor, and what such love concretely entails at this or that time in the history of God's people. For instance, the people of God are to love the alien because they, too, were aliens in Egypt (Ex. 22:21, 23:9, Lev. 19:34, Dt. 10:19, 24:17-22) and thus truly "know the heart of a sojourner" in a way that should naturally lead to compassion for him or her (Ex. 23:9). Above all, the people of God are to love the alien because this is the will of the LORD, who loves, provides for, watches over, and hears in heaven the cry of the alien (Ps. 146:9, Dt. 24:15). God's command to Israel to love the sojourners "as yourself" may also be seen as a divine call to practice justice towards those who are often the victims of oppression and wrongdoing, or evil schemes (Lev. 19:33-34, Jer. 7:5-7, Zec. 7:8-10).

Such love for the alien becomes concrete, among other things, by attending to basic needs for food and clothing (Dt. 10:18-19), showing fairness in dealings with workers' wages (Dt. 24:14-15, Mal. 3:5), and being generous with one's abundance (Dt. 24:19-22). Those in Israel who are tempted not to follow God's command to love the alien neighbor "as yourself" are warned not "to

²⁵ This is the general thrust of James K. Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis*, where the author uses Old Testament data to argue for a regulated border today. The claim is advanced by the argument that the only sense of the Old Testament noun *ger* "corresponds to a legal alien today," and therefore must be distinguished from the meaning of the term "foreigner" (*nekhar* and *zar*) which would arguably correspond today to "an illegal immigrant" (p. 156, cf. p. 57); Carroll, however, has taken Hoffmeier to task for "adding" to his study of the lexical use of *ger* "an element, which I believe is impossible to prove," namely, that *ger* "was a person who entered Israel and followed legal procedures to obtain recognized standing as a resident alien" (p. 52, emphasis mine). Carroll argues that, while this may be true in some cases, Hoffmeier's absolute claim says more than the biblical data allows one to hold: "The Law never mentions some sort of legal entry requirement. What is expected is that these individuals obey the laws and participate in the religious life of Israel; in turn, the Law was generous to them." Moreover, Carroll points to the case of Ruth whose "entry and assimilation process" into the community of Israel "does not deal at all with 'legal procedures' but rather with 'cultural ones'" (cf. chapters 1 and 4), and to Jacob's purchase of land in Shechem (Gen. 33) as an instance where no explicit mention is made in the text of legal permission of entry into the land prior to purchase—an assumption made by Hoffmeier—but "only that he bought property after moving into the region" (Gen. 33:18-20). Carroll concludes his critique of Hoffmeier by stating that "the verb *ger* [*ger*] has the broad term meaning 'to reside,' irrespective of legal standing (e.g., Judg. 5:17; Ps. 15:1; Jer. 49:18, 33, 50:4)." See M. Daniel Carroll R., Review of James K. Hoffmeier, "The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens, and the Bible," *The Denver Journal: An Online Review of Current Biblical and Theological Studies* 13 (January 2010). Online: <http://www.denverserinary.edu/article/the-immigration-crisis-immigrants-aliens-and-the-bible/>.

pervert the justice due the sojourner" lest they become "guilty of sin" (Dt. 24:15, 17) and the objects of "swift witness against...those who thrust aside the sojourner" (Mal. 3:5). God's concern for the well-being of aliens is typically placed alongside His compassion for the widow, the fatherless, and the poor (Dt. 10:18, 24:17, 19-21, Ps. 146:9, Jer. 7:6, Zec. 7:10, Mal. 3:5). Aliens in the midst of Israel are thus seen as neighbors who, for the most part, are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society.

The New Testament assumes the Old Testament's command to love our neighbors as ourselves, whoever they are. But the New Testament also assumes the Old Testament's witness to Yahweh's compassion for the stranger in our Lord Jesus Christ's own self-identification with the stranger and in His reaching out to those outside of the house of Israel during His ministry, whether or not they are foreigners. In the final judgment scene, the Son of Man welcomes into His Father's kingdom those who have reached out to Him by helping "one of the least of these." Our Lord desires to identify Himself with the stranger so that we might see Him in the stranger: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35, italics added). Notwithstanding the various interpretations of the identity of "one of the least of these" in Matthew 25,²⁶ Martin Luther uses the text in his explanation of the fifth commandment in his *Large Catechism* to identify Christ with "those in need and peril of body and life."²⁷ While the biblical teaching can function specifically as a warning against the rejection of the disciples ("one of the least of these my brothers") and therefore of the Lord who sent them into the world,²⁸ such teaching has also functioned more broadly in Lutheran catechesis to promote God's command to look after the neighbor's well-being. In either case, the biblical and catechetical teachings assume the Old Testament's broader and more fundamental affirmation of the virtue of welcoming the stranger in our midst.

Our Lord's compassion for the stranger, for those outside of the house of Israel, which is evident in His ministry, is consistent with Yahweh's concern for the strangers around and among the people of Israel. In the Old Testa-

²⁶ "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40, cf. 45). For the diversity of interpretive options on this point, see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 428-30, cf. 421-23.

²⁷ "Therefore God rightly calls all persons murderers who do not offer counsel or assistance to those in need and peril of body and life. He will pass a most terrible sentence upon them at the Last Day, as Christ himself says. He will say: 'I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' That is to say, 'You would have permitted me and my family to die of hunger, thirst, and cold, to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, to rot in prison or perish from want.'" *The Large Catechism* (LC), Ten Commandments, 191, in Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, ed. [abbreviated as KW], *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 412.

²⁸ See Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia: Jesus' Eschatological Discourse in Matthew's Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000).

ment, such concern for the sojourners includes not only the call for justice on their behalf but also the desire to bring them into the house of Israel to share in the spiritual blessings accorded to the children of God.²⁹ Similarly, our Lord reaches out with His mercy to the demon-possessed daughter of a Canaanite or Syrophenician woman (Mt. 15:21-28, Mk. 7:24-30), making these Gentiles participants in the blessings of His Father's kingdom. Jesus praises the faith of the Canaanite woman, affirming implicitly that Gentiles too are spiritually hungry, can put their trust in the Son whom God has sent, and are able to become children of God the Father. Moreover, Jesus meets the Gentile's daughter's physical need by delivering her from bondage to Satan. He reaches out to strangers in their spiritual and bodily needs.

Our Lord's compassion for those considered to be outside of the house of Israel also becomes evident in His encounter with a Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:3-42), whom He makes by promise an heir of "the gift of God" and "living water" (references to the gift of the Spirit who comes from the Son, cf. Jn. 7:37-39). The extent of our Lord's compassion for a Samaritan—despised by Jews—teaches us that the gift of the Spirit, access to God through worship "in spirit and truth," and the privilege to become a witness to the Messiah are available even to strangers outside of the house of Israel and, through their witness, to their towns or communities. In Jesus' ministry of proclamation and healing, therefore, we see the continuation of Yahweh's concern for the strangers, attending to their temporal (bodily) and spiritual needs and extending His mercy to their family members and communities.³⁰

The Old Testament's witness to Yahweh's compassion for the stranger also comes through in St. Paul's apostolic teaching on hospitality.³¹ The early

²⁹ Even though Carroll and Hoffmeier differ significantly in their approaches to reading the Old Testament data on sojourners, they both speak of the possibility of aliens participating in the spiritual blessings of the people of Israel in accordance with the Old Testament. Hoffmeier, however, argues that such spiritual participation was contingent upon their prior acceptance as "legal immigrants" in the land. See Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis*, 89-96; Carroll sees Hoffmeier's view based on a narrow interpretation of *ger* as referring exclusively to "legal" aliens, as problematic when applied in an absolute manner (see his critique of Hoffmeier in n. 25 above). Notwithstanding these readings of the Old Testament data, it remains still problematic in the New Testament era to argue that for immigrants to participate in the blessings of the church or spiritual Israel in the U.S. today, they must first become legal residents or citizens of the temporal nation-state. The New Testament places no such temporal conditions for becoming children of God through faith in Christ.

³⁰ We recognize, of course, that our Lord also gives a certain priority to the household of Israel (Mt. 15:24) and the biblical dictum that concern for the well-being of others must always begin with those whom God has placed nearest to us in our earthly lives (Mark 7:10-12; Gal. 6:10).

³¹ For a contemporary attempt at describing the moral life using the biblical value of hospitality to the stranger as an "overarching metaphor," see Thomas W. Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2003). Drawing in part from *Resident Aliens* by Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), Castelo argues that many Hispanics in the U.S. qualify as "aliens twice-over," both as Christians in a land hostile to the Gospel and as illegal aliens in the political realm. This reality is a constant reminder to the church of her duty to discern critically what it means to be a Christian in an alien land. This implies in part the duty of Christians both to discern whether

Christians' concern for the needy neighbor extended beyond the confines of the community of faith. Calling the church in Galatia to "do good to everyone," the apostle teaches that the church serves "especially" though not exclusively "those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). The apostle instructs the Christian church in Rome to "contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality [to strangers]" (Rom. 12:13). These apostolic exhortations to the Christian churches to show hospitality to all strangers mirror and are consistent with Yahweh's own command to Israel to reflect His love for the strangers.

To sum up, we must acknowledge that, while the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures give ample evidence of Yahweh's will for His people to love the strangers and aliens by attending to their bodily and spiritual needs, the Scriptures do not speak directly to questions about how the church today should think about or deal with contemporary immigration law in general or "illegal immigration" in particular. Scriptural teaching on immigrants, therefore, cannot be directly translated into current immigration laws or policies.

While the Scriptures do not provide "proof-texts" that give simple or direct answers to all the various legal and political questions about immigration issues today, they do provide an interpretive framework that helps us to reflect on and address such questions. Moreover, we dare not minimize the biblical evidence presented thus far concerning God's call for the church to reflect in her life His own love for the strangers in her midst. This cannot be seen merely as a culturally bound concern, but must be viewed more concretely as God's will and command for His people at all times and in all places. We are bound by Scripture to love our neighbor, including the immigrant in our midst. Therefore, even as Christians struggle to address legal and political questions on the narrow issue of legality, the broad and consistent biblical teaching on God's love for the aliens who live and move amidst His people must be taken with utmost seriousness.

Otherwise stated, Scripture offers us a consensus on basic values that, as a point of departure, should inform the attitudes of God's people towards all immigrants or aliens regardless of their status in society. Although immigrants did not always share in the same temporal and spiritual blessings as God's people in the Old Testament, the divine command to love the alien as our neighbor remains valid and is not fundamentally tied to the fulfillment of any specific obligations on the part of the alien. This suggests that legal or illegal status cannot be a prerequisite for the church's concern about the basic dignity of aliens and their families as God's creatures, or for their need for food and clothing and a fuller life for their families, their fair and just treatment in society, and their need to hear the Gospel and receive the sacraments.

civil laws and political entities of the day promote a just state of affairs and to extend hospitality to strangers. See Daniel Castelo, "Resident and Illegal Aliens," *Apuntes: Reflexiones teológicas desde el margen hispano* 23/2 (Summer 2003): 65-77.

Even as love for God and neighbor directs all Christian moral deliberation, so also do the Ten Commandments, for they give shape and substance to that love. The aforementioned concerns for our immigrant neighbors' physical, social, economic, and spiritual needs are examples of the shape love takes as guided by the commandments. Flowing from love for God, Christian love for our neighbors seeks their spiritual well-being and also seeks "to help and support" them in every need, to help improve their economic well-being ("property and income"), and to explain their actions "in the best possible light."³² As we will see in the next section, the fourth commandment—"Honor your father and your mother"—also has direct relevance. It speaks not only of the shape love takes in the home as children "honor, serve, love, and respect" their parents, but also to what Luther called another "category of 'fatherhood,'" civil authority.³³ Christian love recognizes an obligation to honor and support governing authorities so that our daily life might be decent and orderly and chaos might be constrained (see 1 Tim. 2:2).

By serving as a point of departure for shaping the church's basic attitude towards immigrants today, the biblical teachings on loving the immigrant neighbor as ourselves and on showing hospitality to the strangers in our midst also serve as a good deterrent against the development of any attitudes towards aliens, whether documented or undocumented, that are not driven by a legitimate concern for the law and the neighbor. Faith and charity compel all Christians not to form their final judgments concerning aliens on the basis of discourse and opinions that are fueled by unfounded fears or myths concerning immigrants and/or racist or discriminatory attitudes against people of other ethnic groups and nationalities.³⁴ The remembrance of the LCMS's own immigrant past, including the fears and prejudices endured by many of our Lutheran fathers and mothers in the faith upon arrival to the United States, should help us to foster a charitable disposition towards immigrants today. However, beyond appeals to our own historic immigrant identity, stands the clear and timeless will and command of God in the Scriptures concerning the church's need to remember and care for the immigrant neighbor.

³² See the explanations to the fifth, seventh, and eighth commandments SC I, 9-10, 13-16 (KW, 352-353).

³³ See LCL 149-150 (KW, 407). "Through civil rulers, as through our own parents, God gives us food, house and home, protection and security, and he preserves us through them. Therefore, because they bear this name and title with all honor as their chief distinction, it is also our duty to honor and respect them as the most precious treasure and most priceless jewel on earth."

³⁴ See, for example, Patricia Fernández-Kelly, "To Welcome the Stranger: The Myths and Realities of Illegal Immigration," *Perspectives: Occasional Papers* 10 (2006): 9-22; see also Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service (LIRS), "Immigration Myths and Facts." Website: <http://www.lirs.org/mythbusters>; for an example of a booklet fueled by subtle discriminatory remarks against new immigrants, see John C. Vinson, *Immigration and Nation, a Biblical View* (Montgomery, Virginia: American Immigration Control Foundation, 1997), where he argues that God's division of the nations since Babel and the distinction of Israel from the surrounding nations supports immigration control for the sake of maintaining the traditional European White ethnocultural make-up of the U.S.

II. God's Law, Civil Law,³⁵ and the Neighbor:

On Christian Obedience to God's Commands

While the Scriptures consistently teach the church to love the strangers in her midst as a foundational value for all times and places, the Scriptures also instruct Christians to obey or submit to the authorities whom God has sent, instituted, and appointed for our good (Rom. 13:1-7, 1 Pet. 2:13-17). The one in authority is to be honored and feared as "God's servant" and minister, for he bears the "sword" in order "to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good." Submission to the authorities concretely means obedience to the laws these servants and ministers are called to create, implement, and enforce (e.g., paying taxes, cf. Rom. 13:6-7). While Scripture does not offer a specific position on immigration law, it does bind Christians to obey the civil authorities, including laws dealing with immigration.³⁶

While Martin Luther includes the promotion of our neighbor's life (including that of the stranger) under the fifth commandment ("You are not to kill"), he also clearly teaches submission to the authorities God has placed in our midst (including, civil servants) under the fourth commandment ("You are to honor your father and your mother").³⁷ Both are the will of God and, therefore, must be carried out. This means concretely that we must love immigrants, show fairness to them, and promote their lives and well-being regardless of their legal status in society and, at the same time, submit to the temporal authorities and thus obey the civil laws they enact, promote, and enforce in society (including those laws that deal with immigrants and their legal status). Given these equally valid demands that God's commandments place on Christians, it is not uncommon for brothers and sisters in Christ to struggle with and argue among themselves about the best ways to be faithful to what God desires of His people.

The popular debate over whether immigrants without a valid visa should be referred to as "illegal" or "undocumented" immigrants illustrates what happens when we attempt to resolve the inherent tension between the demand to preserve the immigrants' well-being *regardless of legal status* with the demand to obey the laws of the land *regulating their legal status*.³⁸ On the one hand, Christians who prefer to speak of "undocumented" immigrants

³⁵ "Civil law" is used in this document in a theological sense to refer to all humanly instituted law, enforced by earthly authorities, and intended to maintain order and justice. (See Appendix II B.2.)

³⁶ We want to emphasize that immigration law as such is not inherently bad. A government's efforts to provide secure borders and clear standards for managing immigration is a necessary aspect of its responsibility to provide for the well-being of its citizens—the very vocation that God gives to civil authorities. See Amstutz and Meilaender, *Public Policy & the Church*, 4-17.

³⁷ LC, Ten Commandments, 141-142, 150-151.

³⁸ On the use of the modifiers "illegal" and "undocumented," see Leopoldo Sánchez, "Immigrants Among Us: What Are Confessional Lutherans to Do?" *LOGIA* 19/1 (2010): 57-58.

might desire to affirm the basic dignity of immigrants (along the lines of the fifth and eighth commandments), showing sensitivity to their plight and the need for promoting their well-being. Consequently, they might appear to give less weight in their use of language to current demands of the civil law regarding legality or illegality without ultimately denying the need for the rule of law. These brothers and sisters in Christ generally tend to be in disagreement with those aspects of current immigration law that they consider inadequate to address the fair treatment of immigrants. On the other hand, Christians who speak more readily of "illegal" immigrants might focus on the need for obedience to the civil law (a fourth commandment concern) as it applies to current immigration law, but in doing so might appear to come across as insensitive to the plight of immigrants and as somewhat uncritical concerning certain potentially problematic aspects of current immigration law that might not address adequately their fair treatment.

These popular uses of language to refer to immigrants in our midst, even within church circles, are instructive. They reveal to some extent how Christian conversation about immigrants today can be shaped significantly or at least in part by Christian attitudes and priorities concerning what it means to be faithful to God's commandments.³⁹ Some acknowledgment of the basic assumptions underlying our discourses about immigrants helps us to recognize that brothers and sisters in Christ with an equal desire to be faithful to God's commands may actually disagree on how best to carry them out when it comes to dealing with their immigrant neighbor.

Acknowledgment of genuine and legitimate Christian disagreements about the application of God's commands to reflection on and attitudes toward aliens also serves as a deterrent against caricatures of each other's positions on a delicate issue. On the one hand, Christians who tend to give priority to obedience to the civil authorities (fourth commandment) in their approach to immigration are not necessarily insensitive to the plight of immigrants and their families. On the other hand, Christians who tend to give higher priority to the well-being and fair treatment of immigrants and their families (fifth

³⁹ It is interesting to note, for instance, within the Evangelical tradition, how Hoffmeier's and Carroll's differing starting points in their studies on immigrants in the Bible give their assessments of contemporary illegal immigration a different tone. Hoffmeier takes as his starting point and overall framework obedience to the law, which leads him to stress the distinction between a legal alien and a foreigner and thus the need for border enforcement today. This leads to a strong focus on obedience to the law with minimal concern with whether contemporary U.S. immigration law actually promotes a just state of affairs or not for our immigrant neighbors. See *The Immigration Crisis*, 29-57, 153-160. Carroll, on the other hand, starts with the immigrant as a human being created in God's image and then highlights his identity as a stranger who is to be shown hospitality. This leads to a strong focus on the Christian's disposition to see the immigrant as a neighbor in need and, while the command to obey the law is affirmed, the focus is given to the Christian's duty to be a responsible and well-informed citizen on the matter of current immigration law and the forms of injustice it arguably promotes. See *Christians at the Border*, 63-134.

commandment) in their approach to immigration are not necessarily insensitive to the need for obedience to the civil authorities and the laws of the land.

Although adjectives such as "illegal" and "undocumented," when referring to immigrants, assume and manifest to some degree different yet legitimate Christian attitudes on what it means to be faithful to God's commandments when dealing with immigrants, Christians must also remember that the use of such terms has limitations. Since such adjectives are neither forbidden nor commanded in Scripture, Christians are free to use them. At the same time, while Christians can use them as they see fit, they should do so critically and with charity. For example, when used in the presence of immigrants or people who work to advocate for their fair treatment, the adjective "illegal" will likely be seen or heard as uncharitable and become an unnecessary obstacle to further Gospel proclamation to the immigrant or dialogue with those whose vocation is to advocate for them. Similarly, when used in the presence of some legislators, border patrol agents, or citizens who want to honor the rule of law, the otherwise valid use of the adjective "undocumented" may be interpreted as a lack of proper concern either for the rule of law or proper appreciation of the work of those who enact and enforce the particular laws of the land.

Furthermore, Christians must exercise good judgment in their use of extra-biblical terms such as "illegal" and "undocumented" because these adjectives are also limited in their scope. Such terms clearly operate within the narrow confines of legality. Precisely because of this focus on legal status alone, they offer neither a comprehensive picture of our immigrant neighbors nor an accurate portrait of the complexity of the immigration problem.

On the one hand, recognition of the intended scope of these popular terms prevents Christians from reducing the alien or immigrant neighbor to a legal category, label, or problem. Immigrants are, much more basically, human beings, God's creatures, and sinners just like each one of us. Their physical and spiritual needs must at the very least be taken into account in any discussions about the role of the individual Christian and the church in dealing with them. When applied to the alien, for instance, the term "illegal" fails to distinguish properly between the immigrant person and the specific act he or she has committed that is contrary to the law.

On the other hand, and not least importantly, recognition of the narrow legal scope of the terms "illegal" and "undocumented" allows Christians to consider seriously a broader and more comprehensive range of factors related to civil law in the immigration issue. Such factors may include but are not limited to family unification, labor demand, economic need, law enforcement, national or border security, workers' rights, human rights, and earned paths to legalization.⁴⁰ In dealing with aspects of civil law that may be considered

⁴⁰ GRIC reads: "As corporate citizens of this nation, we recognize that solutions to the problem of illegal immigration are complex. There are many factors that deserve consideration, each

by some as inadequate or unjust, “Christians have the right and duty to work for the repeal of unjust laws and the proper enforcement of just laws through due process of law.”⁴¹

At the same time, because it is not always clear when due process has actually been exhausted in any particular case, Christians will likely differ on the degree to which a call for more adequate legislation seems likely or unlikely in a particular political climate. They will therefore respond differently to cases where they believe a particular aspect of civil law is unjust or inadequate. As conscientious citizens and residents of the state, for example, some Christians may simply determine that immigration law, while not perfect, is nevertheless sufficiently fair and reasonable as it currently stands. Other conscientious Christians, while acknowledging that ordinarily “the rights of individuals and proper standards of justice must be established by the government through legislative processes,” may “in the evident failure of due process... in good conscience participate in public demonstrations to dramatize the injustice” they feel a particular law promotes.⁴² Yet others who are not content with the current state of the law may choose not to do what they could otherwise do, namely to protest publicly, choosing instead to “exercise restraint in using this privilege because of the danger of lawlessness.”⁴³

Scripture requires Christians to obey God rather than man when the civil authority and its laws are set in opposition to the law of God. Christians obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29) “when a civil law conflicts with a clear

exhibiting its own value. Secure borders, national security, policy enforcement, national stability, inexpensive labor, decent income, budget limits, human rights, and work opportunities are only the beginning of the long list.”

⁴¹ CTR, *Civil Obedience and Disobedience* (1966), B, p. 4. Since the document applies the language of due process specifically to situations “when one’s own legal rights are infringed upon, but also and especially when one joins others deprived of their legal rights,” one could conclude that the statement does not apply technically to immigrants who are in the nation illegally because they have no “legal rights.” Even if that were the case, however, the broader principle of working to repeal unjust laws or enforce just laws still applies to Christians as citizens of the nation-state who, in good conscience, are convinced that certain aspects of immigration law are unjust.

⁴² *Ibid.* The CTR statement encourages a Christian who considers a particular law to be in conflict with the “higher law of God” to “be quite sure that all legal means of changing the law have been exhausted,” “consult with men of good conscience to test the validity of his judgment,” and “direct his act of disobedience as precisely as possible against the specific law or practice which violates his conscience.” *Ibid.*, C.1-2, 4, p. 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, C.5, p. 5. This particular argument is immediately followed by a concern for avoiding association of Christians “with groups and individuals who may be protesting the same law from apparently wrong motives and who may be seeking to capture a movement for their own improper ends.” *Ibid.*, 5-6. The same principle applies to Christians who feel they should protest against illegal immigration, but refrain from doing so together with others who feel the same way “from apparently wrong motives”—i.e., motives that are incompatible with God’s law of love or hostile to the Christian faith (e.g., the idea that God wants the U.S. to be a stronger White-European country, or that Mexicans are more prone to criminal behavior than people from other ethnic groups).

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precept of God.”⁴⁴ But *when* is that the case in current immigration law? Most Christians are not against immigration law in general, but some (if not many) question *how* fair and reasonable *some* aspects of such law are. What is an appropriate response when there is no clear and broad consensus among Christians on the way in which immigration law specifically conflicts with God’s law?

If a Christian considers a civil law to be in conflict “with the higher law of God,” and thus decides to engage in some form of civil disobedience, he is encouraged to “carry out his act of disobedience in a nonviolent manner,” and “direct his act of disobedience as precisely as possible against the specific law or practice which violates his conscience.”⁴⁵ He must also be willing to bear the cross and thus suffer the potentially “punitive consequences” of his actions.⁴⁶ For example, a Christian might provide assistance to a father who is seeking to avoid (or evade?) deportation because it will separate him from his family. But such a Christian should also be prepared willingly to accept the possibility of penalties imposed because his involvement.⁴⁷ Similarly, if a state were to criminalize pastoral care such as providing transportation for undocumented immigrants to worship services or other church activities, pastors and other Christian leaders would face the dilemma of obeying God or man and should again be willing to accept potential legal penalties for their behavior.⁴⁸

Furthermore, because it is not always clear among Christians *when* immigration laws actually go against God’s will, it is expected that legitimate and passionate disagreement among them will take place on the godliness and justice of particular immigration laws. “Since in the ethical field we do not always see eye to eye,” the LCMS should “encourage its members to exercise the greatest care in judging one another in their individual and different responses to complex social problems as each endeavors to apply the divine principle of Christian love to the specific human situation.”⁴⁹ While “the breaking of an unjust law, as civil disobedience is at times defined, need not necessarily

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, C, p. 5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, C.3-4, p. 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, C, p. 5.

⁴⁷ While a Christian may in good conscience provide assistance to an undocumented immigrant in dire need, offering extended sanctuary to the same in order to avoid dealing with a deportation order can be construed as concealing or harboring an immigrant illegally while lying to government officials. This is especially problematic if the immigrant has a criminal background. If Christians believe that they might find themselves in such a situation, they should proceed with caution and seek legal advice as soon as possible (see n. 90 below).

⁴⁸ SRIC mentions briefly how such state legislation, if it were approved, might also prevent Christians from exercising acts of mercy. SRIC states: “Meanwhile, in order to fulfill our Christian obligation, we also request that the charitable act of providing assistance to undocumented aliens not otherwise engaged in illegal activity not be criminalized *ipso facto*.”

⁴⁹ CTR, *Civil Obedience and Disobedience*, D, p. 6; SRIC notes that “Christians equally committed to God’s Word may reasonably arrive at different conclusions on specific aspects of these issues and their resolution.”

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reflect a spirit of anarchy, criminal intent, or general contempt for laws,” and may even be interpreted to “reflect an earnest desire to respect the rule of law and to test the validity of a specific law and so to provide a larger measure of justice,” Christians should be careful to avoid “an exaggerated individualism that breeds contempt for law and due process of law” and “the asserting of individual rights at the expense of the rights of others.”⁵⁰

The commands to love our neighbor (including the alien) and to obey civil authority are both included in the law of God and, therefore, Christians are required to fulfill their demands. Because both mandates are comprehended in the divine law, fulfilling them is itself a matter of love. In this sense, love of one’s immigrant neighbor (fifth commandment) and obedience to civil servants (fourth commandment) are not antithetical to one another, for the immigrant is not the only neighbor Christians are called to love. There is also the neighbor citizen or resident of a nation, who may or may not be as vulnerable or needy as the immigrant neighbor in every case, but whose well-being is also a matter of concern for both the government and for Christian citizens.

Christians who are residents or citizens of a nation are legitimately called to love that neighbor or sets of neighbors with whom they share a common national identity or the bond of nationhood. Admittedly, there are times when a moral dilemma arises in the matter of obedience to two equally valid demands placed on us by God’s law of love and, therefore, some logical priority must be given to one neighbor over another given a specific situation. In such cases, one inevitably sins boldly for the sake of some neighbor and suffers the consequences of one’s actions. It can be argued, for instance, that a citizen has an obligation to put his fellow citizen first.⁵¹ This approach will inevitably place one’s immigrant neighbor further down in the scale of priority. It can also be argued, however, that a foreigner who has lived long enough in the nation without recourse to proper documentation is no longer just an alien but actually one of those who shares the way of life of the citizens and residents of the state, and therefore citizens should now have moral obligations towards them.⁵² How might such a position towards some immigrants affect negatively or positively the well-being of citizens and society?

⁵⁰ CTR, *Civil Obedience and Disobedience*, G.2, G.3.a, c, p. 6. The document also cautions Christians against “the anarchic spirit which pits one segment of the population against another” (G.3.b); cf. CTR, *Guidelines for Crucial Issues in Christian Citizenship* (1968), Section Two, VI, p. 6.

⁵¹ Note Meilaender in “Immigration: Citizens & Strangers” (11), “We are called to recognize the image of God in every human being, and we owe something to each person simply by virtue of his or her humanity. But we also stand in particular relationships to certain persons for whom we bear special responsibilities: sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors, fellow citizens. These special relationships channel our potentially endless obligations and make them practicable.” *First Things* (May 2007):10-12.

⁵² “Those who have lived in this country for an extended period, starting families and putting down roots, at some point can no longer reasonably be regarded as outsiders. *De facto*, if not *de jure*, they are one of us. Our obligations to them gradually begin to mirror those we owe fellow citizens, of which the refusal to expel them from the country is basic. Various conditions—such as the payment of back taxes or proficiency in English—should be attached to an amnesty

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In a less than perfect world, civil law (including immigration law) will not always be fair, just, or adequate in every aspect and for every neighbor. Christians who are equally committed to obeying the civil authorities will differ on how they respond to particular immigration laws. In seeking to fulfill the demands of God’s law, which commands us to obey the civil authorities and love our neighbor (including the immigrant), we will as sinners inevitably fail to come to the aid of or advocate for some neighbor. Because we cannot fulfill the law of God perfectly for every neighbor in need every time, we will always need to confess our sins, receive Christ’s forgiveness, and strive to do better.

provision, to underline the importance of the rule of law and the need for genuine integration. But to those who are already, whether we like it or not, members of the American people, our obligations are strong enough to prohibit outright deportation.” *Ibid.*

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III. Living in God's Two Realms:

On the Activity of Christians in the World as Church and as Citizens

Genuine diversity among Christians in approaching the issue of illegal immigration results from the inherent tension between fulfilling the commands to love the stranger in our midst regardless of his/her legal status and to submit to the authorities and their laws regulating the legal status of immigrants. Such tension can also be seen as an attempt to be faithful to God's call to be both a citizen of the heavenly city (that is to say, a faithful member of the church who supports her mission) and a citizen of the earthly city (that is to say, a responsible citizen or resident who upholds the civil law). Christian attitudes about illegal immigration are often shaped by a genuine desire to live faithfully in God's two realms, kingdoms, or governments—namely, the spiritual and temporal.

The teaching concerning God's two realms has an honorable place in Lutheran biblical and confessional catechesis.⁵³ This teaching addresses questions about the proper distinction and relationship between God's work in the world through the church and through civil government, and therefore also deals with the activity of Christians in the world both as members of the church and as citizens or residents of the state. Therefore, it serves as a promising interpretative framework for dealing with questions regarding what a Lutheran response to immigration issues in general and illegal immigration in particular might look like in the contemporary context.

The doctrine of the two realms is grounded in the assumption and acknowledgment that God wills to preserve His fallen creation in two distinct ways and thus for the sake of accomplishing two distinct goals. The Lutheran confessors teach "the difference between spiritual and secular power, sword, and authority," and that "for the sake of God's command, everyone should honor and esteem with all reverence both authorities and powers as the two highest gifts of God on earth."⁵⁴ In the spiritual realm (also known as the right-hand kingdom), God preserves His fallen creation by forgiving sinners on account of Christ. The confessors state: "According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments."⁵⁵ Thus God uses the church and her ministers to reconcile sinners to Himself through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments (means of grace). The priesthood of all believers, which includes each individual Christian in the context of his or her vocation, also engages in the "mutual conversation and consolation of brothers and sisters" as Christians

⁵³ See Martin Luther's classic treatise "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed," AE 45:75-129; AC XVI and Ap XVI; FC, Ep XII,12-16 and SD XII,17-23.

⁵⁴ AC XXVIII, 4.

⁵⁵ AC XXVIII, 5-6 (citing Jn. 20:21-23).

share the Gospel with one another and with those outside the community of faith as opportunities arise.⁵⁶

In the temporal realm (also known as the left-hand kingdom), God preserves His fallen creation by promoting peace and justice in society. Through the "sword" or "secular authority," God uses government servants to restrain sinners from gross manifestations of evil and reward good behavior in society. The confessors state: "Secular authority does not protect the soul but, using the sword and physical penalties, it protects the body and goods against external violence."⁵⁷ Under the temporal authority, each person, and indeed each Christian, has a role as a resident or citizen to obey the authorities and follow the laws of the land. Each of us also—particularly in the contemporary United States context of a representative democracy where the governed have a voice in the establishment of laws through their elected government officials—has the opportunity and responsibility to work within our own particular vocations towards the promotion, enactment, and enforcement of laws that are good, right, and salutary.

The distinction between "the powers of church and civil government" must therefore be maintained, so that one power "should not usurp the other's duty."⁵⁸ In the spiritual realm, the church is engaged with those activities that center in the message of justification by grace through faith in Christ. Through the "word" of the Gospel, the church deals with our spiritual condition and relationship before God. In the temporal realm, on the other hand, civil government is engaged with those activities that promote justice, peace, and order in civil society. Through the "sword," civil government deals with our relationships and responsibilities before others. As members of the church and as citizens or residents of the land, Christians seek to live and work faithfully in both of God's realms or kingdoms.

The Lutheran distinction between the two kinds of authority reminds us not to confuse the activities and aims God intends to accomplish through each realm. On the one hand, the responsibility of the church in the spiritual government does not consist in the formulation, enactment, and enforcement of immigration laws. Under the spiritual power, the church is called to proclaim the Gospel and administer the sacraments in accordance with Christ's institution.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the responsibility of civil government or temporal

⁵⁶ "We now want to return to the gospel, which gives guidance and help against sin in more than one way, because God is extravagantly rich in his grace: first, through the spoken word, in which the forgiveness of sins is preached to the whole world (which is the proper function of the gospel); second, through baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers and sisters." SA III, 4.

⁵⁷ AC XXVIII, 11.

⁵⁸ AC XXVIII, 12 (Latin text).

⁵⁹ "That is why one should not mix or confuse the two authorities, the spiritual and the secular. For spiritual power has its command to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments."

authority does not consist in the proclamation of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, or the promotion of works of mercy that flow out of the Gospel. The government can enact and enforce temporal laws dealing with illegal immigration, but it does not teach the church how or whether she should carry out her Word and sacrament ministry among undocumented immigrants.

Confusion of the two realms happens when obedience to government and civil law concerning the legal status of immigrants interferes with the church's responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to them and do the works of mercy that flow from the Gospel for them without regard to their legal status. For example, a form of such interference would take place if, hypothetically speaking, civil legislation penalized individual Christians or church workers with fines or possible imprisonment for proclaiming the Gospel to undocumented immigrants or doing mercy work among them. Similarly, civil legislation, applications of law, or regulations that might hypothetically prevent the faithful from doing the mercy work of visiting persons in immigration detention centers could also be seen as an example of such interference. In a more likely scenario, imagine vocal public opposition to illegal immigration by a zealous citizen, who is also a member of the congregation, in the particular context of church-sponsored missionary activities in an increasingly immigrant neighborhood. This can be seen as an example of the interference described above insofar as his opposition will most likely become an obstacle to the proclamation of the Gospel in the community.⁶⁰

Confusion of the two realms also happens when the church's zeal to proclaim the Gospel among the nations in her midst interferes with the government's responsibility to regulate and enforce immigration laws according to what is reasonable and just. For example, missionary efforts and mercy work among immigrants who live in the United States illegally should not, as a matter of course, avoid dealing with concrete ways to seek legal status for them. In particular, the Synod's leaders, workers, and congregations who identify potential church leaders from immigrant communities for service in the church should be prepared to do everything in their power to seek legal status for them (e.g., obtaining or sponsoring a religious worker visa). Such investment of time, effort, and financial resources can itself be seen as a testimony to the church's sacrificial love for the stranger. In the long run, it is also likely to prevent the invisibility and marginality of immigrant workers in church and society while at the same time maintaining the church's ongoing

It should not invade an alien office. It should not set up and depose kings. It should not annul or disrupt secular law and obedience to political authority. It should not make or prescribe laws for the secular power concerning secular affairs. For Christ himself said [John 18:36]: 'My kingdom is not from this world.'" AC XXVIII, 12-15.

⁶⁰ Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., "Misión e inmigración: Pedagogía para trabajar entre los inmigrantes," *Misio Apostólica* 16/1 (2008): 72, 74.

proclamation of the Gospel without potential interference from civil authorities due to unresolved legal issues.

A related form of confusion of the two realms would take place if a church provides an undocumented immigrant with employment and thus a salary on the grounds that "the laborer deserves his wages" (1 Tim. 3:18). While it is possible under the spiritual realm for immigrants to volunteer in church activities—even in duties related to the ministry of the Gospel—without holding a green card or a special visa that allows them to work in the United States legally, employment practices are still a matter regulated by the state. The church as a legal entity must adhere to such laws and regulations in the temporal realm.

The Lutheran distinction between the two realms or kingdoms also reminds us that the unity of the church is grounded in and nourished by the Gospel and the sacraments. This means that such unity neither depends on nor is determined by a particular position on current immigration law.⁶¹ Disagreements among Christians on civil law should not in principle prevent them from sharing in the Lord's Supper.⁶² Such disagreements arise in part from diverse views about the degree to which immigration law—either in its totality or, more often, in certain aspects—can be considered just and reasonable. Some Christians feel that they can obey the current law in good conscience. Others feel that they cannot. While all Christians agree that they, as a matter of course, must submit to the civil authorities in all things, some also find that there are certain situations where they believe they cannot do so "without sin."⁶³ They recognize that "a command of a political authority" may at times be set in opposition to a divine command.⁶⁴ To put it differently, Christians can acknowledge that at times particular civil legislation may not be in agreement with the law of God in some respect.

Responses among faithful Christian citizens to such incongruence vary from voicing one's concerns through the power of the vote to acting on one's conscience through temporary forms of peaceful or nonviolent disobedience. Beyond dramatizing injustices through public demonstrations, some Christian citizens and residents of the state patiently allow immigrants who are in the United States illegally but who are not malevolent or an imminent danger to society to coexist among them until current immigration law can deal more adequately with the complexity of some particular situations that raise important moral questions. Think, for example, of children who, through no fault of their own, were brought by their parents to the country illegally, and thus think of no other nation except the United States as their own. How should

⁶¹ Sánchez, "Immigrants Among Us," 58.

⁶² Sánchez, "Misión e inmigración," 72, 74.

⁶³ AC, XVI, 6-7.

⁶⁴ AC, XVI, 7.

society treat these neighbors, who have no protection under the law (e.g., constantly face the possibility of being deported, have no authorization to work) and yet hold no self-identity except that of being an “American”? A number of Christian (and non-Christian) citizens and residents have often exercised a measure of patience towards these children, waiting for some remedy from the civil government.⁶⁵

It is important to note that Christians who, in faithfulness to their consciences, practice such temporary forms of peaceful disobedience or resistance are not thereby “for” illegal immigration, but rather “against” some aspects of current law that they believe do not yet deal justly with their immigrant neighbors. Moreover, whether one entirely agrees with the current state of immigration law or not, responsible Christians on both sides of the debate must also recognize that they have to live with and take full responsibility for the impact for the decisions they make and the actions they take have on the lives of actual people. This includes especially, but not exclusively, consequences for immigrants and their families (e.g., a deportation may, in some cases, divide a family or put someone’s life at risk).

The Lutheran distinction between the two realms reminds us that disagreements about immigration law among Christians should not infringe upon their unity in Christ, which the means of grace alone bring about and preserve. We can then once again freely acknowledge that, among Lutherans who sincerely want to show mercy to their immigrant neighbors and also obey the civil authority, there can be a reasonable spectrum of opinions and a variety of debate positions concerning what is—and what is not—just, good, reasonable, orderly, and peace building for society in current immigration law.⁶⁶ Christians should exercise civility when dealing with one another in matters that pertain to the state of the civil law lest their speech become a cause for division and strife within the church.

There is room for Christians who disagree with one another to speak freely to each other in love and with respect on difficult and complex civil issues without fear of losing their right standing before God through faith in Jesus Christ, which the Gospel alone establishes apart from our works and choices. A Christian who acts in good conscience according to his God-given vocation in the temporal realm has acted in accordance with the law of God and, moreover, can still be saved in the spiritual realm where one’s standing

⁶⁵ At the time of publication a temporary remedy is available. On August 15, 2012, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) began to accept requests for “Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process,” which allows certain children who came to the United States before the age of 16 to apply for deferral of deportation or removal. As a rationale for deferred action the USCIS mentions its desire “to focus its enforcement resources on the removal of individual who pose a danger to national security or a risk to public safety” and not “on low priority cases, such as individuals who came to the United States as children and meet other requirements.” Online: <http://search.uscis.gov/search?affiliate=82601b2c6&q=deferred+action+process>.

⁶⁶ Sánchez, “Immigrants Among Us,” 58.

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before God does not depend on the fulfillment of the law.⁶⁷ Christians should therefore exercise their vocations with joy and responsibility in the left-hand realm, without fearing the loss of their salvation in Christ, which is a gift of the Gospel alone. We may disagree vehemently on left-hand issues, and even criticize our own brothers and sisters who hold positions in government for their actions, but we should be careful about condemning Christians because they have exercised their vocation, which they seek to do for the sake of the neighbor.

It is also true that Christians must not seek to use their freedom in the Gospel to irresponsibly opine or hold some absolute position on this or that law merely for the sake of this freedom. Instead, Christians should use their freedom to serve others, for the good of their neighbors. Christians must recognize that views about various laws may have consequences for real people, their neighbors. Christians, therefore, ought not make decisions on civil laws that affect others without carefully and responsibly assessing what their positions will mean for concrete neighbors.

The two realms must be distinguished and not confused, but there is also a relationship between the two. While the state should not restrict the church’s proclamation of the Gospel and pastoral care to all people regardless of their legal status, the government does have some role in regulating the work of the church as an institution in the left-hand realm. For instance, as mentioned before, under the civil law the church cannot employ and pay wages to an undocumented church worker. In a similar manner, while the church does not legislate or tell the civil government exactly how to legislate, it can be argued that Christians as church, either individually or corporately, may have some role in pointing out sin and injustice to the civil authorities as part of their duty to teach the law (i.e., what is pleasing to God according to His revealed will) when the government does not act in a just or godly manner.⁶⁸ But *how* and *when* is the church meant to fulfill this duty?

The LCMS has officially pointed out sin in the case of abortion, which constitutes a clear case where a moral practice protected by civil law is contrary to God’s law (more specifically the fifth commandment). Not just as individuals but as a church body (and thus corporately) the Synod has pointed out that

⁶⁷ The confessors teach that a Christian who exercises an office under the civil government does a “God-pleasing” task and can do so “with a good, clear conscience.” FC, SD XII, 17-18. See also Martin Luther, “Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved,” AE 46:87-137.

⁶⁸ “Even when agreeing, for instance, that the church does not have a Gospel-based responsibility to promote the transformation of the civil realm, Lutheran theologians and church bodies have disagreed about whether the corporate church (and not just the individual Christian) has a Law-based duty to teach the state ethical principles. Theologians and church bodies have also disagreed about the most prudent and effective means by which the church might actually teach those ethical principles in a pluralistic and democratic society.” CTCR, *Render unto Caesar...and unto God: A Lutheran View of Church and State* (1994), 53.

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abortion is sin and has made its position an official one.⁶⁹ But *how* and *when* is that to be done in the case of immigration law? Could or should it be done publicly as Synod in the case of certain immigration laws? Or does the LCMS, perhaps more humbly, lay out the issues, the tools for Lutheran interpretation and analysis, and the broader concerns and limits to be taken into account in responsible Christian decision-making?

The latter approach lets *individual* Christians make their own conscientious decisions, with some guidance from the church as Synod, concerning what is just and reasonable when there is no clear consensus among all Christians on the moral failure of certain aspects of immigration law. The LCMS has traditionally gone in this more private and individual direction with societal and political issues where black-and-white is not easily determined in every case. This approach seeks to teach not by direct, irrefutable command but through biblical and theological guidelines and principles that the Christian is meant to reflect on and contextualize.⁷⁰ It also allows room for Christians, especially as individual citizens and residents of the state, to disagree with and persuade one another on left-hand kingdom issues through the use of reason. Moreover, it calls all sides to repentance when their positions are colored by selfish aims or mean-spirited rhetoric, and avoids making an individual Christian feel that his or her standing before God is conditional upon general or specific agreement about immigration law.

⁶⁹ The most recent LCMS resolution reiterating this (and using the language of “sin”) is Res. 6-02A, “To Reiterate Synod’s Stance on Abortion” (2001). See “Abortion,” in *This We Believe*, 1.

⁷⁰ CTCR, *Render unto Caesar...and unto God*, 51-52. To illustrate the “more traditional Lutheran view,” the document cites a 1983 “catechism” on proposed tuition tax credit legislation: “In still other cases, sensitive questions may arise for public debate concerning which God’s Word provides even less specific guidance...In these cases it may be helpful for the Synod, while recognizing that Lutheran Christians equally committed to following God’s will as revealed in Holy Scripture may come to different conclusions, to keep its members informed and offer guidance to them as they determine their own positions” (p. 51).

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IV. Who Is My Neighbor?

The Place of the Christian’s Vocation in the Immigration Debate

What does it mean to fulfill the law of God? Christians know the law of God as the Ten Commandments. But how is the Decalogue fulfilled or carried out in their everyday lives? This question remains an abstract one until we look more closely at the concrete vocations God has given us and the specific neighbor or sets of neighbors God has put in our lives.⁷¹ Vocation is the calling God gives each Christian to fulfill His law by serving some neighbor(s) through the exercise of certain tasks and responsibilities. When a Christian serves his neighbor in the context of his God-given vocation or “station in life,” he fulfills concretely God’s “commandment of love” and thus His will that we love our neighbor as ourselves.⁷² Since Christians relate to many neighbors, they typically have more than one vocation and, therefore, more than one neighbor to attend to in this life.

To have a vocation is no accident, but God’s created intent for us. Vocations can be appropriately understood as part of the fabric or order of God’s own creation. Vocations derive in one way or another from God’s command and institution of work as part of His creation. Even before the Fall into sin, God created man to tend the garden (Gn. 2:15). Even though after the Fall work is often seen and felt as a divine curse (cf. Gn. 3:17-19), Christians should not forget that work is actually a temporal means instituted by the Creator through which He blesses, provides for, protects, and sustains His creation.⁷³ “Work is the ‘mask’ behind which the hidden God Himself does everything and gives men what they need to live.”⁷⁴ God has provided the world with

⁷¹ This section develops an argument made in Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., “Arizona Neighbor On My Mind,” *ConcordiaTheology.Org* (May 3, 2010). Online: <http://concordia theology.org/2010/05/arizona-neighbor-on-my-mind>. See Appendix II for an explanation of the term “vocation” as used in this report.

⁷² “This commandment of love, valid everywhere and for all people, becomes specific for us as individuals in the context of the station in life in which God has placed us. Through our station in life we are placed into a definite and particular relationship to one another. And our duty to serve one another thereby takes on very specific form.” Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1972), 36.

⁷³ “The world only sees the troublesome and heavy burden of work and therefore flees and hates it. To do that, however, means to look at work with the ‘eyes of the flesh,’ which can only see the toil and trouble of work—and the flesh ought not to have anything else. However, Christians see work with the eyes of the Holy Spirit...God has sweetened the sourness of work with the honey of his good pleasure and the promise of his blessing...Thus work is indeed under a curse, but it also stands under God’s blessing.” *Ibid.*, 102.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 101; “Instead of coming in uncovered majesty when he gives a gift to man, God places a mask before his face. He clothes himself in the form of an ordinary man who performs his work on earth. Human beings are to work, ‘everyone according to his vocation and office’; through this they serve as masks of God, behind which he can conceal himself when he would scatter his gifts.” Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Evansville, Indiana: Ballast Press, 1994), 138 (cf. 123-143).

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workers and rulers of all kinds who, through their labors, contribute to the well-being of many neighbors.⁷⁵

Moreover, God created male and female in His own image and, therefore, in perfect righteousness—namely, to live in a right relationship before God and a right relationship before human beings. Even though we rightly speak of our relationship with God after the fall as one that has been corrupted by sin, we must remember that from the beginning God has desired to live in communion with His creatures and—instead of destroying His fallen creation—chooses to restore it through Christ's redemptive work and the Spirit-led speaking and living out of the Gospel through the church on earth. God instituted the church already from the beginning by creating our first parents to live in communion with Him in the Garden. After the fall He makes provision to restore His creatures to communion with Himself through Christ. God has provided the world with the church, her ministers, and individual members to proclaim the Gospel of redemption in Christ and thus to contribute to the spiritual well-being of many neighbors.

God created us to live rightly before one another. Adam and Eve, our first parents, were not created to live merely as isolated beings seeking to fulfill their own individual needs and desires. Instead, God created man and woman for each other and thus to care for and sustain one another in the context of the marital union. People living in this fallen world often speak of marriage and family life in terms of its challenges, failures, or inconveniences. Christians are called to remember that God instituted marriage, and thus the family, as a means to bless, care for, and protect His creation.⁷⁶ Parents provide for the temporal and spiritual needs of children. The Christian household is the first place where children learn from their parents the value of work, marriage, authority, and God's Word. It is the first economy, government, and church.

God instituted secular government "already in paradise" under the command to rule the earth. Government is rooted in the reality that, as a result of the institution of marriage, "earthly life requires relationships in which some are superiors and others are dependent, in which some give commands and others are subjects."⁷⁷ Therefore, secular government, broadly speaking, includes "marriage, the household, property, the relationship between master and servant," even if after the fall secular government is defined more strictly

⁷⁵ "Whoever does not work is a thief and robs his neighbor in two ways. First, he permits others to work for him and nourishes himself from their 'blood and sweat.' Second, he withholds what he ought to give his neighbor." Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 102 (italics added).

⁷⁶ "On earth and in relation to his neighbor he [i.e., man] fills an 'office'; there the main point is that creation is sustained, e.g., that children receive food, clothing and care. This work of love God effects on earth through the 'orders'—the order of marriage, of teacher and pupils, of government, etc." Wengert, *Luther on Vocation*, 6-7.

⁷⁷ Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 48.

as God's means to curb external sin through the "sword" wielded by political authorities.⁷⁸

In short, all vocations, stations, or offices through which we relate to and serve our neighbor in the world today derive from God's design and word.⁷⁹ To be a creature means to have vocations and neighbors for whom we care. But who is my neighbor? Indeed, my neighbor is anyone who needs my help. Yet if everyone is my neighbor in general, the danger is that no one will be my neighbor concretely. When speaking about immigrants who are in the United States illegally, one must remember that each person has a different story and experience.⁸⁰ Some are victims of trafficking.⁸¹ Some do not have legal status due to violence and exploitation by another party. Many entered the United States legally but overstayed their visas for any number of reasons, including family reunification issues, fear of persecution, or the desire to provide their children a more dignified life. One must also admit that a number have come to or stayed in this country to engage in criminal acts. Immigration is not merely an issue about law in some general sense, but about the individuals who are our neighbors. Otherwise stated, vocation allows us to put a human face on debates concerning law in general and immigration law in particular.

Just as the Lutheran teaching on vocation avoids the idea that the law can be fulfilled abstractly without some concrete neighbor in mind, this teaching also helps us to avoid the danger of thinking of our neighbor as an abstract object by directing us to advocate for specific neighbors in their particular situations and within a context of actual service, from some concrete office or station in life. When it comes to the immigration debate, the critical argument is not whether one is for or against "illegal" immigration. Whatever is "illegal" according to this or that current law is, strictly speaking, "illegal." There is no argument there. Disagreements about the civil law have to do instead with whether immigration law, either broadly or in certain aspects, deals adequately, fairly, justly, or reasonably with certain neighbors or sets of neighbors. It is therefore only natural that particular answers to illegal immi-

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

⁷⁹ "God has established stations among men—Luther also speaks of orders, institutions, offices, or hierarchies. There are many and various stations in life, for 'God is a great lord and has many kinds of servants'... Sometimes Luther summarizes them in three basic stations: ministry, marriage (or the family, including everything related to business and the economy), and secular authority... All these are 'divine stations and orders' because God has established them in his word, and they are to be honored as holy institutions." *Ibid.*, 36-37.

⁸⁰ *SRIC* notes: "Millions of undocumented persons have come to the United States for many and various reasons. They have come to flee oppression of many sorts, including extreme poverty and hunger. They have come in order to make provision for their loved ones. They have come in order to end separation from loved ones. They have come illegally because they have deemed that the legal route is nearly impossible to maneuver. They have come because they can work, and they find dignity in labor. We recognize also that a small percentage have come for malevolent reasons."

⁸¹ See Res 6-07A "To Support Efforts to End Human Trafficking/Slavery," in *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Convention Proceedings* (2010), 144.

gration will depend, whether we realize it or not, on our vocational priorities and corresponding neighbors for whom we are called to advocate.

Vocation allows us to argue boldly and persuasively for particular neighbors. It encourages Christians to take a stand for the people whom we are to serve. For example, the governor of a U.S. state might argue, from his or her position as an officer of the law in the left-hand realm, for tougher enforcement measures against immigrants who reside in the state illegally in order to protect state residents for whom he or she is responsible against problems such as violence, kidnappings, human trafficking, and other crimes. In doing so, the state official performs his or her duty from a particular vocation—in this case, by advocating for the safety and quality of life of state residents. With regard to law enforcement, border patrol agents also fulfill their vocations by stopping immigrants who want to cross into the United States without a proper visa. This is the main duty through which these agents will promote national security on behalf of the citizens of the nation—their neighbors. Since we are faced with many neighbors asking for our attention, vocation defines *who* is my closest neighbor, what neighbor's needs one should deal with *first*, and *how* to do so.

A significant tension often arises as we wrestle with the obligation to love our neighbor in the everyday complexities of life. Even as we are called to "do good to everyone," so we are also encouraged to show special concern for "the household of faith" (Gal 6:10). Our Lord chided the Pharisees for a convoluted "ethic" that resulted in neglect of family members in the name of some other set of religious priorities (Mk 7:10-12). Such references remind us that love for our neighbor always involves particular individuals and that our Lord expects love for our neighbor to begin with our families and other neighbors who are in closest proximity to us. So the father dare not neglect the love of his family in the name of love for others who are farther removed. Similarly, it is appropriate for a Christian community to give priority to the neighbors in its midst, as Paul says in Galatians 6. And, from this same principle, it is morally appropriate for civil entities and governing authorities to give priority to the well-being of their own citizens.⁸²

At the same time, this concern for the "nearest neighbor" is not permission to deny that the person who is farther removed is also my neighbor. When the lawyer in the parable of the Good Samaritan asks, "Who is my neighbor?" he is attempting "to deflect attention away from himself" in order to avoid the command to love. His question "implies that there are some people who are *not* my neighbor." But no such conclusion is allowed by the Lord, whose ministry shows that "absolutely *no one* is excluded from his love" (see Matt. 5:43-44).⁸³ While no Christian is able to do good in equal measure to every neighbor, we

⁸² Peter C. Meilaender has emphasized the matter of proximity as an important factor in the immigration debate. See "Immigration: Citizens and Strangers," 10-12.

⁸³ Arthur A. Just, Jr., *Luke 9:51-24:53* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 451-452.

ought never to assume that God would have us exclude anyone from the love of neighbor to which we have been called.

Inevitably, in a less than perfect world, advocating for one neighbor may also mean not coming to another neighbor's defense. Not surprisingly, therefore, there will also be conscientious and upright citizens and residents who will advocate for hard-working immigrants whose legal status is questionable or difficult to regularize but who over the years have contributed to the economic vitality of the state, whose children were born or raised in this nation and know of no other country than this land of freedom and opportunity, and whose families are a complex composite of citizens, residents, and undocumented aliens all living under the same roof. Broadly speaking, those who will speak for them are likely to argue for initiatives such as sensible worker visa programs, humane enforcement of immigration laws, protection and access to public education for children of undocumented aliens, family unification, and earned paths to legalization. Such advocates include but are not limited to families and friends of the undocumented, pro bono immigration lawyers, human rights activists, Christians and church workers who work very closely or almost exclusively with immigrants, as well as larger groups such as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS).⁸⁴

A measure of conflict is inevitable in a sinful world with so many competing issues calling for our attention and so many types of neighbors calling for our help. Our neighbors—in a good and real sense—are our burdens and crosses to bear. God has given us our neighbors. We rightly struggle with questions about *whom* we should serve *first* and *how* we should best serve them.⁸⁵ We cannot evade that fundamental divine intention for our lives. It is part of our creatureliness, our being bound or rightly related to the specific people whom God has given us to serve. In making decisions for this or that neighbor in the context of our God-given vocations, Christians will of course experience a certain measure of ambiguity at times and should expect a certain level of paradox.

Such paradox arises when a Christian considers his office, where the neighbor he has been called to serve from a particular station in life depends on him, *vis-à-vis* his own individual or private relationship as a Christian to some other neighbor. This paradoxical state of existence in the life of the Christian implies that "a distinction must be made between acting (and suffering)

⁸⁴ We speak here of advocacy in the broad sense of promoting the well-being of the immigrants through various means. When defined more narrowly as a means to address systemic change in immigration law, advocacy represents only 1% or less of LIRS's service portfolio. More broadly, LIRS is a social ministry or service driven by the Lutheran faith whose mission is to protect refugees and migrants at risk and to assist with their resettlement in the United States.

⁸⁵ Sánchez, "Misión e inmigración," 71, 73. Other questions, beyond the scope of this document, could be asked with regard to this issue such as the responsibility of government to its citizens, an immigrant's responsibility to obey governing authorities in his/her new country as well as the country of origin, etc.

in my own behalf in a private relationship with my neighbor on the one hand, and acting (and suffering) in my office, that is, in the responsibility for others inherent in my station.⁸⁶ As an individual Christian, for instance, “when you consider yourself and what is yours,” you might turn the other cheek privately and even suffer personally some injustice carried out by your neighbor.⁸⁷ Positively stated, as an individual Christian, I might also privately assist even my own enemies when the need arises.⁸⁸ However, when called to a particular office and vocation to care for some particular neighbors, I cannot act individually anymore, but must now give priority to and come to the defense of those neighbors I am called to defend and advocate for in my office and station. In such a situation, I cannot simply “turn the other cheek” or aid my enemies, if this means that those neighbors I have been called to serve in my office will suffer as a result of my individual or private decisions and actions.⁸⁹

Let us apply further the distinction between the Christian acting as an individual and the Christian acting in a particular office. Think, for example, of a border patrol agent. As an individual Christian, he might actually disagree with current immigration law and see the current system as unjust, noting how it does not seem to take into consideration the economic needs and the labor demands that bring those who are poorest into the United States. As an individual Christian, the agent may also show compassion to the immigrant who is coming illegally into the United States, taking care of his basic humanitarian needs and at times even providing protection from “coyotes” (smugglers) and others who might want to harm him. As an individual Christian, acting outside his particular office, he may also share the Gospel with immigrants—whether here legally or illegally—in his neighborhood and serve their needs

⁸⁶ Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 68. Luther writes: “A Christian should be so disposed that he will suffer every evil and injustice without avenging himself; neither will he seek legal redress in the courts but have utterly no need of temporal authority and law for his own sake. On behalf of others, however, he may and should seek vengeance, justice, protection, and help, and do as much as he can to achieve it” (italics added). See “Temporal Authority,” AE 45:101. Lohse speaks of the distinction between the Christian as “Christ-person” and as “world-person”: “In order to make clear the Christian’s twofold duty, he [i.e., Luther] spoke of the Christian as being ‘two persons,’ a Christian person and a person of the world.” Bernard Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 321.

⁸⁷ Commenting on Christ’s words “do not resist evil” (Mt. 5), Luther distinguishes between “satisfying God’s kingdom inwardly and the kingdom of the world outwardly” as follows: “In the one case, you consider yourself and what is yours; in the other, you consider your neighbor and what is his. In what concerns you and yours, you govern yourself by the gospel and suffer injustice toward yourself as a true Christian; in what concerns the person or property of others, you govern yourself according to love and tolerate no injustice toward your neighbor.” Luther, “Temporal Authority,” AE 45:96.

⁸⁸ “As a Christian, when his own personal welfare is involved, he seeks to do nothing else than serve his neighbor, even if his neighbor is his enemy. He is prepared to suffer injustice without protecting himself and resisting evil, without calling upon the authorities and their judicial power for help, without avenging himself...” Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 69.

⁸⁹ “However, as a secular person, fulfilling his office of protecting those entrusted to his care and acting in matters that affect the welfare of his neighbor, he must under all conditions fulfill his duty to protect them, to oppose evil, block it, punish it, and use force in resisting it.” *Ibid.*

enemies—when the opportunity arises (Luke 6:27-28). What a high calling! It is sobering that God demands so much of us. On the one hand, we must rejoice in our vocations and attend primarily to those neighbors we have been called to serve. On the other hand, we must have the needs of all our neighbors in mind when the opportunity to serve them arises—even those neighbors who are living among us illegally. We must be ready to serve and cannot use vocation as an excuse not to do so. Some Christians may do so acting as individuals, even if they cannot do so from a particular office (e.g., the border patrol agent). Other Christians, whose primary vocation puts them in a position where they are called to care for their immigrant neighbors, will also be able to offer such service from a particular office (e.g., a pro-bono immigration lawyer).

In the immigration debate, there is also an argument to be made for serving the neediest and most vulnerable neighbors in our midst as we make decisions about which “neighbor” to serve first. Immigrants are among the poorest and most vulnerable neighbors among us. The argument for the priority of love towards the neediest has to be seriously considered.⁹¹ Having said that, some will admittedly argue that other neighbors who are not poor immigrants are also most vulnerable and needy when it comes to certain protections that the law must seek to provide for them. In those cases, arguing from some particular vocation and advocating for some particular neighbor or set of neighbors has taken place. And yet in all their discussions on civil law, Christians are called to consider not only their particular vocations and specific neighbors, but also God’s clear and timeless will and command in Scripture to remember, care for, and deal fairly with the immigrant neighbors in their midst. Christians will, of course, disagree on *how* to deal with all the aforementioned concerns and demands, but *that* they should do so is not negotiable.

⁹¹ A priority of love towards the most needy should not be equated with the expression “preferential option for the poor” if by the latter term one means that the poor are closest to earning God’s favor on the basis of their condition in life and thus apart from faith in Christ. Therefore, in a Lutheran framework, the term “priority of love” should be used only in the sphere of the righteousness of the law, which deals with our relationship before human beings or our neighbors. It does not belong to the article of the righteousness of faith, which deals with our relationship before God through faith in Christ. For the distinction between the two kinds of righteousness, see Ap IV, 21-26.

through the congregation’s mercy programs in the community. And yet, in his vocation as a border patrol agent in the civil realm, he is bound to stop even the neediest neighbor who wants a better life for his children from crossing the border into the United States. In doing so, the border patrol agent puts his office, and the neighbor(s) he has been called to serve under that office, above his own personal or private relationships to particular immigrant neighbors.

On the other side of the border, let us consider a Mexican husband and father, who lives in a neighborhood where drug lords put lives in danger on a daily basis, and who has tried desperately to no avail to find decent work in his own land. As an individual Christian, apart from his particular God-given calling and office as husband and father, he may be quite willing to suffer hunger, anxiety, and death—i.e., to “turn the other cheek,” as it were, and suffer injustice at the hands of some neighbor, trusting in God’s final deliverance. And yet, in his God-given vocation as a husband and father, the man must defend and provide for his wife and children. What a man might be willing to suffer as an individual, therefore, is different from what he has been called to do for the sake of others whose suffering he is called to alleviate. For example, even though the husband and father knows that crossing the border without a proper visa is an illegal act, and that by doing so he might actually affect other neighbors, his vocation as father may lead him to choose to cross into the United States to find safety, work, and peace for his loved ones simply because he is bound to care for those whom God has put in his life.

Although one cannot attempt to fulfill God’s law in some abstract sense without some concrete neighbor in mind, Luther is also able to teach that the law of God is above this or that particular vocation, office, and neighbor.⁹⁰ This insight adds another layer of complexity to the immigration debate and prevents us from arriving at some exclusivist approach to vocation and office that will conveniently leave out some important neighbors who might not fit neatly within our stations. Indeed, despite the distinction made above between the Christian acting for himself and the Christian acting from his office, Christians still must find ways, whenever possible, to deal with the suffering neighbor even when he is outside his particular vocation(s).

While one must argue for some specific neighbor, one cannot use that argument to justify leaving another one to suffer. Unfortunately, vocation can be practiced in such a way that some neighbors are summarily excluded. The law of God, however, calls us to serve every single neighbor—even our

⁹⁰ “The ‘common order of Christian love’ stands above the stations. At the same time, only those called to a particular vocation are responsible for the special works of that vocation. The same works are not required of everyone; rather, each has different works according to his station and vocation. All, however, are equally called to love in the same way; through love ‘one serves not only the three orders, but also serves every needy person in general with all kinds of benevolent deeds.’ Thus the Christian’s service of his neighbor goes far beyond the regular duties of his vocation...Luther’s ethics is an ethics of station and vocation, but not in an exclusive sense.” Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 40-41.

Concluding Remarks and a Final Exhortation

As we reflect on our response to immigration issues thus far, some summarizing observations are in order. Lutheran theology contributes a number of scriptural and confessional guidelines and principles for approaching the contemporary immigration debate. It leaves room for disagreement among Christians on left-hand realm issues without disrupting the unity in Christ grounded in the right-hand realm where the Gospel saves. While Lutheran theology affirms the responsibility of Christians to obey the civil authorities, it also leaves room among Christians for various assessments of the level of justice and righteousness in certain aspects of immigration law. Such assessments and levels of response depend on the neighbor whom one has been called to advocate for, defend, and protect, and therefore on one’s vocation and office. Therefore, Lutheran theology compels us to consider civil laws not only abstractly but concretely by advocating for particular neighbors or sets of neighbors. There is always a human face to the immigration debate. As Christians engage in debate over a complex issue for the sake of their neighbor in the spirit of Christian love and humility, they ought to do so not only by appealing to the use of reason and persuasion but also by putting the best construction on the neighbor with whom and about whom they speak.

We must also warn against the misuse of Lutheran theology to justify an unbalanced position. On the one hand, the desire to proclaim the Gospel and do the work of mercy can foster an unwillingness to deal with immigration laws. As we consider what the Bible says about God’s command to love the aliens in our midst, we should also take seriously God’s command to obey the authorities. On the other hand, the desire to promote the rule of law can foster an uncritical, passive, and even idolatrous attitude towards government and civil law that does not lead to a serious consideration of a potentially unjust state of affairs. Here the Christian should take seriously God’s command to love the immigrant neighbor, but also seek to be well informed on the state of current civil law on immigration and its potential problems and injustices, precisely for the sake of respect for God’s law in general and for the rule of law in particular. Lutheran theology helps us to avoid extremes.

We should also be aware that Lutheran theology can be used improperly in such a way that no one is led to repent of anything or to deal with the consequences of their actions or attitude toward their neighbor. Christians who rightly advocate for the rule of law might falsely think they do not need to repent if they violate the eighth commandment by portraying the actions of their immigrant neighbors in the most negative light. Christians may be so angry about failures to control immigration that they excuse their lack of compassion for struggling and suffering immigrants. Other Christians, who advocate for showing mercy and compassion to the immigrant for the sake of the Gospel, may consider themselves more righteous than others and defame governing officials or border control agents who are seeking to fulfill their vocations in a godly way and to protect their fellow citizens and country.

Christians who strongly support immigrant rights may feel that they are justified in vilifying those who disagree. Undocumented immigrants themselves might believe they have no need to repent for disregarding the law or refusing to acknowledge the necessity of decent and orderly processes of governance.

Finally, Lutheran theology can be misused in a way that obscures the Gospel. A strong rule of law stance without an equally strong concern for the proclamation of the Gospel and the work of mercy among immigrants can lead immigrants to see Lutherans as Christians who do not practice what they preach. Moreover, a persistent insistence on the need for undocumented immigrants to repent of their sin of breaking the law, without an equal insistence on the need for repentance for all who benefit directly or indirectly from their labors, makes the church look hypocritical and thus like a church whose Gospel message cannot be trusted.

All of this reminds us of the struggle of Christian life in a fallen world. Our sin is ever before us (Ps 51:3) and our whole life remains one of repentance.⁹² The Gospel's absolution is constantly needed both for our obvious sins and for the many times when we see no recourse other than to choose what appears to be "the lesser of two evils." None of this shakes our confidence in God's word of forgiveness, even as we seek again and again to do better.

We must all acknowledge that we do fail to help some neighbor and we do not fulfill all that the law demands of us. We all sin in various ways as we seek to fulfill our vocations in the left- and right-hand realms and kingdoms.⁹³ Therefore, in what is one of the most complex and debated issues of our time, the Gospel, by means of confession and absolution, must be brought to bear continually as Christians engage in conversations about what is best for various neighbors and attempt to better carry out their vocations responsibly and in good conscience for the sake of these neighbors—including immigrants among us.

⁹² Martin Luther, AE 31:25.

⁹³ Althaus states, "...[W]e cannot fulfill any vocation without being involved in sin. Here again it is very important that all Christian ethos is ethos under justification. This is particularly true of our vocation, whatever that may be. Thus the work that we do in our vocation cannot be acceptable apart from the certainty that our sins are forgiven. No matter how impossible it is to avoid sins in our station and vocation because of our sinful nature, however, our station as such remains pure and holy because it is established through God's word." Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 41.

V. Responding to Immigration Concerns:

Some Guidelines for Church Workers

These guidelines address a few of the many questions that may be raised by church workers and others in ministries involving immigrant populations. As of the time of this writing, the guidelines appear to be consistent with current immigration law. However, given the rapidly changing nature of immigration law, the reader should not construe these guidelines as legal advice. Church workers are always encouraged to seek legal counsel in their own state.

1. A church worker may proclaim the Gospel and teach God's Word to immigrants regardless of their legal status. One may incorporate immigrants into the life and membership of the congregation.
2. One may also incorporate immigrants into the life of the parochial school. One may give undocumented immigrants and their children access to a Christian education in Lutheran schools, colleges, and seminaries of the church. There is no federal law that prohibits the admission of undocumented immigrants to private, not-for-profit, educational institutions of the church.
3. One may offer assistance to immigrants through the church's ministries of relief and mercy regardless of their legal status.⁹⁴ One may assist the needy with food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance, and childcare. One may assist Lutheran churches in other countries from which undocumented immigrants come so that their church leaders might reach out to them with the Gospel and care for them through ministries of mercy in order that they might find paid and dignified work to support their families.
4. One may help immigrants gain legal status in the country. One may seek the advice of lawyers and advocacy groups to reunite families separated through enforcement of immigration laws, or to seek asylum for those individuals or families for whom there is a reasonable fear of death or persecution upon return to the country of origin.
5. A church worker is not required to investigate the legal status of immigrants attending the local congregation or parochial school. One is not required to report undocumented attendees to state authorities.⁹⁵ Potential situations such as the following may constitute government intrusion into the church's work of spiritual

⁹⁴ "It is lawful to provide human care to a person who lacks documentation." Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service (LIRS), *Bible Study Guide: People on the Move • New Neighbors • Much to Give* (Baltimore, Maryland), 7. The *Bible Study Guide* is part of a set of materials titled *Be Not Afraid: Resources for Congregations & Immigrant Families Fractured by Fear*, and is available online at <http://lirs.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/BNAMANUALBIBLESTUDY.pdf>.

⁹⁵ "You are not required to report someone who lacks documentation." *Ibid.*

care: the presence at worship of enforcement personnel looking for undocumented persons; the use of church property by enforcement personnel to stage a raid; a demand made to clergy by enforcement personnel to disclose information about members whose legal status has been disclosed to the pastor in the context of confession and absolution. The church is not the government and is not expected to engage in law enforcement activities. At the same time, one must encourage and help undocumented members of the body of Christ to fulfill the law in every way possible. In assisting them, one must also be prepared to exercise a good measure of patience in what can become a long, complex, and expensive process towards legalization.⁹⁶

6. One must not give undocumented immigrants paid employment at the church or school unless they are legally authorized to be employed in the United States. One may involve them in the life of the congregation on a legitimate volunteer basis (e.g., people serving as elders, musicians, assistant liturgists, or in outreach to the community).
7. A pastor must not share with civil authorities privileged and confidential information given to him by an undocumented immigrant member of the congregation in the context of confession and absolution or spiritual counseling. This includes the person's immigration status. The general principle that a pastor is not to divulge sins confessed to him so as not to break the ordination vow applies. Moreover, even in the broader context of pastoral care in the right-hand realm, the same general principle of confidentiality may apply since the undocumented member does not see or approach his pastor as any individual citizen in the left-hand realm but specifically as his pastor in the right-hand realm.⁹⁷ The scope of the clergy/penitent privilege varies from state to state, so it is important to seek legal counsel if there is a question whether privilege applies to a particular communication.
8. If an undocumented immigrant is involved in criminal activities that actually put people's lives in danger, there is probable cause for calling the authorities to check into and deal with the threat. In such situations, however, the immediate issue is not the question of legal status per se but the life-endangering activities of the individual. Situations that may require contacting the authorities include knowledge of criminal activities such as terrorism, bulk cash smuggling/financial crimes, human smuggling, gang-related

⁹⁶ "It is not lawful to help someone avoid compliance with immigration law, such as an order of deportation." *Ibid.* (see n. 41 above).

⁹⁷ See CTCR, *The Pastor-Penitent Relationship: Privileged Communications* (1999); available online at <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdo?src=lc&id=412>.

crime, weapons smuggling, child exploitation/pornography, narcotics smuggling, human trafficking (forced labor/slavery), and employment/exploitation of unlawful workers.⁹⁸ In such cases where sharing vital information may help to save life, the principle of Christian love for the neediest neighbor applies.

9. In providing humanitarian assistance to undocumented immigrants, one must be careful not to transport them across the border into the U.S. One must not deal with "coyotes" (smugglers) and other criminal elements who ask for one's help to bring people across the border. Also, one must not willingly hide or conceal information from government authorities concerning immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally when specifically asked to share such information by investigating authorities. Concealing information from civil authorities is particularly problematic if, whether one knows it or not, an immigrant has a criminal record. One should always seek legal advice, especially when one finds oneself in potentially ambiguous legal situations.

⁹⁸ For further examples of criminal activity or violations that may put others' lives at risk, see <http://www.ice.gov/exec/forms/hsi-tips/tips.asp>.

APPENDIX I

A Framework for Considering Immigration Concerns:

Case Studies

The following case studies are intended to stimulate reflection and discussion rather than provide “right and wrong answers.” In each case, individuals are encouraged to think about and discuss these cases using the biblical and Lutheran framework outlined in this document. That framework includes such important themes as the mission of the church to share the Gospel with all nations, the call to love your neighbor, the importance of the church’s unity, respect for law, vocation, the two realms, and so forth.

Case Study 1—Vocation, Two Realms, and the Mission of the Church

You have been called to serve a predominantly Anglo parish in an increasingly Latino neighborhood. A prominent Anglo member of your congregation who serves on the city council is rather vocal not only outside but also in the church about his opposition to illegal immigration. He repeatedly insists, on the basis of Romans 13:1-7, that we must obey and enforce our immigration laws. Members of the Latino community whose legal status is unknown, but likely include some undocumented people, are increasingly hesitant to attend any outreach church activities because of their fear that this particular zealous citizen or others like him in the church might call the attention of “la migra” (immigration officers) to raid their homes or workplace, or might make police officers suspicious enough about their legal status to check out their papers. As a result, the congregation’s evangelistic and mercy efforts in the community are not trusted and the Gospel is simply not being proclaimed within earshot of these Latino neighbors.

Questions for Discussion:

1. As one who works in the right-hand realm, what do you say to this dear Anglo member? In particular, what do you say to him as one who lives and has his vocation as a city council member and a concerned citizen in the left-hand kingdom?
2. On the other hand, how do you speak to him as a member of the church who also lives and has his vocation in the right-hand realm as a baptized child of God? What responsibilities does he have as a Christian in relation to the church’s work of mission and mercy in the predominantly Latino neighborhood?
3. What might be some of the consequences of the member’s actions of vocal opposition to illegal immigration, for the church and the Latino neighbor? Are there some things that a Christian *could* say but should *not* in certain contexts?
4. Is the council member’s appeal to the text from Romans 13 fully

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valid? How would you help him to also consider the biblical mandate to love his immigrant neighbor as himself (e.g., Lev. 19:33-34)? In what ways might this member of the congregation reasonably fulfill both biblical teachings?

Case Study 2—Vocation, Two Realms, and the Unity of the Church

A concerned Hispanic member of the congregation in Case Study 1 who works *pro bono* as an immigration lawyer has offered many of her services to Latinos in the community. As a result of her tireless work and legal counsel, which she does in an office at church set aside for this ministry of mercy, many Hispanics in the community have been asking about the church. As a lawyer, this person respects the rule of law, but through her practice she has become convinced that the current immigration law does not deal adequately with some neighbors. Her *pro bono* work is inspired by her desire to use the law to help people in difficult situations. As a Christian, she takes very seriously God’s command that we love the sojourner neighbor as ourselves (cf. Lev. 19:33-34). She is so disappointed in the Anglo member’s vocal opposition to illegal immigration—at times, in the presence of Latinos seeking legal advice—that she will not commune with him at the Lord’s Table. The *pro bono* lawyer explains to the pastor that she is frustrated and even angry about the brother’s lack of sensitivity to the plight of these immigrants, their legal struggles, the broken and unjust aspects of the current immigration system, and the importance of the church’s work of mercy among them.

Questions for Discussion:

1. As a church worker in this congregation, you have to speak to this dear Latina sister and congregation member who resents the actions of her Anglo brother. Might she have a point, even a biblical basis, regarding the issue of his lack of sensitivity towards the sojourner neighbor? Or is she overreacting?
2. How do you acknowledge the value of this sister’s vocation as the concrete context in which the law of God is fulfilled and her neighbor is served? It is clear that the lawyer’s vocational perspective colors her concern and priorities. How is a vocational angle or context helpful for assessing aspects of immigration law as an informed Christian citizen or resident of the state?
3. How do you speak to the sister about the value of distinguishing between God’s work in the temporal and spiritual realms? When does vocational perspective become a problem? What are the potential consequences of confusing the two realms for the unity of the church and even for the church’s mission among Hispanics in the neighborhood?

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Case Study 3—Vocation, Two Realms, and Neighbor

On the Mexican side of the border, the father of three children living in poverty tries to get across to find work in the United States. On the U.S. side of the border, a member of the border patrol—a Mexican American—stops the desperate father from crossing for the second time in the same year. After getting to know each other a little bit through the strange circumstances of their encounters, they find out that they are actually distant relatives.

In a conversation, the father shares his struggles back home and expresses his wish that he did not have to cross over and come in without a visa (these are almost impossible to get anyway). He feels, however, that he must do it to provide food and a better life for his children. The officer shares his frustration with some aspects of current immigration law, but explains to the father that it is his duty to enforce the law and unfortunately he will have to make sure the father returns to Mexico.

The officer makes sure the father has something to eat before the journey. The father tells the officer he bears no grudges against him and understands he is just doing his job. The officer understands the struggles of the father and tells him that he respects his desire to take good care of his children. They share a handshake, a smile, and wish each other well, knowing that they will likely see each other again under similar circumstances.

Questions for Discussion:

1. In what ways are these two men living righteously in the world? In what way(s) do these men serve some neighbor through their vocations and thus fulfill the law of God? What obligation is each man attempting to fulfill in his particular vocation?
2. How does the “law of the land” (or civil law) concerning illegal immigration enter into conflict to some degree with both of these men’s vocations and the particular commandments they are trying to obey? How do they acknowledge or verbalize this conflict? How do they resolve the conflict while remaining faithful to their vocations?
3. How are these men respectful of each other’s vocations? How is compassion shown to their neighbor in the encounter between the men? Do these two men have any further obligations towards one another beyond the specific circumstances of their encounter given the fact that they are distant relatives?
4. How does the distinction or paradox between a Christian acting individually or “privately” in relationship to a neighbor and the identity of the Christian acting “in his office” for the sake of others play out in this scenario?

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Case Study 4—Law, Human Care, and Neighbor

Tomás is in a county jail waiting to hear if his wife and two children are safe. Today Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raided his workplace and arrested all employees without documentation. Tomás blames himself for what has happened. He knew the risks in overstaying his visa and tried to live in the shadows. He wanted to seek a legal way to remain, but the risk of exposure was too great.

His family hardly leaves the house because they are afraid. Raquel, his wife, anxiously watches their children, who were born in America and are therefore U.S. citizens, go off to school each morning, and she watches worriedly for their return each afternoon. Going to church is scary for the family too, but it has been one of the few positives in their life, building their faith and providing a place to better their English speaking skills. Another positive was sending money, called remittances, back to Tomás’ brother to help take care of their extended family. But now all of that is over. Deportation seems certain.

How can Tomás make sure his wife and children return to his country with him? Since the children are U.S. citizens, they will need passports to travel, assuming his country will allow them to enter. Until all of these issues are figured out, Tomás worries how his wife will pay the rent and put food on the table. And if she is arrested herself, who will take care of the children?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What aspects of this story could be addressed through better border control and immigration law?
2. What aspects of this story could be addressed by human care from churches both in the United States and in Tomás’ home country?
3. How would you encourage this father in detention? What is your prayer for people in his situation?
4. Sometimes knowing someone’s plight makes us want to bend laws, and sometimes knowing that someone has broken the law makes us want to withhold compassion. How do we guard against both? What is a faithful response?

Case Study 5—Vocation, Two Realms, and Neighbor

Juanita is a border control officer for ICE and a second-generation American citizen whose family comes from Mexico. She and her family are members of your LCMS congregation. She takes her citizenship and her vocation seriously as a Christian, seeking to live a God-pleasing life. She recognizes the need for border security and especially the danger of the illegal drug trade across the southern border of the U.S. Yet, she finds herself struggling with her conscience as she works each day in support of immigration laws that she considers to favor highly-educated and technically-trained individuals while they make it nearly impossible for honest, poorly educated individuals to enter the U.S. legally, even though there is a demand for such workers in agriculture

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and other industries. She and her husband have relatives on both sides of the border. They agonize over the distressing circumstances their families face in Mexico and sympathize with the desire of many to migrate to the U.S. for their safety and well-being.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you counsel Juanita if she shared her conscience pangs with you?
2. In what ways may her vocations as a citizen, border control agent, and family member be in conflict? How do our experiences and background color and sometimes confuse our viewpoint and attitudes? Do you have ideas as to how these responsibilities should be prioritized?
3. Are there circumstances in which a government official should criticize or question the duties she is expected to uphold?
4. Is there a conflict between compassion and law? How would you encourage Juanita to retain both a respect for government and those who hold authority and continued compassion for her family and other potential immigrants?

Case Study 6—Vocation, Two Realms, and Neighbor

James is a border control officer as well. He has developed a deep antipathy toward the “coyotes” who smuggle people and drugs into the U.S., having observed occasions when they left weak or injured people on their own in danger of death and other times when they have fired on him and his colleagues. He realizes that the immigration problem is complex, but he has no sympathy for those who cross illegally because every crossing puts lives in danger, including his own.

As a consequence of his daily work, James was deeply troubled when his pastor encouraged the congregation to show compassion to all immigrants, legal or illegal. James believed that the pastor failed to recognize both the immediate dangers illegal immigration entails and the long-term problems that happen as increasing numbers of poor immigrants enroll in schools and require medical services.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you assess the legitimacy of James’ attitudes and concerns from a Christian perspective?
2. What would you encourage him to do if he shared with you his distress over the pastor’s comments? What might you say to his pastor?
3. In what ways do Christian teachings—such as love for one’s neighbor, submission to governing authorities, sin and grace—apply to this situation?

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4. How does our particular vocation both present opportunities for serving our neighbor and also tempt us to particular biases?

Case Study 7—Vocation, Neighbor, and the Ministry

The pastor of a congregation near an entry point for the U.S. has learned that one of his members is an undocumented worker. She has come to him in fear that she will be unable to continue to work and may be deported. Her husband and their children are citizens of the U.S. After securing her permission, the pastor discussed this confidentially with the elders. The different members of the Board of Elders had significantly different opinions about what should be done. One believes the woman should be compelled to turn herself in to the authorities or be excommunicated, another that the church should provide legal support to her family. Others are unsure about what should be done.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you advise this pastor to minister to the woman and her family? What should his priorities be as her pastor?
2. To what extent does the church—this particular congregation—have a corporate obligation to its members? Does it have a corporate obligation toward the government? How should they be prioritized?
3. How should the importance of maintaining family unity be weighed against the obligation of obedience to governmental authority?
4. Do you see any ways that our theology might help to draw the elders toward a godly consensus and greater unity in dealing with situations of this kind?

Case Study 8—Confession, Absolution, and Pastoral Care

A woman begins to attend church regularly and expresses interest in becoming a member. In a new member class, while discussing the fourth commandment and its meaning, the pastor notices that the woman is crying. When the pastor speaks with her privately and asks if he can help, she confesses to him that she has been in the U.S. illegally for many years and feels guilty and ashamed about it. She has two children who are legal residents, both in school. The pastor hears her confession and absolves her. They agree that they will visit an immigration attorney together. The attorney’s counsel is not very optimistic, but she says that it may be possible for this woman to gain legal status and they begin that process. The woman and her children complete member preparation and the pastor and congregation welcome them into membership. Yet, because the case drags on, the woman continues to struggle spiritually and seeks the comfort of forgiveness from her pastor.

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Questions for Discussion:

1. How should the pastor’s callings as a servant of the Word and also a citizen guide him in this instance?
2. How should the woman’s God-given vocation as a mother be taken into account by the pastor as he counsels her?
3. Was it proper for the pastor to absolve this woman in the first place? Should he continue to commune her? Should he continue to absolve her if she returns to him, still struggling with guilt and shame? What is the basis for your answers?
4. Should the congregation be informed of this immigrant woman’s legal status in the U.S.? What might be helpful or problematic about informing the congregation?
5. If the pastor brought up general aspects of this case in a circuit meeting, what advice would you hope other pastors in that circuit would give?
6. As the pastor counsels the woman, what difference should it make, if any, if the woman in this case study were single and without family in the U.S.?

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APPENDIX II

Terms

A. Immigration Terms:⁹⁹

1. **Asylum Seekers:** People forced to flee their homeland without access to the refugee resettlement process. People must apply for asylum within one year of arrival in the United States, unless certain limited exceptions apply, in order to be considered eligible. Those who receive asylum are called *asylees*.
2. **Immigrants:** People who have been admitted to live permanently in the United States as lawful permanent residents (LPRs).
3. **Lawful Permanent Residents:** Individuals who have legal authorization (a “Green Card”) to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time, but are not citizens and do not have the right to vote. Typically foreign-born individuals seek to become lawful permanent residents in one of three ways:
 - **Family Sponsorship.** Adult U.S. citizens can sponsor their foreign-born spouses, parents, children and siblings. Lawful permanent residents can sponsor their spouses, children under age 21 and unmarried adult children.
 - **Employment Sponsorship.** U.S. employers can sponsor individuals for specific positions when there is a demonstrated shortage of available highly skilled workers.
 - **Diversity Lottery.** Immigrants from certain countries can register for 50,000 visas made available each year.
4. **Mixed-Status Families:** Mixed-status families are those with one or more members who are not U.S. citizens. The noncitizen family members may or may not be documented. For example, a mixed-status family might comprise a U.S. citizen married to an undocumented immigrant with U.S.-born citizen children.
5. **Naturalized Citizens:** Lawful Permanent Residents are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship through a process called naturalization. To qualify for naturalization applicants must meet these qualifications:
 - They must have resided in the United States for five years, or three years if they are married to U.S. citizens, without having committed any serious crimes.
 - They must show that they have paid their taxes and are of “good moral character.”
 - They must demonstrate knowledge of U.S. history and government as well as an ability to understand, speak and write basic English.

⁹⁹ The definitions of immigration terms in this Appendix, with minor adaptations, are from LIRS, *Bible Study Guide*, 6-7, 9-10.

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6. Non-immigrants: People who are permitted to enter the United States for a limited period. Most non-immigrants must apply for a visa before entry. Visa holders must also pass an immigration inspection upon arrival.
7. Refugees: People who fled their home country due to persecution or fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Refugees typically stay in camps in a safer country before being resettled in a third country. The process usually takes years.
8. Undocumented Immigrants: People present in the United States without the permission of the U.S. government. Undocumented immigrants enter the United States without being inspected by an immigration officer or by using false documents. A foreign-born person who entered the country with permission of the U.S. government can become undocumented by "overstaying," remaining after a temporary status expires.
9. Visa: Travel document granted by consular officials. Visas do not guarantee entry into the United States.

B. Theological Terms:

1. Law: God's will written in the heart of every human creature (natural law) and specifically revealed to God's people in the Ten Commandments.
2. Civil Law: In contrast to the way the term "civil law" is used in American jurisprudence (referring to private relations between members of a community, rather than criminal matters), this document uses the term in a theological sense that includes all the laws of society (i.e., civil, criminal, and so forth). In this theological sense such civil law, which is formulated through the use of reason, is established and enforced by temporal government (civil authorities) and so is fallible. Nonetheless, because civil law brings about and maintains a measure of order in accordance with God's will and design, it is to be recognized as a gift of God and is to be obeyed unless it is directly contrary to his will as expressed in Holy Scripture.
3. Neighbor: Translation of the Hebrew *rea* (רֵעַ) and the Greek *plesion* (πλησιον). In the Old Testament, the term refers most narrowly to a fellow man from the house of Israel. Thus the moral obligations under God's law begin with those within the covenant relationship with God and one another (e.g., Lev. 19:18), but such "love for neighbor" extends also more broadly to the alien in their midst (cf. Lev. 19:33-34). Jesus speaks of the "neighbor" in a way that transcends relationships that include only the people of Israel—those sharing a common religion—in order to include all kinds of people who need our help (Mt. 22:39). Indeed, he makes clear that

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loving one's neighbor includes love of one's enemies (Mt. 5:43-48)—telling of a Jew helped by an unlikely good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37). In his explanation of the fifth commandment in the *Large Catechism*, Martin Luther speaks of neighbors broadly as "those in need and peril of body and life."

4. Immigrant: One of many possible translations of the Hebrew word *ger* (גֵר), which can also be rendered as alien, foreigner, sojourner, or stranger.
5. Two Realms (Two Kingdoms, Two Governments): God's twofold work, rule, or governance in the world to accomplish the redemption of sinners through the forgiveness of sins (right-hand realm or kingdom), and establish peace and justice in civil society through the use of the law to punish evil and reward good (left-hand realm or kingdom).
6. Vocation: God's calling to each Christian to fulfill His law or commands through the concrete service of some neighbor in the exercise of a particular office or station in life. Offices or stations include father and mother, son or daughter, spouse, schoolteacher, student, farmer, worker, governor, police officer, border patrol agent, immigration lawyer, social worker, citizen, church elder, deaconess, and pastor.

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LOS INMIGRANTES ENTRE NOSOTROS

Un marco de referencia
luterano para tratar
los problemas relacionados
con la inmigración



Un informe de la Comisión en
Teología y Relaciones Eclesiásticas
La Iglesia Luterana del Sínodo de Missouri
Noviembre 2012

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Los inmigrantes entre nosotros: abreviaciones

AEs	Los Artículos de Esmalcalda
Ap	La Apología de la Confesión de Augsburgo
CMa	El Catecismo Mayor
Decl. Sól.	Declaración Sólida de la Fórmula de la Concordia
Ep	Epítome de la Fórmula de la Concordia
FC	La Fórmula de la Concordia
LC	Libro de Concordia: Las Confesiones de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana. Editado por Andrés A. Meléndez (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989)
ODML	Las Obras de Martín Lutero. 10 vols. Buenos Aires: Publicaciones El Escudo, 1967-1985

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Los inmigrantes entre nosotros

*Un marco de referencia luterano para tratar los
problemas relacionados con la inmigración*

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Los inmigrantes entre nosotros

Un marco de referencia luterano para tratar los problemas relacionados con la inmigración

Prefacio

El siguiente informe no es ni más ni menos que lo que el subtítulo sugiere: *un marco de referencia luterano* para considerar el complejo y desafiante tema de la inmigración en los Estados Unidos. Para ser claros, este documento no presenta la "posición oficial" de la Iglesia Luterana del Sínodo de Missouri (LCMS) entorno a los debates actuales en los Estados Unidos con respecto a la inmigración. Esto se debe a varias razones: (1) La Comisión en Teología y Relaciones Eclesiásticas (CTCR) no determina la posición oficial del Sínodo. Nuestros informes son publicados con el propósito de estudiar y discutir, y no como una declaración final sobre doctrina y práctica. (2) El Sínodo no solicitó una perspectiva sobre inmigración que tratara de solucionar todas las discusiones o finalizar el debate en la LCMS (¡mucho menos en los Estados Unidos!). (3) Al emprender una tarea del Sínodo, la CTCR trata de encarar el tema asignado en base a las verdades escriturales y confesionales que no están limitadas por las realidades constantemente cambiantes de ciertas circunstancias sociales, políticas, legales o culturales. Un documento que intentara ser, por sobre todas las cosas, "relevante" a los debates actuales sobre este tema, rápidamente se convertiría en irrelevante. (4) Como el documento mismo trata de explicar, hay temas sociales, políticos y legales que no son tratados específicamente en la Palabra de Dios y acerca de los cuales, por lo tanto, los cristianos comprometidos a la misma comprensión de la autoridad de la Escritura pueden discrepar.

Al mismo tiempo, la Comisión busca proveer aquí un recurso útil para que los cristianos—especialmente luteranos—consideren el tan desafiante tema de la inmigración. Uno de los objetivos es ayudar a quienes tienen fuertes opiniones a considerar cómo y por qué cristianos conscientes y serios llegan a conclusiones diferentes sobre la inmigración. Más que nada, la Comisión desea recordar a los lectores que tanto el inmigrante como el ciudadano son nuestros prójimos, o sea, personas a quienes hemos sido llamados a amar. Por lo tanto, el siguiente informe incluye no sólo una discusión teológica de algunas de las preguntas que los cristianos hacen con respecto a la inmigración, sino también dos Apéndices. El Apéndice I provee una serie de casos de estudio. El Apéndice II es un glosario con dos breves listas de términos: la primera contiene términos legales y la segunda términos teológicos, y se explica cómo son utilizados esos términos en este documento. Los "términos de inmigración" son los que se utilizan frecuentemente en los debates nacionales, mientras que los "términos teológicos" son importantes para comprender la perspectiva teológica de este documento. Quizás sea bueno que, antes de leer este informe, lea el Apéndice II.

I. Prójomos inmigrantes del pasado y actuales:

¿Cómo debe la Escritura guiar las actitudes hacia los inmigrantes?

Cuando tratamos el tema específico de la inmigración ilegal, debemos reconocer que hay un problema básico de interpretación: la Escritura no trata específicamente la pregunta de cuál debe ser la actitud de la iglesia hacia los inmigrantes “ilegales” o “indocumentados”. La Escritura trata de la actitud básica de la iglesia hacia los inmigrantes (extranjeros, residentes temporales o peregrinos, forasteros) que viven en medio del pueblo de Dios, sin hacer que sus enseñanzas dependan del estatus de legalidad de esos inmigrantes. Si bien en un principio este problema puede dejarnos perplejos, el reconocerlo nos permite, por un lado, evitar dar respuestas bíblicas a un tema sobre el que la Escritura no habla directamente y, por otro, apreciar en su totalidad los valores bíblicos fundamentales que deben informar como punto de partida las acciones de la iglesia entre los inmigrantes, más allá de su estatus en la sociedad.

Los inmigrantes son, simplemente dicho, prójomos. Como prójomos, los inmigrantes deben ser vistos bajo la ley de Dios que nos llama a amar a nuestro prójimo como a nosotros mismos. Mientras que la palabra hebrea *rea* (רֵעַ) en el mandato de Dios de amar al “prójimo” se aplica primero y más inmediatamente al pueblo de Israel, el término también incluye a quienes están fuera de la comunidad del pacto—incluyendo el *ger* (גֵר) o extranjero.¹³

“No opriman a los extranjeros que habiten entre ustedes. Trátenlos como si fueran sus compatriotas, y ámenlos como a ustedes mismos, porque también ustedes fueron extranjeros en Egipto. Yo soy el Señor su Dios” (Lv. 19:33-34, cf. Lv. 19:18, itálicas agregadas).

Este texto representativo ofrece la narrativa y guía básica del Antiguo Testamento para establecer un consenso bíblico sobre las actitudes que agradan a Dios hacia los inmigrantes, los extranjeros o quienes están de paso, como “prójimos” a quienes debemos amar como a nosotros mismos. El Nuevo Testamento asume las enseñanzas y valores del Antiguo Testamento a este respecto, resaltando el uso amplio del término *plesion* (πλησιον) para incluir las relaciones caracterizadas por una preocupación por el bienestar de quienes están fuera de los lazos religiosos, políticos y étnicos que unen al pueblo de Israel entre sí (por ejemplo: enemigos, samaritanos).¹⁴

¹³ De acuerdo a Lv. 19:18, el mandamiento de amar a nuestro prójimo se aplica inequívocamente hacia los miembros del pacto de Jehová, pero no evidentemente hacia todos los hombres. Es cierto... que Lev. 19:34 también impone una obligación hacia el *ger* que vive en la tierra (cf. Dt. 10:19), y las mismas palabras son usadas en esta conexión así como Lv. 19:18 las utiliza con referencia a los israelitas... El mandamiento, por lo tanto, tiene una extensión decisiva.” Johannes Fichtner, *πλησιον*, en *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [Nota: de ahora en más TDNT], vol. 6 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1968), 315.

¹⁴ En Mt. 22:39 y Mc. 12:31 (“Amarás a tu prójimo como a ti mismo”), Jesús hace referencia a Lv. 19:18. Haciendo *πλησιον* un término que incluye el amor a nuestros enemigos y perseguidores

La palabra hebrea *ger* puede ser traducida de muchas maneras: extranjero, extraño, inmigrante, forastero, peregrino o alguien que está de paso.¹⁵ Al mirar el llamado que estos textos hacen de amar al extranjero, sin embargo, debemos tener cuidado de no transferir una interpretación contemporánea, o leerlos de manera anacrónica. Una aproximación común a dichos textos de la Escritura hoy tendería a argumentar que el amor por el prójimo inmigrante en la Escritura ignora los problemas importantes relacionados con las leyes actuales de inmigración.¹⁶ Sin embargo, debe notarse que los inmigrantes del Antiguo Testamento no vivieron en nuestra era moderna de naciones y estados soberanos donde la inmigración está mucho más regulada por las leyes.¹⁷

Si bien el mandato bíblico de amar y recibir al extranjero en nuestro medio como a nuestro prójimo es ley de Dios, no podemos ignorar las demandas que las leyes civiles imponen a los ciudadanos e inmigrantes por igual en los Estados Unidos de hoy día y en otros países. Más aún, debemos afirmar el derecho del estado de establecer leyes y normas con respecto a la inmigración, incluyendo leyes que limitan la inmigración de diversas maneras para la protección y el bienestar de sus ciudadanos. Temas como la seguridad nacional y el tráfico humano, por ejemplo, son áreas que necesitan ser legítimamente gobernadas para frenar el mal y promover el bien (Ro. 13:3-4).

(Mt. 5:43-48), o un judío siendo ayudado por un buen samaritano (Lc. 10:25-37), Jesús define al “prójimo” más universalmente o de una manera que trasciende las relaciones entre el pueblo de Israel—como un pueblo que comparte una religión o una identidad política—para incluir todas las clases de prójomos que necesitan nuestras oraciones y ayuda. Ver Heinrich Greeven, *πλησιον*, en TDNT, vol. 6 (1968), 316-317; Fichtner nota que, ya en la elección del Antiguo Testamento griego (Septuaginta) de traducir *רֵעַ* como *πλησιον*, tenemos el uso de “un término tan amplio y general y que de ninguna manera está restringido a los miembros del pacto.” *Ibid.*, 315.

¹⁵ Ver también Ex. 22:21, 23:9, Dt. 10:18-19, 24:14-15, 24:17-22, Sal. 146:9, Jer. 7:5-7, Zac. 7:8-10, Mal. 3:5.

¹⁶ Amstutz y Meilander dicen que las declaraciones públicas sobre inmigración hechas por muchas iglesias prominentes que hacen más énfasis en el amor por el inmigrante que en la aplicación de la ley, por lo general no tratan correctamente otros factores como “los propósitos de la política, las relaciones entre los de adentro y los de afuera, y las bases de orden internacional.” Mark Amstutz y Peter Meilander, “Public Policy & the Church: Spiritual Priorities”, *The City* (Primavera 2011), 13. Los autores ofrecen como ejemplos de una postura “unilateral” la resolución del 2009 sobre temas de inmigración de la Asociación Nacional de Evangélicos (NAE), la carta pastoral conjunta del 2003 emitida por los Obispos Católicos de México y de los Estados Unidos en referencia a la migración, y la resolución sobre normas sociales del 2009 de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América (ELCA) sobre la reforma migratoria (pp. 4-5).

¹⁷ “Al contrario del mundo de Éxodo y Levítico, o del que José y María tuvieron que huir a Egipto, el mundo contemporáneo está formado por naciones-estados independientes, reconocidos como entidades soberanas por las leyes internacionales, entre las cuales se encuentran los derechos (y obligaciones) soberanos de controlar el pasaje de personas a través de las fronteras internacionales y regular la distribución de ciudadanía nacional.” “Public Policy & the Church”, 8-9; Hoffmeier argumenta, por otro lado, que las “naciones y estados, grandes y pequeños, en el mundo bíblico estaban delimitados por fronteras y a menudo eran defendidos por grandes fuerzas y destacamentos militares.” Ver James K. Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens, and the Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 153. Su argumento está expuesto en el segundo capítulo de su libro (pp. 39-57).

También debe reconocerse que, en los tiempos del Antiguo Testamento, la ley de Dios gobernaba tanto los asuntos espirituales del pueblo de Israel, como los temporales. En tales circunstancias, los extranjeros no eran *ipso facto* o automáticamente receptores de los beneficios espirituales y temporales del pueblo Dios. Un estudio más comprensivo del uso de *ger* en Deuteronomio muestra un panorama más complejo con respecto a la relación de los extranjeros con Israel. Mientras que el texto representativo de Levítico 19:33-34 y otros similares muestran el llamado consistente de Dios a Israel a amar y cuidar a los extranjeros en su medio, otros textos pueden ser leídos como si no todos los extranjeros tuvieran el mismo estatus que los israelitas.¹⁸

Esta situación, en donde los extranjeros no reciben todos los beneficios temporales que reciben los miembros de un grupo establecido se debe, en parte, a la relación entre el parentesco y la herencia y propiedad de la tierra que caracterizó a la sociedad israelita y a otras del cercano oriente—una red que ya no estaba disponible para los inmigrantes que se mudaban a Israel y dependían, en parte, de la misericordia del pueblo de Dios.¹⁹ Y otra razón por la cual a veces no incorporaban extranjeros en los beneficios temporales (e incluso espirituales) del pueblo de Dios puede simplemente encontrarse en la dureza del corazón de Israel hacia los prójomos vulnerables y desfavorecidos incluso entre su propio pueblo—un problema conocido en la historia del pueblo de Dios y condenado por la Escritura.²⁰

Aun en el Antiguo Testamento, el llamado de Dios a Israel de recibir y amar al extranjero no se traduce necesariamente en darles los mismos privile-

¹⁸ Ver Luis R. Rivera Rodríguez para un ejemplo de un autor que exagera el significado de la distinción bíblica en el estatus entre los israelitas y los extranjeros. Él ve las leyes de Deuteronomio como parciales y perjudiciales para el extranjero. “Immigration and the Bible: Comments by a Diasporic Theologian”, *Perspectives: Occasional Papers 10* (2009): 23-36, especialmente 31. Para una aproximación más positiva en general a la forma en que Israel trataba a los extranjeros en su medio, comparar el comentario de M. Daniel Carroll R.: “La ayuda para el necesitado tenía que ocurrir a varios niveles: familias individuales (daban descanso el sábado, incluyendo a los extranjeros en las celebraciones), la comunidad (ley de recoger el sobrante), lugares de trabajo de cualquier clase (pago de salarios), centros religiosos (recolección del diezmo), y en las puertas de la ciudad con los ancianos u otras reuniones legales (imparcialidad en asuntos legales). Ver *Cristianos en la frontera: La inmigración, la Iglesia y la Biblia* (Lake Mary, Florida: Casa Creación, 2009), 96.

¹⁹ “El desafío que los extranjeros —aquellos inmigrantes o refugiados que se habían mudado a Israel—enfrentaban cuando llegaban a la tierra consistía en que ellos habían dejado su línea de parentesco. Por consiguiente, quedaban sin la ayuda que sólo una familia ampliada podía ofrecer. Como extranjeros, ellos también fueron excluidos del sistema de tenencia de tierra. Los extranjeros, por lo tanto, podían en particular ser vulnerables a lo inesperado y a las ásperas pruebas de la vida. Sin tierra ni parientes, muchos extranjeros dependían de los israelitas para trabajar, tener provisión y protección... Por lo visto, unos cuantos tuvieron éxito, pero parecían ser la excepción a la regla (Lv. 25:47).” *Cristianos en la frontera*, 93-94.

²⁰ “Los profetas protestaron contra aquellos israelitas que no aceptaban la responsabilidad de tener cuidado por esa gente. Eso era una violación a su fe en el Señor, que no toleraría tal desobediencia (Jer 22:3; Ez 22:7, 29; Mal 3:5; cf. Sal 94:6). La religión verdadera era inseparable de la ética caritativa con los que estaban en desventaja (Jer 7:4-8; Zac 7:8-10).” *Cristianos en la frontera*, 94.

gios temporales bajo las leyes que gobiernan los asuntos del pueblo de Dios. De la misma forma, en el contexto actual de naciones-estados, en donde las responsabilidades del estado hacia los ciudadanos tienen prioridad sobre las responsabilidades hacia los extranjeros, se asume una falta de igualdad en lo que a estatus ante la ley se refiere.²¹ Por ejemplo, sabemos que a un extranjero con visa de turista se le permite visitar los Estados Unidos por un tiempo limitado, pero no se le permite trabajar en el país. Más aún, un residente permanente legal²² de los Estados Unidos tiene el privilegio de trabajar y ganarse la vida en el país, pero no puede votar en las elecciones estatales y nacionales, ni servir en jurados. Sin embargo, ¿debemos asumir que estas distinciones hechas en la actualidad entre ciudadanos y extranjeros encuentran su base bíblica en las distinciones del Antiguo Testamento entre Israel y los extranjeros en su medio? Así como es peligroso utilizar la información del Antiguo Testamento anacrónicamente para argumentar a favor del amor por el extranjero sin tener en cuenta la ley civil hoy, también es peligroso utilizar distinciones entre Israel y extranjeros en el Antiguo Testamento para defender distinciones similares en la ley actual de inmigración y seguridad de las fronteras.

Dado el contexto de la era del Nuevo Testamento, donde “Israel” se refiere a la iglesia y no a una entidad política particular, debemos ser cuidadosos de no usar las leyes temporales y políticas de Israel como “un” o “el” plano bíblico para defender o diseñar las normas o leyes modernas de la nación-estado.²³ En la era del Nuevo Testamento, por ejemplo, es posible hablar de cristianos inmigrantes como pertenecientes al “Israel” espiritual y, por lo tanto, como nuestros hermanos en Cristo y herederos de todos los derechos y beneficios espirituales de los hijos de Dios. Al mismo tiempo, en términos del estado temporal de la actualidad, podemos decir que estos mismos inmigrantes pueden residir en la nación en forma legal o ilegal. Por un lado, como el Israel espiritual, los cristianos inmigrantes participan de todas las bendiciones espirituales del pueblo de Dios a través de la fe en Cristo. Pero al mismo tiempo se puede admitir que, bajo el gobierno temporal y sus leyes, estos mismos hermanos no comparten con los ciudadanos cristianos los mismos derechos y privilegios temporales bajo la ley civil en todos los casos.²⁴

²¹ Mark Amstutz y Peter Meilander argumentan que, en una democracia representativa, la existencia misma de leyes de inmigración asume “una preferencia por los intereses de nuestros compañeros ciudadanos antes que por los forasteros.” “Public Policy & the Church”, *The City*, 4 (2011): 8.

²² Ver Apéndice II para una definición legal de este término.

²³ Para un ejemplo representativo de una discusión con respecto al Israel del Antiguo Testamento como tipo de Jesús (el Nuevo Israel reducido a uno), y de la iglesia cristiana (el Nuevo Israel a través de la fe en Cristo), así como de la naturaleza espiritual (y por tanto no temporal) de la iglesia en el Nuevo Testamento, ver CTCR, *Los “Últimos Tiempos”: Un estudio sobre escatología y milenialismo* (1989); en <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=683>.

²⁴ Partiendo de la distinción entre los dos reinos, Amstutz y Meilander ofrecen ejemplos donde la ética bíblica y las normas estatales no son sinónimos: “Todas las personas, por ejemplo, llevan la imagen de Dios y, por lo tanto, poseen la misma innata dignidad humana. Pero esta dignidad equitativa no provee automáticamente derechos de membresía. Las universidades

Como se dijo más arriba, cuando en la iglesia se usan los mandatos bíblicos de amar y recibir al extranjero, no podemos ignorar la distinción entre el reino espiritual y temporal. También es cierto que, al hacer distinciones entre Israel y extranjeros, el Antiguo Testamento no ofrece posturas o normas sobre leyes de inmigración, hablando en general, o inmigración “ilegal”, hablando en particular. Algunas aproximaciones a los textos bíblicos que tratan sobre los inmigrantes tratan de utilizar la información bíblica para defender o justificar ciertas formas de leyes migratorias actuales.²⁵ Pero los cristianos no deberían usar el Antiguo Testamento como excusa para amar al inmigrante en formas que disminuyen el significado de la validez de la ley según funciona hoy en las naciones-estados. De la misma manera, los cristianos deben ser cautelosos en utilizar ciertas distinciones entre Israel y los extranjeros hechas en el Antiguo Testamento para abogar por ciertas formas de ley de inmigración o de aplicación de la ley, o argumentar que tales distinciones bíblicas antiguas pueden o deben ser replicadas en términos de la relación entre ciudadanos y extranjeros nacionales en naciones-estados contemporáneos.

¿Cuál es, entonces, la actitud que debemos tener hoy hacia los inmigrantes según las Escrituras? La Escritura nos dice qué es lo que motiva el amor de Israel por su prójimo inmigrante, y lo que tal amor significa en términos concretos en tal o cual momento de la historia del pueblo de Dios. Por ejemplo: el pueblo de Dios debe amar al extranjero porque ellos también fueron extran-

donde enseñamos admiten sólo algunos estudiantes de entre un gran número de solicitantes. Una persona puede desear trabajar para una empresa particular, pero la decisión de ofrecerle un puesto reside en el empleador, no en el solicitante. La membresía en las naciones es regulada cuidadosamente, requiriendo pasaportes, visas y otra documentación antes de que un extranjero pueda cruzar la frontera nacional” (“Public Policy & the Church,” 11-12).

²⁵ Esta es la idea general de James K. Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis*, donde el autor utiliza la información del Antiguo Testamento para argumentar a favor de la regulación de la frontera hoy día. Lo que dice es apoyado por el argumento que el único sentido del sustantivo *ger* del Antiguo Testamento “corresponde a un extranjero legal actual” y, por lo tanto, debe ser distinguido del significado del término “forastero” (*neklar y zar*), que supuestamente correspondería hoy al “inmigrante ilegal” (p. 156, cf. p. 57); Carroll, sin embargo, critica a Hoffmeier por “agregar” a su estudio de *ger* “un elemento que creo es imposible de probar”, que es que *ger* “era una persona que había entrado a Israel y seguido los procedimientos legales para obtener el reconocimiento como extranjero residente” (p. 52, énfasis mío). Carroll dice que, si bien esto puede ser cierto en algunos casos, el reclamo absoluto de Hoffmeier dice más de lo que la información bíblica permite sostener: “La Ley nunca menciona algún tipo de requerimiento para entrar legalmente. Lo que sí se espera es que estos individuos obedezcan las leyes y participen en la vida religiosa de Israel; a cambio, la Ley era generosa con ellos.” Más aún, Carroll señala el caso de Rut, cuya “entrada y proceso de asimilación” en la comunidad de Israel “no trata para nada con ‘procedimientos legales’, sino más bien con ‘procedimientos culturales’” (cf. Capítulos 1 y 4), y de Jacob, cuando compra la tierra de Siquén (Gn. 33) como una instancia donde en el texto no se hace mención explícita de permiso legal de entrada en la tierra antes de comprarla—una suposición hecha por Hoffmeier—sino “sólo que la compró luego de mudarse a esa región (Gn. 33:18-20). Carroll concluye su crítica de Hoffmeier diciendo que “el verbo *ger* [ger] tiene el significado amplio de ‘residir’, independientemente del estado legal (por ejemplo, Jue. 5:17; Sal. 15:1; Jer. 49:18, 33; 58:4).” Ver M. Daniel Carroll R., “Revisión de James K. Hoffmeier, ‘The Immigration Crisis: Immigrants, Aliens, and the Bible’,” *The Denver Journal: An Online Review of Current Biblical and Theological Studies* 13 (January 2010). Online: <http://www.denverseminary.edu/article/the-immigration-crisis-immigrants-aliens-and-the-bible/>.

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jeros en Egipto (Ex. 22:21, 23:9, Lv. 19:34, Dt. 10:19, 24:17-22), porque “ustedes conocen los sentimientos del extranjero” tan bien, que naturalmente deben sentir compasión por ellos (Ex. 23:9). Por sobre todo, el pueblo de Dios debe amar al extranjero porque esa es la voluntad del Señor, quien ama, provee, protege y escucha en el cielo el gemir del extranjero (Sal. 146:9, Dt. 24:15). El mandamiento de Dios a Israel de amar a los extranjeros como “a sí mismos”, también puede ser visto como un llamado divino a practicar la justicia hacia quienes a menudo son víctimas de la opresión y la maldad o confabulaciones maléficas de quienes quieren aprovecharse de ellos (Lv. 19:33-34, Jer. 7:5-7, Zac. 7:8-10).

Tal amor por los extranjeros se vuelve concreto, entre otras cosas, al proveer por sus necesidades básicas de alimento y vestimenta (Dt. 10:18-19), al ser justo en el pago a los obreros (Dt. 24:14-15, Mal. 3:5), y al dar generosamente de lo que uno tiene en abundancia (Dt. 24:19-22). Aquellos en Israel que son tentados a no seguir el mandamiento de Dios de amar al prójimo extranjero “como a sí mismos”, son advertidos de “no pervertir la justicia que el extranjero merece”, para no convertirse en “culpables de pecado” (Dt. 24:15, 17) y objetos... “contra los que niegan el derecho del extranjero” (Mal. 3:5). La preocupación de Dios por el bienestar de los extranjeros generalmente se sitúa junto a textos que hablan de su compasión por las viudas, los huérfanos, y los pobres (Dt. 10:18, 24:17, 19-21, Sal. 146:9, Jer. 7:6, Zac. 7:10, Mal. 3:5). Por lo tanto, los extranjeros en medio de Israel son vistos como prójimos quienes, en su mayor parte, se encuentran entre los miembros más vulnerables y desfavorecidos de la sociedad.

El Nuevo Testamento asume el mandamiento del Antiguo Testamento de amar a nuestros prójimos como a nosotros mismos, sean quienes sean. Pero el Nuevo Testamento también asume el testimonio del Antiguo Testamento de la compasión de Jehová por el forastero en la auto identificación de nuestro Señor Jesucristo con el forastero y en su inclusión de quienes no pertenecían a la casa de Israel durante su ministerio, fueran o no extranjeros en un sentido político. En la escena del juicio final, el Hijo del Hombre recibe en el reino de su Padre a quienes le mostraron amor ayudando a “uno de los más pequeños”. Nuestro Señor quiere identificarse con el forastero para que podamos verle a él en el forastero: “Porque tuve hambre, y ustedes me dieron de comer; tuve sed, y me dieron de beber; fui forastero, y me recibieron” (Mt. 25:35, itálicas agregadas por el autor). A pesar de las varias interpretaciones de la identidad de “uno de los más pequeños” en Mateo 25,²⁶ Martín Lutero utiliza el texto en su explicación del quinto mandamiento en su *Catecismo Mayor* para identificar a Cristo

²⁶ “De cierto les digo que todo lo que hicieron por uno de mis hermanos más pequeños, por mí lo hicieron” (Mateo 25:40, cf. 45). Sobre la diversidad de opciones de interpretación sobre este punto, ver W. D. Davies y Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 428-30, cf. 421-23.

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con “quienes están en necesidad y en peligro en cuerpo y vida.”²⁷ Si bien la enseñanza bíblica puede servir específicamente como una advertencia contra el rechazo de los discípulos (“uno de los más pequeños de estos, mis hermanos”), y por lo tanto del Señor que los envió al mundo,²⁸ tal enseñanza también ha sido utilizada en forma más amplia dentro de la catequesis luterana para promover el mandamiento de Dios de ocuparnos por el bienestar del prójimo. En ambos casos, las enseñanzas bíblicas y catequéticas presuponen la afirmación más amplia y fundamental de dar la bienvenida al extranjero en medio nuestro.

La compasión de nuestro Señor por el extranjero, por quienes no pertenecían a la casa de Israel, que es evidente en su ministerio, es consistente con la preocupación de Jehová por los extranjeros que rodeaban y vivían entre el pueblo de Israel. En el Antiguo Testamento, tal preocupación por los extranjeros no sólo incluía un llamado a la justicia en su nombre, sino también el deseo de incorporarlos a la casa de Israel para que compartieran en las bendiciones que los hijos de Dios recibían.²⁹

De la misma manera, nuestro Señor extiende su misericordia a la hija endemoniada de una mujer cananea o sirofenicia (Mt. 15:21-28, Mr. 7:24-30), haciendo partícipes a tales gentiles de las bendiciones del reino de su Padre. Jesús alaba la fe de la mujer cananea, afirmando implícitamente que los gentiles también están espiritualmente hambrientos, que también pueden confiar en el Hijo que Dios ha enviado, y que también pueden ser hijos de Dios el

²⁷ “Con razón Dios llama asesinos a todos aquellos que no aconsejan ni ayudan en las calamidades y peligros corporales y de la vida en general. Y en el día del juicio pronunciará Dios horrible sentencia contra los mismos, como Cristo anuncia, diciendo: ‘Tuve hambre, y no me disteis de comer; tuve sed, y no me disteis de beber; fui forastero, y no me recogisteis; estuve desnudo, y no me cubristeis; enfermo, y no me visitasteis’, lo cual es como si dijera: ‘Habéis dejado que yo y los míos pereciésemos de hambre, sed y frío; que las fieras nos desgarrasen; que nos pudriésemos en una celda y fenciésemos en la miseria.’” *El Catecismo Mayor* [Nota de ahora en más CMa], Los Diez Mandamientos, 191, en el *Libro de Concordia: Las Confesiones de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana* editado por Andrés A. Meléndez (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), p. 413 [Notas de ahora en más LC].

²⁸ Ver Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia: Jesus’ Eschatological Discourse in Matthew’s Gospel* (Jerusalem y Parousia: El discurso escatológico de Jesús en el Evangelio de Mateo), (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000).

²⁹ Aun cuando Carroll y Hoffmeier difieren significativamente en el enfoque con que leen la información del Antiguo Testamento con respecto a los extranjeros, ambos hablan sobre la posibilidad de que, de acuerdo con el Antiguo Testamento, los extranjeros participaran de las bendiciones espirituales del pueblo de Israel. Sin embargo, Hoffmeier dice que tal participación espiritual dependía de su previa aceptación como “inmigrantes legales” en la tierra de Israel. Ver Hoffmeier, *The Immigration Crisis*, 89-96; Carroll cree que el punto de vista de Hoffmeier, el cual se basa en una interpretación limitada de *ger* y *gera* como términos que se refieren exclusivamente a extranjeros “legales”, es problemático cuando se aplica en una manera absoluta (ver su crítica de Hoffmeier en n. 25 arriba).

No obstante estas lecturas de la información del Antiguo Testamento, en la era del Nuevo Testamento todavía sigue siendo problemático decir que, para que los inmigrantes puedan participar de las bendiciones de la iglesia o del Israel espiritual en los Estados Unidos hoy, primero deben ser residentes o ciudadanos legales de la nación-estado temporal. El Nuevo Testamento no impone tales condiciones temporales para convertirse en hijos de Dios a través de la fe en Cristo.

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Padre. Más aún, Jesús atiende la necesidad física de la hija de esa mujer gentil y la libera de la esclavitud de Satanás. Él atiende las necesidades espirituales y físicas de los extranjeros.

La compasión de nuestro Señor por quienes estaban fuera de la casa de Israel también se hace evidente en su encuentro con la mujer samaritana (Jn. 4:3-43) a quien hace, a través de una promesa, heredera del “don de Dios” y “del agua viva” (referencias ambas al don del Espíritu que viene del Hijo, cf. Jn. 7:37-39). El alcance de la compasión de nuestro Señor por una samaritana—despreciada por los judíos—nos enseña que el don del Espíritu, el acceso a Dios a través de la adoración “en espíritu y en verdad”, y el privilegio de ser un testigo del Mesías, están a disposición incluso para los de afuera de la casa de Israel y, a través de su testimonio, para sus ciudades y comunidades. En el ministerio de proclamación y sanidad de Jesús, por lo tanto, vemos la continuación de la preocupación de Jehová por los extranjeros, ocupándose de sus necesidades temporales (físicas) y espirituales, y extendiendo su misericordia a los miembros de sus familias y comunidades.³⁰

El testimonio del Antiguo Testamento a la compasión de Jehová por el extranjero también lo vemos en la enseñanza apostólica de San Pablo acerca de la hospitalidad.³¹ La preocupación de los primeros cristianos por el prójimo necesitado iba más allá de los confines de la comunidad de fe. Al llamar a la iglesia en Galacia a “hacer bien a todos”, el apóstol enseña que la iglesia sirve “especialmente”, aunque no exclusivamente, “a los de la familia de la fe” (Gal. 6:10). El apóstol instruye a la iglesia cristiana en Roma a “ayudar a los hermanos necesitados y practicar la hospitalidad [a los extranjeros]” (Ro. 12:13). Estas exhortaciones apostólicas a las iglesias cristianas de mostrar hospitalidad con todos los extranjeros, reflejan y son consistentes con el mandamiento de Jehová a Israel de reflejar su amor a los extranjeros.

Para resumir debemos reconocer que, si bien las Escrituras proféticas y apostólicas presentan amplia evidencia de la voluntad de Jehová de que su pueblo ame a los forasteros y extranjeros ocupándose de sus necesidades

³⁰ Reconocemos, por supuesto, que nuestro Señor también da cierta prioridad a la casa de Israel (Mt. 15:24), y que el dictado bíblico de preocuparse por el bienestar de los demás siempre debe comenzar con aquellos a quienes Dios ha puesto más cerca nuestro en nuestra vida terrenal (Mc. 7:10-12; Gal. 6:10).

³¹ Para un intento contemporáneo de describir la vida moral utilizando el valor bíblico de hospitalidad al extranjero como una “metáfora global”, ver Thomas W. Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2003). Basándose en parte en *Resident Alien*, por Stanley Hauerwas y William H. Willimon (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), Castelo dice que muchos hispanos en los Estados Unidos son “dos veces extranjeros”, tanto como cristianos en un país hostil al Evangelio, y como extranjeros ilegales en el campo político. Esta realidad es un recordatorio constante a la iglesia de su obligación de discernir críticamente lo que significa ser cristiano en tierra extranjera. Esto implica, en parte, la obligación de los cristianos de discernir si las leyes civiles y las entidades políticas actuales promueven una situación justa, y de extender hospitalidad a los extranjeros. Ver Daniel Castelo, “Resident and Illegal Aliens,” *Apuntes: Reflexiones teológicas desde el margen hispano* 23/2 (Verano 2003): 65-77.

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físicas y espirituales, las mismas no hablan directamente acerca de cómo la iglesia de hoy debe pensar o actuar con respecto a la ley de inmigración en general, o a la “inmigración ilegal” en particular. Por lo tanto, la enseñanza de la Escritura con respecto a los inmigrantes no puede traducirse directamente a las leyes o políticas migratorias actuales.

Mientras que las Escrituras no proveen “textos comprobados” que den respuestas simples o directas a todas las preguntas legales y políticas actuales relacionadas con la inmigración, sí proveen un marco de interpretación que nos ayuda a reflexionar y tratar tales preguntas. Más aún, no se nos ocurra atrevemos a minimizar la evidencia bíblica presentada hasta ahora con respecto al llamado de Dios a que la iglesia refleje en su vida el amor de Dios por los extranjeros en su medio. Este llamado no puede ser visto como una simple obligación cultural, sino más concretamente como la voluntad y mandamiento de Dios para su pueblo de todos los tiempos y en todos los lugares. La Escritura nos obliga a amar a nuestro prójimo, incluyendo al inmigrante en nuestro medio. Por lo tanto, aun cuando los cristianos luchan con preguntas difíciles con respecto a los asuntos legales y políticos sobre la legalidad, la enseñanza bíblica más amplia y consistente del amor de Dios por los extranjeros que viven y se mueven entre su pueblo debe ser tomada con la mayor seriedad.

Dicho de otra forma, la Escritura nos ofrece un consenso sobre los valores básicos que, como punto de partida, deberían guiar las actitudes del pueblo de Dios hacia todos los inmigrantes o extranjeros, más allá de su estatus legal en la sociedad. A pesar que los inmigrantes no siempre recibieron las mismas bendiciones temporales y espirituales que el pueblo de Dios en el Antiguo Testamento, el mandato divino de amar al extranjero como a nuestro prójimo continúa siendo válido y no está fundamentalmente atado al cumplimiento de ninguna obligación específica por parte del extranjero. Esto sugiere que el estatus legal o ilegal no puede ser un prerrequisito para que la iglesia se preocupe y ocupe por la dignidad básica de los extranjeros y sus familias como criaturas de Dios, o por sus necesidades de alimento y vestido y una vida más rica para sus familias, de su tratamiento bueno y justo en la sociedad, y de su necesidad de escuchar el Evangelio y recibir los sacramentos.

Así como el amor a Dios y al prójimo dirige toda la reflexión moral cristiana, también lo hacen los Diez Mandamientos al dar forma y sustancia a ese amor. Las preocupaciones antes mencionadas con respecto a las necesidades físicas, sociales, económicas y espirituales de nuestros prójimos inmigrantes, son ejemplos de la forma que toma el amor guiado por los mandamientos. Del amor de Dios fluye el amor cristiano por nuestros prójimos que busca su bienestar espiritual y trata de ayudarlos y hacerles prosperar en todas las necesidades de su vida, mejorar y conservar sus bienes y medios de vida, e interpretar todo en el mejor sentido.³²

³² Ver las explicaciones al quinto, séptimo y octavo mandamiento del Catecismo Menor de Lutero.

Como veremos en la próxima sección, el cuarto mandamiento—“Honra a tu padre y a tu madre”—también es directamente pertinente, ya que no sólo habla de la forma que toma el amor en el hogar cuando los hijos “honran, sirve, aman y respetan” a sus padres, sino también de lo que Lutero llama de otra “categoría de paternidad”, que es la autoridad civil.³³ El amor cristiano reconoce como obligación el honrar y apoyar a las autoridades gobernantes, para que así nuestra vida diaria pueda ser respetable y ordenada y se evite el caos (ver 1 Tim. 2:2).

Sirviendo como punto de partida para dar forma a la actitud básica de la iglesia hacia los inmigrantes de hoy día, las enseñanzas bíblicas de amar al prójimo inmigrante como a nosotros mismos, y de mostrar hospitalidad a los forasteros en nuestro medio, también sirven como buen elemento disuasivo contra el desarrollo de cualquier actitud contra los extranjeros, sean o no documentados, que no sea la de una preocupación legítima por la ley y el prójimo. La fe y la caridad impulsan a todos los cristianos a no formar un juicio final con respecto a los extranjeros en base a opiniones alimentadas por temores o mitos infundados con respecto a los inmigrantes, y/o actitudes racistas o discriminatorias contra personas de otros grupos étnicos o nacionalidades.³⁴ El recordar el pasado inmigrante de la LCMS, incluyendo los temores y prejuicios sufridos por muchos de nuestros padres y madres luteranos en la fe al llegar a los Estados Unidos, debería ayudarnos a tener una disposición caritativa hacia los inmigrantes hoy. Sin embargo, más allá de nuestra identidad inmigrante histórica, se encuentra la clara y eterna voluntad y mandato de Dios en las Escrituras con respecto a la necesidad de la iglesia de recordar y ocuparse por el prójimo inmigrante.

³³ Ver CMA, 150 (LC, 407). “Pues Dios, mediante ella [la autoridad secular], como mediante nuestros padres nos da y nos conserva nuestro alimento, nuestro hogar, nuestra hacienda y la protección y la seguridad. Es por el hecho de que la autoridad secular lleva nombres y títulos tales, como su más preciada loa con todos los honores, que estamos también obligados a honrarla y a estimarla en grado sumo, como si fuera el mayor tesoro y más preciosa joya en este mundo.”

³⁴ Ver, por ejemplo, Patricia Fernández-Kelly: “To Welcome the Stranger: The Myths and Realities of Illegal Immigration”, *Perspectives: Occasional Papers* 10 (2006): 9-22; ver también LIRS: “Mitos y realidades de la inmigración”. En línea: <http://lirs.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/NoTemasFactSheetMythbuster.pdf>. Para un ejemplo de un folleto con frases discriminatorias contra nuevos inmigrantes, ver John C. Vinson, *Immigration and Nation, a Biblical View* (Monterey, Virginia: American Immigration Control Foundation, 1997), donde argumenta que la división de las naciones hecha por Dios desde Babel, y la distinción de Israel de las naciones que le rodeaban, apoyan el control migratorio para poder mantener la tradicional raza blanca de ascendencia europea en los Estados Unidos.

II. La Ley de Dios, la ley Civil³⁵ y el prójimo:

Sobre la obediencia cristiana a los Mandamientos de Dios

Si bien por un lado las Escrituras consistentemente enseñan a la iglesia a amar a los extranjeros en su medio como un valor básico para todos los tiempos y lugares, por otro lado también instruyen a los cristianos a obedecer o someterse a las autoridades que Dios ha enviado, instituido y designado para nuestro bien (Ro. 13:1-7, 1 Pe. 2:13-17). El representante de la autoridad debe ser honrado y temido como “siervo de Dios” y ministro, ya que lleva la “espada” que “castiga a quienes hacen el mal y elogia a quienes hacen el bien.” Someterse a las autoridades significa, en concreto, obedecer las leyes que esos siervos y ministros son llamados a crear, implementar, y poner en práctica (por ejemplo, pagar los impuestos, cf. Ro. 13:6-7). Si bien la Escritura no toma una posición específica sobre leyes migratorias, sí establece que los cristianos deben obedecer a las autoridades civiles, incluyendo las leyes migratorias.³⁶

Si bien bajo el quinto mandamiento (“No matarás”) Martín Lutero incluye la promoción de la vida de nuestro prójimo (incluyendo la del extranjero), también enseña claramente bajo el cuarto mandamiento (“Honra a tu padre y a tu madre”),³⁷ la sumisión a las autoridades que Dios ha puesto en medio nuestro (incluyendo los servidores civiles). Ambos son la voluntad de Dios y, por lo tanto, deben ser cumplidos. Esto significa, concretamente, que debemos amar a los inmigrantes, debemos ser justos con ellos, y debemos ayudarlos para que estén bien, sea cual sea su situación legal en la sociedad y, al mismo tiempo, debemos someternos a las autoridades temporales y obedecer las leyes civiles que ellos establecen, promueven, y ponen en práctica en la sociedad (incluyendo las relacionadas con los inmigrantes y su situación legal). Dados estos dos mandatos igualmente válidos que los mandamientos de Dios dan a los cristianos, no es infrecuente que los hermanos en Cristo tengan problemas y hasta discutan entre ellos con respecto a cuál es la mejor manera de ser fiel a lo que Dios desea y espera de su pueblo.

El debate popular sobre si los inmigrantes que no tienen el beneficio de una visa válida deberían ser catalogados como “ilegales” o “indocumentados”, ilustra lo que sucede cuando tratamos de resolver la tensión inherente entre la demanda de preservar el bienestar de los inmigrantes *más allá de su*

³⁵ En este documento, la “ley civil” se utiliza en un sentido teológico para referirse a toda ley instituida y puesta en práctica por los hombres con la intención de mantener el orden y la justicia. (Ver Apéndice II B.2).

³⁶ Queremos enfatizar que la ley de inmigración, como tal, no es mala en sí misma. Los esfuerzos que un gobierno haga para proveer fronteras seguras y prácticas claras para manejar la inmigración, son parte de su responsabilidad de velar por el bienestar de sus ciudadanos—esta es precisamente la misma vocación que Dios da a las autoridades civiles. Ver Amstutz y Meilander, *Public Policy & the Church*, 4-17.

³⁷ CMA, Los Diez Mandamientos, 141-142, 150-151 (LC, 405-407).

estatus legal, y la demanda de obedecer las leyes que *regulan su estatus legal*.³⁸ Por un lado, los cristianos que prefieren hablar de inmigrantes “indocumentados”, pueden querer afirmar la dignidad básica de los inmigrantes (siguiendo la línea del quinto y octavo mandamiento), siendo sensibles a sus problemas y necesidad de bienestar. Como resultado, puede parecer que, en su uso del lenguaje, dan menos valor a las demandas de la ley civil con respecto a la legalidad o ilegalidad, pero sin negar la necesidad de la ejecución de la ley. Estos hermanos en Cristo generalmente tienden a estar en desacuerdo con aquellos aspectos de la ley de inmigración actual que, consideran, tratan en forma inadecuada a los inmigrantes. Por otro lado, los cristianos que hablan de inmigrantes “ilegales”, generalmente se basan en la necesidad de obedecer la ley civil (una preocupación del cuarto mandamiento), según se aplica a la ley de inmigración actual, pero al hacerlo aparecen como insensibles a los problemas de los inmigrantes y hasta permisivos de algunos aspectos potencialmente problemáticos de la ley de inmigración actual que quizás no resuelva en forma adecuada el trato justo del inmigrante.

Estos usos populares de lenguaje para referirse a los inmigrantes en medio nuestro, incluso dentro de los círculos de la iglesia, son instructivos pues revelan, hasta cierto punto, cómo el diálogo cristiano sobre este tema puede ser significativamente, o al menos en parte, moldeado por las actitudes y prioridades cristianas sobre lo que significa ser fiel a los mandamientos de Dios.³⁹ El tener en cuenta algunas de las suposiciones en las que basamos las conversaciones acerca de los inmigrantes nos ayuda a reconocer que, aun siendo hermanos en Cristo, y a pesar de tener el mismo deseo de ser fieles a los mandamientos de Dios, podemos estar en desacuerdo en lo que concierne a la mejor manera de actuar con respecto al prójimo inmigrante.

El reconocimiento de los desacuerdos cristianos genuinos y legítimos en la aplicación de los mandamientos de Dios en torno a la reflexión y a las actitudes hacia los extranjeros también actúa como freno contra las críticas injustas acerca de las diferentes posiciones en este tema tan delicado. Por un lado, los

³⁸ Sobre el uso de los modificadores “ilegal” e “indocumentado”, ver Leopoldo Sánchez, “Immigrants Among Us: What Are Confessional Lutherans to Do?”, *LOGIA* 19/1 (2010): 57-58.

³⁹ Es interesante notar, por ejemplo, dentro de la tradición evangélica, cómo los diferentes puntos de partida de Hoffmeier y Carroll en sus estudios sobre inmigrantes en la Biblia dan, a sus estimaciones de la inmigración ilegal actual, un tono diferente. Hoffmeier toma, como punto de partida y marco general de referencia, la obediencia a la ley que lo lleva a resaltar la distinción entre un extranjero legal y un extraño, y por lo tanto la necesidad actual de reforzar las fronteras. Esto lleva a un fuerte énfasis en la obediencia a la ley, con una preocupación mínima sobre la justicia o no de la ley migratoria actual de los Estados Unidos para nuestros prójimos inmigrantes. Ver *The Immigration Crisis*, 29-57, 153-160. Carroll, por otro lado, comienza con el inmigrante como un ser humano creado a imagen de Dios, y luego resalta su identidad como un extraño con quien se debe ser hospitalario. Esto lleva a un fuerte énfasis en la disposición del cristiano de ver al inmigrante como un prójimo en necesidad y, si bien el mandamiento de obedecer la ley es reafirmado, el enfoque se dirige a la obligación del cristiano de ser un ciudadano responsable y bien informado sobre la ley migratoria y las formas de injusticia que quizás promueve. Ver *Cristianos en la frontera*.

cristianos que tienden a dar prioridad a la obediencia a las autoridades civiles (cuarto mandamiento) con respecto a la inmigración, no son necesariamente insensibles a las necesidades de los inmigrantes y sus familias. Por otro lado, los cristianos que tienden a dar mayor prioridad al bienestar y tratamiento justo de los inmigrantes y sus familias (quinto mandamiento) que a su situación migratoria, tampoco son necesariamente insensibles a la necesidad de obedecer las autoridades civiles y las leyes del país.

A pesar de que ciertos adjetivos como “ilegal” e “indocumentado”, cuando se refieren a inmigrantes, asumen y manifiestan hasta cierto punto actitudes cristianas diferentes pero a la vez legítimas sobre lo que significa ser fiel a los mandamientos de Dios con respecto a los inmigrantes, los cristianos también deben recordar que el uso de tales términos tiene limitaciones. Dado que la Escritura no prohíbe ni ordena tales adjetivos, los cristianos son libres de utilizarlos. Pero, si bien son libres de usarlos, deben hacerlo con caridad. Por ejemplo, al hacerlo delante de inmigrantes que luchan por ser tratados con justicia, el adjetivo “ilegal” seguramente va a ser visto como insensible, y se convertirá en un obstáculo innecesario para la proclamación del Evangelio al inmigrante o para dialogar con aquellos cuya vocación es abogar por ellos. De la misma manera, cuando se usa en presencia de legisladores, agentes de frontera, o ciudadanos que quieren honrar la ley del país, el término “indocumentado” puede ser interpretado como una falta de respeto por la ley o de apreciación del trabajo de quienes la hacen cumplir.

Más aún, los cristianos deben ejercitar su buen juicio en el uso de términos no bíblicos, como “ilegal” e “indocumentado”, porque estos adjetivos también son limitados en su alcance. Tales términos operan claramente dentro de los estrechos confines de la legalidad. Y precisamente por causa de ese enfoque único en lo legal, es que no ofrecen un cuadro completo de nuestros prójimos inmigrantes ni un retrato acertado de la complejidad del problema migratorio.

Por un lado, el reconocer el alcance de estos términos populares previene a los cristianos de reducir al prójimo extranjero, o inmigrante, a una categoría legal, etiqueta, o problema. Los inmigrantes son, mucho más básicamente, seres humanos, criaturas de Dios, y pecadores igual que cada uno de nosotros. Al menos sus necesidades físicas y espirituales deben ser tomadas en cuenta en toda discusión que se realice sobre el rol del cristiano individual y la iglesia con respecto a ellos. Cuando se aplica al extranjero, por ejemplo, el término “ilegal” fracasa en distinguir apropiadamente entre la persona inmigrante y el acto específico que esa persona ha cometido contra la ley.

Por otro lado, y no menos importante, el reconocer la limitación del alcance legal de los términos “ilegal” e “indocumentado” permite a los cristianos considerar seriamente una gama más amplia y comprensiva de factores relacionados con la ley civil referentes al tema de inmigración. Tales factores pueden incluir, pero no están limitados, a la unificación de la familia, demanda de mano de obra, necesidad económica, cumplimiento de la ley, seguridad fronteriza o nacional, derechos de los trabajadores, derechos humanos, y for-

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mas de obtener la legalización.⁴⁰ Al tratar ciertos aspectos de la ley civil, que para algunos pueden resultar inadecuados o injustos, “los cristianos tienen el derecho y la obligación de trabajar para derogar las leyes injustas y para que se pongan en práctica leyes justas a través del debido proceso de la ley.”⁴¹

Al mismo tiempo, como no siempre está en claro cuándo se ha agotado ese debido proceso en un caso particular, seguramente los cristianos van a diferir en el grado en el cual una legislación más adecuada parece necesaria o no, dentro de un clima político particular. Por lo tanto, van a responder en forma diferente a los casos en los que creen que un aspecto particular de la ley civil es injusto o inadecuado. Como conscientes ciudadanos y residentes de su país, por ejemplo, algunos cristianos quizás decidan que la actual ley de inmigración, si bien no es perfecta, al menos es suficientemente justa y razonable. Otros cristianos conscientes, si bien reconocen que generalmente “los derechos de los individuos y los estándares de justicia adecuados deben ser establecidos por el gobierno a través de procesos legislativos”, pueden, “ante la evidente falla del debido proceso... con buenas intenciones participar en demostraciones públicas para dramatizar la injusticia” que creen que una ley en particular promueve.⁴² Y otros, que no están contentos con el estado actual de la ley, quizás decidan no hacer lo que podrían hacer, o sea, protestar públicamente, eligiendo en cambio “no ejercitar este privilegio por el peligro de anarquía.”⁴³

⁴⁰ SRIC dice: “Como ciudadanos corporativos de esta nación, reconocemos que las soluciones al problema de la inmigración ilegal son complejas. Hay muchos factores que deben ser considerados, cada uno de los cuales tiene valor en sí mismo. Fronteras seguras, seguridad nacional, aplicación de las leyes, estabilidad nacional, mano de obra barata, salarios decentes, presupuesto limitado, derechos humanos y oportunidades de trabajo son sólo el comienzo de una larga lista.”

⁴¹ CTCR, *Civil Obedience and Disobedience* (1966), B, p. 4. Dado que el documento aplica el lenguaje del debido proceso específicamente a situaciones “cuando los derechos legales de uno son violados, pero también y especialmente cuando uno se une a otros privados de sus derechos legales”, uno puede concluir que, técnicamente, la afirmación no se aplica a los inmigrantes que están en el país ilegalmente porque no tienen “derechos legales”. Sin embargo, aun si ese fuera el caso, el principio más amplio de esforzarnos por abolir las leyes injustas o poner en práctica leyes justas se aplica a los cristianos como ciudadanos de la nación-estado quienes, de buena conciencia, están convencidos que ciertos aspectos de la ley de inmigración son injustos.

⁴² *Ibid.* La declaración de la CTCR alienta al cristiano que considera que una ley en particular está en conflicto con la “suprema ley de Dios”, a “asegurarse que todos los medios legales para cambiar esa ley han sido agotados”, “consultar con personas de buena conciencia para probar la validez de su juicio”, y “dirigir su acto de desobediencia tan precisamente como sea posible contra la ley o práctica específica que viola su conciencia.” *Ibid.*, C.1-2, 4, p. 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, C.5, p. 5. Este argumento en particular está seguido inmediatamente por una preocupación por evitar asociaciones de cristianos “con grupos e individuos que puedan estar protestando contra la misma ley por motivos aparentemente equivocados y quienes puedan estar buscando unirse a un movimiento para sus propios fines.”

Ibid., 5-6. El mismo principio se aplica a los cristianos que sienten que deberían protestar contra la inmigración legal pero se abstienen de hacerlo, junto con otros que sienten lo mismo “por motivos aparentemente equivocados”—por ejemplo, motivos que son incompatibles con la ley de amor de Dios, u hostiles a la fe cristiana (por ejemplo, la idea de que Dios quiere que

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La Escritura requiere que los cristianos obedezcan a Dios antes que a los hombres cuando la autoridad civil y sus leyes se oponen a la ley de Dios. Los cristianos obedecen a Dios antes que al hombre (Hechos 5:29) “cuando una ley civil contradice un claro precepto de Dios.”⁴⁴ Pero, ¿cuándo sucede eso en la ley actual de inmigración? La mayoría de los cristianos no están en contra de la ley de inmigración en general, pero algunos (o quizás muchos) cuestionan *cuán* justos y razonables son *algunos* de sus aspectos. ¿Cuál es la respuesta apropiada, entonces, cuando no hay un consenso claro y amplio entre los cristianos sobre la forma en que la ley de inmigración específicamente entra en conflicto con la ley de Dios?

Si un cristiano considera que una ley civil está en conflicto “con la suprema ley de Dios”, y por lo tanto decide involucrarse en algún tipo de desobediencia civil, se le alienta a que “realice su acto de desobediencia en forma pacífica”, y a que “dirija su acto de desobediencia tan precisamente como sea posible contra la ley o práctica específica que viola su conciencia.”⁴⁵ Tal cristiano también debe estar dispuesto a cargar la cruz y a sufrir las potenciales “consecuencias punitivas” de sus acciones.⁴⁶ Por ejemplo, un cristiano puede ayudar a un padre que está tratando de evitar (¿o evadir?) la deportación para no separarse de su familia. Pero también debe estar preparado para aceptar la posibilidad de castigos impuestos por su acción.⁴⁷

De la misma forma, si un estado fuera a penalizar el cuidado pastoral, como por ejemplo proveer transporte a inmigrantes indocumentados a servicios de adoración u otras actividades en la iglesia, los pastores y otros líderes cristianos se enfrentarían con el dilema de obedecer a Dios o al hombre, y una vez más deberían estar dispuestos a aceptar los posibles castigos legales por sus acciones.⁴⁸ Más aún, dado que no siempre está claro entre los cristianos *cuándo* las leyes de inmigración realmente contradicen la voluntad de Dios, se espera que el desacuerdo legítimo y enardecido ocurra entre cristianos con respecto a la piedad y la justicia de las leyes específicas de inmigración. “Dado

Estados Unidos sea un país de blancos europeos, o que los mexicanos están más predisuestos a conductas criminales que las personas de otros grupos étnicos).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, C, p. 5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, C.3-4, p. 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, C, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Si bien un cristiano puede, en buena conciencia, asistir a un inmigrante indocumentado que necesita ayuda desesperada, el ofrecerle asilo prolongado para evitar lidiar con una orden de deportación puede ser tomado como encubrimiento o amparo de un inmigrante ilegal, a la vez que mentir a oficiales del gobierno. Esto es especialmente problemático si el inmigrante tiene antecedentes criminales. Si los cristianos creen que pueden llegar a encontrarse en tal situación, deben proceder con cautela y consultar con un abogado lo antes posible (ver n.90 más abajo).

⁴⁸ SRIC menciona brevemente cómo, si tal legislación fuera aprobada, haría que muchos cristianos dejaran de realizar obras de caridad. SRIC dice: “Mientras tanto, para cumplir con nuestra obligación cristiana, también solicitamos que el acto de caridad de proveer asistencia a los extranjeros indocumentados que no participan de actividades ilegales, no sea castigado *ipso facto*.”

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que en el campo ético no siempre vemos las cosas de la misma manera”, la LCMS debería “alentar a sus miembros a ejercitar el mayor cuidado posible al juzgar al otro en sus diferentes respuestas individuales a los complejos problemas sociales, ya que cada uno trata de aplicar el principio divino del amor cristiano a la situación humana específica.”⁴⁹ Mientras que “el quebrantar una ley injusta, que a veces es definido como desobediencia civil, no necesariamente refleja un espíritu de anarquía, intención criminal, o menosprecio general por las leyes”, y puede ser interpretado como un “reflejo de un deseo sincero de respetar el estado de derecho y de probar la validez de una ley específica para proveer una mayor medida de justicia”, los cristianos deben evitar un individualismo exagerado que crea desdén por la ley y por el estado de derecho”, y “la reivindicación de derechos individuales a costo de los derechos de los demás.”⁵⁰

Los mandamientos de amar a nuestro prójimo (incluyendo al extranjero) y de obedecer a la autoridad civil, están ambos incluidos en la ley de Dios y, por lo tanto, los cristianos deben cumplir con sus demandas. Dado que ambos mandatos están incluidos en la ley divina, el cumplirlos es, en sí mismo, una cuestión de amor. En este sentido, el amar al prójimo inmigrante (quinto mandamiento) y el obedecer a los servidores civiles (cuarto mandamiento), no son éticamente contradictorios entre sí, ya que el inmigrante no es el único prójimo a quien los cristianos son llamados a amar. También está el prójimo ciudadano o residente de una nación, quien puede estar o no tan vulnerable o necesitado como el prójimo inmigrante, pero cuyo bienestar también es motivo de preocupación tanto para el gobierno como para los ciudadanos cristianos.

Los cristianos residentes o ciudadanos de una nación son legítimamente llamados a amar a ese o esos prójimos con quienes comparten una misma identidad nacional o la misma nacionalidad. Es cierto que hay veces en que se presenta un dilema moral con respecto a la obediencia a dos demandas igualmente válidas hechas por la ley del amor de Dios y, por lo tanto, algún tipo de prioridad lógica se debe dar a un prójimo sobre otro en determinada situación. En tales casos, uno inevitablemente peca con determinación por el bien de un prójimo y sufre las consecuencias de sus acciones. Se puede argumentar, por ejemplo, que un ciudadano tiene la obligación de cuidar primero de un con-ciudadano.⁵¹ Esta actitud va, inevitablemente, a ubicar al prójimo inmigrante

⁴⁹ CTCR, *Civil Obedience and Disobedience*, D, p. 6; SRIC nota que “cristianos igualmente comprometidos con la Palabra de Dios pueden razonablemente llegar a conclusiones diferentes en aspectos específicos de estos temas y su resolución.”

⁵⁰ CTCR, *Civil Obedience and Disobedience*, G.2, G.3.a, c, p. 6. El documento también advierte a los cristianos contra “el espíritu anárquico que pone a un segmento de la población contra otro” (G.3.b); cf. CTCR, *Guidelines for Crucial Issues in Christian Citizenship* (1968), Sección Dos, VI, p. 6.

⁵¹ En “Immigration: Citizens & Strangers” (11), Meilaender dice: “Somos llamados a reconocer la imagen de Dios en cada ser humano, y debemos algo a cada persona simplemente en virtud de su humanidad. Pero también tenemos relaciones particulares con algunas personas, hacia las cuales tenemos responsabilidades especiales: hijos, hermanos, amigos y vecinos, concia-

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más abajo en la escala de prioridades. Sin embargo, también se puede argumentar que un extranjero que ha vivido suficiente tiempo en el país sin poder acceder a la documentación apropiada ya no es más un extranjero cualquiera, sino alguien que comparte el estilo de vida de los ciudadanos y residentes del país y, por lo tanto, los ciudadanos deberían tener ahora obligaciones morales hacia él.⁵² ¿Cómo puede, esa posición hacia ciertos inmigrantes, afectar, tanto negativa como positivamente, el bienestar de los ciudadanos y de la sociedad?

En un mundo que dista mucho de ser perfecto, la ley civil (incluyendo la ley de inmigración) nunca va a ser siempre equitativa y justa, o adecuada en todos sus aspectos y para cada prójimo. Los cristianos que están comprometidos a obedecer por igual a las autoridades civiles van a diferir en su forma de responder a leyes específicas de inmigración. En la búsqueda por cumplir las demandas de la ley de Dios, que nos ordena obedecer a las autoridades civiles y amar a nuestro prójimo (incluyendo al inmigrante), como pecadores que somos inevitablemente vamos a fallar en ayudar o abogar por algún prójimo. Dado que no podemos cumplir a la perfección la ley de Dios cada vez que cada prójimo sufre, siempre vamos a necesitar confesar nuestros pecados, recibir el perdón de Cristo, y esforzarnos por mejorar.

dadanos. Estas relaciones especiales determinan nuestras obligaciones potencialmente infinitas, y las hacen factibles." *First Things* (Mayo 2007):10-12.

⁵² "Quienes han vivido en este país por un período largo, estableciendo familias y echando raíces, en algún momento ya no pueden ser más vistos como extranjeros. *De facto*, si no *de jure*, ya son uno de nosotros. Nuestras obligaciones para con ellos gradualmente comienzan a reflejar las que debemos a nuestros conciudadanos, siendo una básica el rehusarse a expulsarlos del país. Diferentes condiciones—como el pago de impuestos atrasados o el ser fluido en inglés—deberían ser parte de una propuesta de amnistía para subrayar la importancia del derecho de estado y la necesidad de una genuina integración. Pero para quienes que ya son, nos guste o no, miembros del pueblo estadounidense, nuestras obligaciones son tan sólidas como para prohibir completamente la deportación." *Ibid.*

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III. La vida en los dos Reinos de Dios:

Sobre la actividad de los cristianos como iglesia y como ciudadanos del mundo

Al tratar el tema de la inmigración ilegal, de la tensión inherente que existe entre el cumplir los mandamientos de amar al extranjero en nuestro medio más allá de su condición legal, y de someterse a las autoridades y sus leyes que regulan el estatus legal de los inmigrantes, entre los cristianos surge una diversidad genuina de opiniones. Tal tensión también puede verse como un intento de ser fiel al llamado de Dios de ser tanto ciudadano de la ciudad celestial (o sea, un miembro fiel de la iglesia que apoya su misión) y un ciudadano de la ciudad terrenal (o sea, un ciudadano o residente responsable que cumple la ley civil). Las actitudes cristianas con respecto a la inmigración ilegal a menudo están marcadas por un deseo genuino de vivir fielmente en los dos reinos o gobiernos de Dios—a saber, el espiritual y el temporal.

La enseñanza con respecto a los dos reinos de Dios ocupa un lugar honorable en la catequesis luterana bíblica y confesional.⁵³ Esta enseñanza trata sobre la correcta distinción y relación entre la obra de Dios en el mundo a través de la iglesia y a través del gobierno civil y, por lo tanto, también trata sobre la actividad de los cristianos en el mundo como miembros de la iglesia y como ciudadanos o residentes del país. Por lo tanto, sirve como un promisorio marco interpretativo para tratar las preguntas acerca de qué forma podría tomar, en el contexto contemporáneo, la respuesta luterana a los temas de inmigración en general, y de inmigración ilegal en particular.

La doctrina de los dos reinos está basada en la suposición y reconocimiento que Dios quiere preservar su creación caída de dos formas diferentes, para obtener dos objetivos también diferentes. Los confesores luteranos enseñan "la distinción entre el poder espiritual y el poder y la autoridad temporales", y que, "a causa del mandamiento de Dios, se deben honrar con toda reverencia ambos poderes y autoridades y que deben estimarse como los dos dones divinos más nobles en este mundo."⁵⁴ En el reino espiritual (también conocido como el reino de la derecha), Dios preserva a su creación caída perdonando a los pecadores a través de Cristo. Los confesores dicen: "De acuerdo con el evangelio, el poder de las llaves o de los obispos es un poder y mandato divino de predicar el evangelio, de perdonar y retener los pecados y de distribuir y administrar los sacramentos."⁵⁵ Por lo tanto, Dios utiliza a la iglesia y sus ministros para reconciliar a los pecadores consigo mismo a través de la predicación del Evangelio y la administración de los sacramentos (medios de gracia). El sacerdocio de todos los creyentes, que incluye a cada

⁵³ Ver el tratado clásico de Martín Lutero: "La autoridad secular", ODM 2:129-162; CA XVI y Ap. XVI; FC, Ep. XII, 12-16 (LC, 537) y Decl. Sol. XII, 17-23 (LC, 692).

⁵⁴ CA XXVIII, 4 (LC, 54).

⁵⁵ CA XXVIII, 5-6 (LC, 54); (citando a Juan 20:21-23).

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cristiano en el contexto de su vocación, también participa de "la conversación y consolación mutua de los hermanos" cuando los cristianos comparten el Evangelio entre ellos y con quienes están fuera de la comunidad de fe, cuando las oportunidades se presentan.⁵⁶

En el reino temporal (también conocido como el reino de la izquierda), Dios preserva a su creación caída promoviendo la paz y la justicia en la sociedad. A través de la "espada", o la "autoridad secular", Dios usa a los servidores del gobierno para impedir que los pecadores cometan manifestaciones groseras del mal, y para premiar la buena conducta en la sociedad. Los confesores dicen: "El poder temporal no protege el alma, sino que mediante la espada y penas temporales, protege el cuerpo y los bienes contra la violencia externa."⁵⁷ Bajo la autoridad temporal cada persona, y por supuesto cada cristiano, como residente o ciudadano, tiene el rol de obedecer a las autoridades y cumplir con las leyes del país. Cada uno de nosotros también—y particularmente en el contexto actual de una democracia representativa en los Estados Unidos, donde los gobernados tienen voz en el establecimiento de leyes a través de sus oficiales gubernamentales elegidos—tenemos la oportunidad y responsabilidad de trabajar dentro de nuestra vocación en particular por la promoción, decreto y puesta en práctica de leyes que son buenas, justas y saludables.

Por lo tanto, la distinción entre "las dos autoridades: la espiritual y la temporal", debe ser mantenida para que ningún poder usurpe el deber del otro.⁵⁸ En el reino espiritual, la iglesia está involucrada en aquellas actividades centradas en el mensaje de justificación por gracia a través de la fe en Cristo. La iglesia trata nuestra condición espiritual y relación delante de Dios a través de la "palabra" del Evangelio. Por otro lado, en el reino temporal, el gobierno civil se encarga de aquellas actividades que promueven la justicia, la paz y el orden en la sociedad civil. El gobierno civil trata nuestra relación y responsabilidades con los demás a través de la "espada". Como miembros de la iglesia y ciudadanos o residentes del país, los cristianos tratan de vivir y trabajar fielmente en los dos reinos de Dios.

La distinción luterana entre los dos tipos de autoridad nos recuerda que no debemos confundir las actividades y propósitos que Dios quiere lograr a través de cada reino. Por un lado, la responsabilidad de la iglesia en el gobierno espiritual no consiste en la formulación, decreto e implementación

⁵⁶ "Volvamos a tratar sobre el evangelio que nos ofrece consejo y ayuda no sólo de una manera única contra el pecado, pues Dios es superabundante en dar su gracia. Primero, por la palabra oral, en la cual es predicada la remisión de los pecados en todo el mundo, lo cual constituye el oficio propio del evangelio. En segundo término, mediante el bautismo. En tercer lugar, por medio del santo sacramento del altar. En cuarto, por medio del poder de las llaves y también por medio de la conversación y consolación mutua entre los hermanos". Esmalcaldá, Tercera Parte, Sobre el Evangelio, p. 321.

⁵⁷ CA XXVIII, 10 (LC, 54).

⁵⁸ CA XXVIII, 11 (LC, 54).

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y puesta en práctica de leyes de inmigración. Bajo el poder espiritual, la iglesia está llamada a proclamar el Evangelio y administrar los sacramentos de acuerdo con la institución de Cristo.⁵⁹ Por otro lado, la responsabilidad del gobierno civil o de la autoridad temporal no consiste en la proclamación del Evangelio, la administración de los sacramentos, o la promoción de las obras de caridad que resultan del Evangelio. El gobierno puede decretar e implementar leyes sobre la inmigración ilegal, pero eso no enseña a la iglesia cómo o si debe llevar su ministerio de la Palabra y Sacramentos a los inmigrantes indocumentados.

La confusión de los dos reinos sucede cuando la obediencia al gobierno y a la ley civil con respecto a la situación legal de los inmigrantes interfiere con la responsabilidad de la iglesia de proclamarles el Evangelio y de realizar entre ellos las obras de caridad que fluyen del Evangelio, sin tener en cuenta su estatus legal. Por ejemplo, un caso de dicha interferencia ocurriría si, hablando hipotéticamente, la legislación civil penalizara con multas o hasta cárcel a los cristianos laicos u obreros profesionales de la iglesia, por proclamar el Evangelio o por hacer obras de caridad entre inmigrantes indocumentados. De la misma manera, una legislación civil, aplicación de la ley o regulaciones que hipotéticamente prevengan a los fieles de hacer obras de caridad visitando a personas en centros de detención de inmigración, también podrían ser vistas como ejemplos de tal interferencia. En un escenario más realista, imaginemos la oposición vocal pública a la inmigración ilegal por parte de un ciudadano entusiasta, quien también es miembro de la congregación, en el contexto particular de actividades misionales auspiciadas por la iglesia en un vecindario donde cada vez hay más inmigrantes. Esto puede ser visto como un ejemplo de la interferencia descrita más arriba, ya que tal oposición muy probablemente se convertiría en un obstáculo para la proclamación del Evangelio en la comunidad.⁶⁰

Los dos reinos también se confunden cuando el celo de la iglesia por proclamar el Evangelio entre las naciones en su medio interfiere con la responsabilidad del gobierno de regular y hacer cumplir las leyes de inmigración de acuerdo a lo que es justo y razonable. Por ejemplo, los avances misionales y las obras de caridad entre los inmigrantes que viven ilegalmente en los Estados Unidos no deberían, por norma, evitar tratar de encontrar formas concretas de ayudarles con su situación legal. En particular, los líderes del Sínodo, los obreros de la iglesia y las congregaciones que identifican en las comunidades

⁵⁹ "Por esta razón las dos autoridades, la espiritual y la temporal, no deben confundirse ni mezclarse, pues el poder espiritual tiene su mandato de predicar el evangelio y de administrar los sacramentos. Por lo tanto, no debe usurpar otras funciones; no debe poner ni deponer a los reyes, no debe anular o socavar la ley civil y la obediencia al gobierno; no debe hacer ni prescribir a la autoridad temporal leyes relacionadas con asuntos profanos, tal como Cristo mismo dijo [Juan 18:36]: "Mi reino no es de este mundo." CA XXVIII, 11-13 (LC, 54).

⁶⁰ Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., "Misión e inmigración: Pedagogía para trabajar entre los inmigrantes," *Missio Apostolica* 16/1 (2008): 72, 74.

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de inmigrantes personas con potencial de líderes para servir en la iglesia, deberían estar preparados para hacer todo lo que esté a su alcance para conseguirles la legalidad (por ejemplo, obtener o facilitar la obtención de una visa de trabajador religioso). Tal inversión de tiempo, esfuerzo y recursos financieros puede ser vista como un testimonio del amor sacrificial de la iglesia por el extranjero. A la larga, probablemente también prevenga la invisibilidad y marginalidad de obreros inmigrantes en la iglesia y en la sociedad, manteniendo al mismo tiempo la proclamación constante del Evangelio sin una posible interferencia de las autoridades civiles por causa de asuntos legales irresueltos.

Una forma relacionada de confusión de los dos reinos sucedería si una iglesia da empleo, y por lo tanto salario, a un inmigrante indocumentado basándose en que “digno es el obrero de su salario” (1 Tim. 5:18). Si bien bajo el reino espiritual es posible que los inmigrantes sirvan como voluntarios en las actividades de la iglesia—includingo tareas relacionadas con el ministerio del Evangelio—sin tener una tarjeta verde o una visa especial que les permita trabajar legalmente en los Estados Unidos, la ley laboral todavía es un área regulada por el Estado. La iglesia, como entidad legal, debe adherirse a dichas leyes y reglas del reino temporal.

La distinción luterana entre los dos reinos también nos recuerda que la unidad de la iglesia está basada en y nutrida por el Evangelio y los Sacramentos. Esto significa que tal unidad no depende ni está determinada por una posición particular en torno a la ley de inmigración actual.⁶¹ Los desacuerdos entre los cristianos con respecto a la ley civil no deben, en principio, impedir que compartan la Cena del Señor.⁶² Tales desacuerdos surgen, en parte, de las diferentes posturas acerca de hasta qué punto la ley de inmigración—ya sea en su totalidad o, más a menudo, en ciertos aspectos—puede ser considerada justa y razonable. Algunos cristianos sienten que pueden obedecer la ley actual con buena conciencia. Otros sienten que no lo pueden hacer. Si bien todos los cristianos concuerdan en que, por norma, deben someterse a las autoridades civiles en todas las cosas, algunos encuentran que hay ciertas situaciones en las que creen que no pueden hacerlo “sin pecado”.⁶³ Estos reconocen que “el mandato de la autoridad civil” a veces puede ir en contra de un mandamiento divino.⁶⁴ Dicho de otra manera, los cristianos pueden reconocer que hay veces en que la legislación civil puede no estar de acuerdo con la ley de Dios en algún aspecto.

Las respuestas entre los ciudadanos cristianos fieles ante tal incongruencia varían desde expresar sus preocupaciones a través del poder del voto, hasta actuar según su conciencia a través de formas temporales de desobediencia

⁶¹ Sánchez, “Los inmigrantes entre nosotros,” 58.

⁶² Sánchez, “Misión e inmigración,” 72, 74.

⁶³ CA, XVI, 6-7 (LC, 33).

⁶⁴ CA, XVI, 7 (LC, 33).

cia pacífica o no-violenta. Más allá de dramatizar las injusticias a través de demostraciones públicas, algunos ciudadanos y residentes cristianos del país pacientemente permiten que los inmigrantes que están en los Estados Unidos ilegalmente, pero que no son malintencionados o que no presentan un peligro inminente para la sociedad, coexistan entre ellos hasta que la actual ley de inmigración pueda tratar más adecuadamente la complejidad de algunas situaciones particulares de las que surgen preguntas morales importantes. Pensemos, por ejemplo, en los niños que, sin tener culpa alguna, fueron traídos por sus padres a este país en forma ilegal, pero que el único país que conocen como propio es los Estados Unidos. ¿Cómo debe tratar la sociedad a estos prójimos a quienes la ley no da ninguna protección (por ejemplo, constantemente enfrentan la posibilidad de ser deportados, no tienen permiso para trabajar), y sin embargo no tienen otra identidad que la de ser “americanos” (es decir, “estadounidenses”)? Una cantidad de ciudadanos y residentes cristianos (y no cristianos) ha estado demostrando una gran medida de paciencia hacia esos niños, esperando que aparezca algún remedio del gobierno civil.⁶⁵

Es importante notar que los cristianos que, siendo fieles a sus conciencias practican tales formas temporales de desobediencia o resistencia pacífica, no están “a favor” de la inmigración ilegal, sino más bien “en contra” de ciertos aspectos de la ley actual que creen no tratan justamente a sus prójimos inmigrantes. Más aún, sea que uno concuerde totalmente con el estado actual de la ley de inmigración o no, los cristianos responsables en ambos lados del debate deben también reconocer que tienen que vivir con, y asumir toda la responsabilidad por el impacto de las decisiones y las acciones que toman en las vidas de las personas. Esto incluye especialmente, pero no exclusivamente, consecuencias para los inmigrantes y sus familias (por ejemplo, en algunos casos una deportación puede dividir una familia o poner en riesgo la vida de alguien).

La distinción luterana entre los dos reinos nos recuerda que los desacuerdos entre los cristianos sobre la ley de inmigración no deberían infringir en la unidad que tienen en Cristo que sólo los medios de gracia dan y preservan. Una vez más, entonces, podemos reconocer libremente que, entre los luteranos que sinceramente quieren ser caritativos con sus prójimos inmigrantes a la vez que desean obedecer la autoridad civil, puede haber un espectro razonable

⁶⁵ En el momento de publicar el presente documento, hay un remedio disponible. El 15 de agosto del 2012, el U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) comenzó a aceptar solicitudes para “Consideración de Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia”, que permite que ciertos niños, que vinieron a los Estados Unidos antes de tener 16 años, soliciten una extensión o cese de deportación. El razonamiento para esta acción diferida del USCIS es que desea “concentrar sus recursos en remover a los individuos que plantean un peligro a la seguridad nacional o un riesgo a la seguridad pública”, y no “en casos de baja prioridad como los individuos que vinieron a los Estados Unidos como niños y cumplen con otros requerimientos.” En línea: [http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es/menuitem.e693c9c3247d18452fae1074a191a0/?vgnnextoid=1df868d1cd508310vgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=1df868d1cd508310vgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es/menuitem.e693c9c3247d18452fae1074a191a0/?vgnextoid=1df868d1cd508310vgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=1df868d1cd508310vgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD)

de opiniones y diferentes posiciones con respecto a lo que es—y lo que no es—justo, bueno, razonable, ordenado, y promotor de la paz para la sociedad en la

ley actual de inmigración.⁶⁶ Los cristianos deben comportarse civilmente al tratar los asuntos que pertenecen al estado de la ley civil, de tal forma que sus palabras no se conviertan en causa de división y conflicto dentro de la iglesia.

Hay espacio para que los cristianos que discrepan entre ellos hablen libremente el uno con el otro en amor y con respeto sobre los puntos civiles difíciles y complejos, sin miedo de perder la justificación delante de Dios a través de la fe en Jesucristo que establece sólo el Evangelio aparte de nuestras acciones y elecciones. Un cristiano que actúa de buena conciencia de acuerdo a su vocación dada por Dios en el reino temporal, lo hace de acuerdo con la ley de Dios y, más aún, puede ser salvo en el reino espiritual sin que su justificación delante de Dios dependa del cumplimiento de la ley.⁶⁷ Por lo tanto, los cristianos deben ejercer sus vocaciones en el reino de la izquierda con alegría y responsabilidad, sin temer perder su salvación en Cristo, que es un don del Evangelio. Podemos discordar vehementemente en temas del reino de la izquierda, e incluso criticar por sus acciones a nuestros propios hermanos que ocupan puestos en el gobierno, pero debemos tener cuidado de no condenar a los cristianos cuando ejercitan su vocación por el bien de su prójimo.

También es cierto que los cristianos no deben tratar de usar su libertad en el Evangelio para opinar irresponsablemente o mantener una posición absoluta sobre tal o cual ley sólo en nombre de esa libertad. Al contrario, los cristianos deben utilizar su libertad para servir a los demás y para el bien de sus prójimos. Los cristianos deben reconocer que sus opiniones sobre las leyes pueden tener consecuencias para personas reales: sus prójimos. Por lo tanto, no deben tomar decisiones sobre leyes civiles que afecten a otros, sin antes evaluar cuidadosa y responsablemente lo que ellas podrán significar para prójimos concretos.

Los dos reinos deben ser distinguidos y no confundidos, pero entre ellos existe una relación. Si bien el estado no debe restringir la proclamación del Evangelio y el cuidado pastoral a todas las personas más allá de su condición legal por parte de la iglesia, el gobierno sí tiene un rol en regular la obra de la iglesia como institución en el reino de la izquierda. Por ejemplo, como ya se ha mencionado antes, bajo la ley civil la iglesia no puede emplear y pagar salario a un obrero indocumentado. De manera similar, mientras que la iglesia no legisla o le dice al gobierno civil exactamente cómo legislar, se puede argumentar que los cristianos como iglesia, ya sea en forma individual o corporativa, como parte de su obligación de enseñar la ley (por ejemplo, lo que es

⁶⁶ Sánchez, “Los inmigrantes entre nosotros,” 58.

⁶⁷ Los confesores enseñan que el cristiano que ejercita un puesto bajo el gobierno civil hace una tarea que agrada a Dios, y puede hacerlo “con conciencia limpia e ílesa”. FC, Decd. Sól. XII, 17-18 (LC, 692).

agradable a Dios de acuerdo a su voluntad revelada) cuando el gobierno no actúa de manera justa, pueden tener algún rol en señalar el pecado y la injusticia a las autoridades civiles.⁶⁸ Pero, ¿cómo y cuándo debe la iglesia cumplir con esta obligación?

La LCMS ha señalado oficialmente que el aborto es un pecado, pues constituye un caso claro en el cual una práctica moral protegida por la ley civil es contraria a la ley de Dios (más específicamente el quinto mandamiento). No sólo como individuos, sino también como cuerpo eclesial (y por lo tanto corporativamente), el Sínodo ha señalado que el aborto es un pecado, dando así su posición oficial al respecto.⁶⁹ Pero, ¿cómo y cuándo se puede hacer lo mismo en el caso de la ley de inmigración? ¿Podría o debería ser hecho públicamente como Sínodo en el caso de ciertas leyes de inmigración? ¿O sería mejor que la LCMS, quizás de manera más humilde, presente los problemas y ofrezca las herramientas necesarias para su análisis e interpretación desde una perspectiva luterana, ayudando así a discernir cuáles son los marcos y límites teológicos que han de considerarse en la toma responsable de decisiones por parte de cada cristiano?

Esta última estrategia permitiría que los cristianos *individuales* tomaran sus propias decisiones a conciencia con alguna guía de la iglesia como Sínodo, con respecto a lo que es justo y razonable cuando no hay un claro consenso entre los cristianos respecto a la falla moral de ciertos aspectos de la ley de inmigración. Tradicionalmente, la LCMS ha optado por este camino más privado e individual en temas sociales y políticos, donde no es fácil establecer de manera contundente lo que es pecado o no. Esta estrategia tiene la intención de enseñar no con un mandato directo e irrefutable, sino a través de pautas y principios bíblicos y teológicos sobre los cuales el cristiano debe reflexionar, y que debe contextualizar la situación.⁷⁰ También da espacio para que los cristianos, especialmente como ciudadanos y residentes del país, discrepen y traten

⁶⁸ Incluso al concordar, por ejemplo, en que la iglesia no tiene una responsabilidad basada en el Evangelio de promover la transformación del reino civil, teólogos luteranos y cuerpos eclesiales han discrepado sobre si la iglesia corporativa (y no sólo el cristiano individual) tiene la responsabilidad basada en la Ley de enseñar al Estado principio éticos. Los teólogos y los cuerpos eclesiales también han discrepado en cuanto a los medios más prudentes y efectivos por los cuales la iglesia pueda en realidad enseñar tales principios éticos en una sociedad pluralista y democrática.” CTCR, *Render Unto Caesar...and unto God: A Lutheran View of Church and State* (1994), 53.

⁶⁹ La resolución más reciente de la LCMS que reitera esto (y que utiliza la palabra “pecado”) es la Res. 6-02A, “To Reiterate Synod’s Stance on Abortion” (2001). Ver “Abortion,” en *This We Believe*, 1.

⁷⁰ CTCR, *Render Unto Caesar...and unto God*, 51-52. Para ilustrar la “postura luterana más tradicional”, el documento cita un “catecismo” de 1983 sobre la propuesta de legislación de crédito a los impuestos sobre los estudios: “En otros casos pueden surgir preguntas sensibles para debate público para las cuales la Palabra de Dios provee menos guía todavía... En estos casos puede ser bueno que el Sínodo, a la vez de reconocer que cristianos luteranos igualmente comprometidos a seguir la voluntad de Dios revelada en la Sagrada Escritura pueden llegar a diferentes conclusiones, mantenga informados a sus miembros y les ofrezca una guía que les ayude a determinar sus posiciones” (p. 51).

de persuadirse entre ellos con respecto a los asuntos del reino de la izquierda a través de uso de la razón. Más aún, llama a todas las partes al arrepentimiento cuando sus posturas están motivadas por propósitos malos o egoístas, y evita que el cristiano sienta que su justificación ante Dios depende de su concordancia general o específica con la ley de inmigración.

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IV. ¿Quién es mi prójimo?

El lugar de la vocación del cristiano en el debate sobre la inmigración

¿Qué significa cumplir la ley de Dios? Los cristianos conocen la ley de Dios como los Diez Mandamientos. Pero, ¿cómo se cumple o se aplica el Decálogo en sus vidas cotidianas? Esta pregunta es algo abstracta hasta que miramos más de cerca a las vocaciones concretas que Dios nos ha dado, y a los prójimos o grupos de prójimos específicos que Dios ha puesto en nuestras vidas.⁷¹ La vocación es el llamado que Dios le hace a cada cristiano a cumplir su ley sirviendo a algún prójimo(s) a través del ejercicio de ciertas tareas y responsabilidades. Cuando un cristiano sirve a su prójimo en el contexto de la vocación o “estado de vida” que Dios le ha dado, está concretamente cumpliendo el “mandamiento del amor” de Dios y, por lo tanto, su voluntad de que amemos a nuestro prójimo como a nosotros mismos.⁷² Dado que los cristianos se relacionan con muchos prójimos, típicamente tienen más de una vocación. Por lo tanto, también tienen más de un prójimo a quien asistir en esta vida.

Tener una vocación no es un accidente sino un propósito creado por Dios para nosotros. Las vocaciones pueden ser comprendidas correctamente como parte del orden de la creación de Dios. Las vocaciones derivan, de una u otra forma, del mandamiento e institución de Dios del trabajo como parte de su creación. Incluso antes de la caída en pecado Dios creó al hombre para que cuidara y cultivara el jardín (Gn. 2:15). A pesar que después de la caída el trabajo a menudo se ve y se siente como una maldición divina (cf. Gn. 3:17-19), los cristianos no deben perder de vista que el trabajo es, en realidad, un medio temporal instituido por el Creador a través del cual él bendice, provee, protege, y sostiene su creación.⁷³ “El trabajo es la ‘máscara’ detrás de la cual el Dios escondido hace todo y da a los hombres todo lo que necesitan para

⁷¹ Esta sección desarrolla un argumento hecho por Leopoldo A. Sánchez M. en: “Arizona Neighbor On My Mind” (El prójimo de Arizona en mi mente), ConcordiaTheology.Org (Mayo 3, 2010). En línea: <http://concordiatheology.org/2010/05/arizona-neighbor-on-my-mind/>. Para una explicación del término “vocación”, según es utilizado en este informe, ver el Apéndice II.

⁷² “Este mandamiento de amar, válido en todo lugar para todas las personas, se vuelve específico para nosotros como individuos en el contexto del estado de vida en el cual Dios nos ha puesto. A través de nuestro estado de vida somos puestos en una relación definida y particular con los demás. Y nuestra obligación de servirnos mutuamente, por lo tanto, toma una forma muy específica.” Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1972), 36.

⁷³ “El mundo sólo ve la carga tediosa del trabajo y, por lo tanto, le huye y lo rechaza. Hacer eso, sin embargo, significa mirar al trabajo con los ‘ojos de la carne’ que sólo pueden ver el esfuerzo y los problemas del trabajo... Sin embargo, los cristianos ven el trabajo con los ojos del Espíritu Santo... Dios ha endulzado la amargura del trabajo con la miel de buen agrado y la promesa de su bendición... Por lo tanto el trabajo, si bien está bajo una maldición, también está bajo la bendición de Dios.” *Ibid.*, 102.

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vivir.”⁷⁴ Dios ha provisto al mundo con trabajadores y gobernantes de todo tipo quienes, a través de su labor, contribuyen al bienestar de muchos prójimos.⁷⁵

Más aún, Dios creó al hombre y a la mujer a su propia imagen y, por lo tanto, en perfecta justicia—esto es, para vivir en una relación recta ante Dios y ante los otros seres humanos. Si bien decimos que nuestra relación con Dios después de la caída ha sido corrompida por el pecado, debemos recordar que, desde el principio, Dios ha deseado vivir en comunión con sus criaturas y—en vez de destruir su creación caída—elige restaurarla a través de la obra redentora de Cristo y de la proclamación del Evangelio por parte de la iglesia en la tierra a través de la guía del Espíritu Santo. Dios instituyó la iglesia ya desde el principio al crear a nuestros primeros padres para que vivieran en comunión con él en el Jardín. Luego de la caída, él se encarga de restaurar la comunión de sus criaturas con él a través de Cristo. Dios ha provisto al mundo con la iglesia, sus ministros y miembros, para proclamar el Evangelio de redención en Cristo y, así, contribuir al bienestar espiritual de muchos prójimos.

Dios nos creó para vivir en justicia entre nosotros. Adán y Eva, nuestros primeros padres, no fueron creados sólo para vivir como seres aislados y tratar de saciar sus propias necesidades y deseos individuales. Al contrario, Dios creó al hombre y a la mujer el uno para el otro, para que se cuiden y apoyen mutuamente en el contexto de la unión matrimonial. En este mundo caído, en donde las personas a menudo hablan de los desafíos, fracasos e inconveniencias del matrimonio y la vida familiar, los cristianos somos llamados a recordar que Dios instituyó el matrimonio, y por lo tanto la familia, como un medio para bendecir, cuidar y proteger su creación.⁷⁶ Los padres proveen para las necesidades temporales y espirituales de los niños. El hogar cristiano es el primer lugar donde los niños aprenden de sus padres el valor del trabajo, del matrimonio, de la autoridad y de la Palabra de Dios. Es la primera economía, gobierno, e iglesia.

Dios ya instituyó el gobierno secular “en el paraíso” con el mandato de gobernar la tierra. El gobierno está basado en la realidad que, como resultado de la institución del matrimonio, “la vida terrenal requiere de relaciones en las cuales algunos son superiores y otros son dependientes, en las cuales algunos

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 101. “En vez de venir en majestad descubierta cuando le da un don a un hombre, Dios se pone una máscara en la cara. Se viste de hombre común que realiza su obra en la tierra. Los seres humanos deben trabajar ‘cada uno de acuerdo a su vocación y oficio’; a través de esto sirven como máscaras, detrás de las cuales Dios puede ocultarse para repartir sus dones.” Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Evansville, Indiana: Ballast Press, 1994), 138 (cf. 123-143).

⁷⁵ “Quien no trabaja es un ladrón que roba a su prójimo de dos maneras. Primero, permite que otros trabajen para él y se nutre de su ‘sangre y sudor’. Segundo, retiene lo que debería darle a su prójimo.” Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 102 (títulos agregados).

⁷⁶ “En la tierra, y en relación a su prójimo, él [el hombre] ocupa un ‘puesto’; allí el punto principal es que la creación es sustentada; por ejemplo: que los niños reciben alimento, vestido y cuidado. Dios efectúa esta obra de amor en la tierra a través de ‘órdenes’—el orden del matrimonio, de maestro y alumnos, del gobierno, etc.” Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, 6-7.

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mandan y otros obedecen.”⁷⁷ Por lo tanto, el gobierno secular, hablando en forma general, incluye “el matrimonio, el hogar, la propiedad, la relación entre el amo y el sirviente”, incluso si, luego de la caída, el gobierno secular es definido más estrictamente como el medio que Dios utiliza para aplacar el pecado externo a través de la “espada” empuñada por las autoridades políticas.⁷⁸

En resumen, todas las vocaciones, estados de vida y oficios a través de los cuales nos relacionamos y servimos a nuestro prójimo en el mundo actual, derivan del diseño y la palabra de Dios.⁷⁹ Ser una criatura significa tener vocaciones y prójimos a quienes cuidar. Pero, ¿quién es mi prójimo? Sin lugar a dudas, mi prójimo es cualquiera que necesita mi ayuda. Sin embargo, si todas las personas son mi prójimo en forma general, corro el riesgo de que ninguno sea mi prójimo en forma concreta. Cuando se habla de los inmigrantes que están en los Estados Unidos ilegalmente, uno debe recordar que cada persona tiene una historia y experiencia diferente.⁸⁰ Algunos son víctimas del tráfico de personas.⁸¹ Algunos no tienen condición legal debido a la violencia y explotación de otros. Muchos entraron legalmente a los Estados Unidos pero se quedaron más tiempo del permitido por sus visas por diferentes razones, incluyendo situaciones de reunificación de familia, miedo de persecución, o el deseo de proveer a sus hijos una vida más digna. También debemos admitir que un cierto número ha venido o se ha quedado en este país para cometer actos criminales. La inmigración no plantea un problema acerca de la ley en un sentido general, sino acerca de las personas que son nuestros prójimos. Dicho de otra manera, la vocación nos permite poner un rostro humano en los debates sobre la ley en general, y la ley migratoria en particular.

Así como la enseñanza luterana sobre la vocación evita la idea de que la ley puede ser cumplida abstractamente sin tener a un prójimo concreto en mente, esta enseñanza también nos ayuda a evitar el peligro de pensar en nuestro prójimo como un objeto abstracto, dirigiéndonos a abogar por prójimos específicos en sus situaciones particulares y dentro de un contexto

⁷⁷ Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 48.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

⁷⁹ “Dios ha establecido estados entre los hombres—Lutero también habla de órdenes, instituciones, oficios o jerarquías. En la vida hay muchos y variados estados, ya que ‘Dios es un gran señor y tiene muchos siervos buenos’... A veces Lutero los resume en tres estados básicos: ministerio, matrimonio (o la familia, incluyendo todo lo relacionado a los negocios y la economía), y autoridad secular... Todos estos son ‘estados y órdenes divinos’ porque Dios los ha establecido en su Palabra, y deben ser honrados como instituciones sagradas.” *Ibid.*, 36-37.

⁸⁰ GRIC dice: “Millones de personas indocumentadas han venido a los Estados Unidos por variadas razones. Han venido escapando de diversas formas de opresión, incluyendo la pobreza extrema y el hambre. Han venido para proveer para sus seres queridos. Han venido para terminar de vivir separados de sus seres queridos. Han venido ilegalmente porque se han dado cuenta que la vía legal es casi imposible de manejar. Han venido porque aquí pueden trabajar y encontrar dignidad en su labor. Reconocemos también que, un pequeño porcentaje, han venido por razones malélicas.”

⁸¹ Ver Res. 6-07A “To Support Efforts to End Human Trafficking/Slavery”, en *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Convention Proceedings* (2010), 144.

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de servicio real, desde un oficio o estado concreto en la vida. Cuando se trata del debate sobre inmigración, el argumento crítico no es si uno está a favor o en contra de la inmigración “ilegal”. Todo lo que es “ilegal” de acuerdo a tal o cual ley actual es, estrictamente hablando, “ilegal”. Aquí no hay ningún argumento. Los desacuerdos sobre la ley civil tienen que ver, en cambio, con si la ley de inmigración, ya sea en forma general o en ciertos aspectos, trata en forma adecuada, buena, justa, o razonable, a ciertos prójimos o grupos de prójimos. Por lo tanto, es natural que las respuestas particulares a la inmigración ilegal vayan a depender, nos demos cuenta o no, de nuestras prioridades vocacionales y de los prójimos correspondientes a quienes somos llamados a defender, y por quienes abogamos.

La vocación nos permite argumentar firme y persuasivamente por ciertos prójimos, y nos alienta a defender a las personas a quienes debemos servir. Por ejemplo, el gobernador de un estado puede decir, como oficial de la ley en el reino de la izquierda que, con el fin de proteger a los residentes—por quienes él es responsable—contra ciertos problemas como violencia, secuestros, tráfico humano, y otros crímenes, va a poner en práctica medidas más fuertes contra los inmigrantes que viven en su estado en forma ilegal. Al hacer esto, el oficial cumple con su obligación desde una vocación en particular—en este caso, abogando por la seguridad y calidad de vida de los residentes de su estado. Con respecto a la puesta en práctica de la ley, los agentes de control de la frontera también cumplen sus vocaciones al detener a los inmigrantes que quieren cruzar a los Estados Unidos sin tener visa. Esa es la principal tarea a través de la cual esos agentes promueven la seguridad nacional en nombre de los ciudadanos del país—sus prójimos. Dado que son muchos los prójimos que merecen nuestra atención, la vocación define *quién* es mi prójimo más cercano, cuál de sus necesidades debería atender *primero*, y *cómo* hacerlo.

Cuando debatimos sobre la obligación de amar a nuestro prójimo en las complejidades de la vida diaria, a menudo se produce una tensión significativa. Porque así como somos llamados a “hacer el bien a todos”, también se nos alienta a hacer el bien mayormente a “los de la familia de la fe” (Gál. 6:10). Nuestro Señor reprendió a los fariseos por su “ética” retorcida que resultaba en la negligencia de miembros de la familia en nombre de algún grupo de prioridades religiosas (Mc. 7:10-12). Tales referencias nos recuerdan que el amor por nuestro prójimo siempre involucra personas específicas, y que nuestro Señor espera que el amor por nuestro prójimo comience en nuestras familias y entre los otros prójimos que están más cerca de nosotros. Por lo tanto, que el padre no se atreva a descuidar el amor por su familia en nombre del amor por otros que están más alejados. De la misma manera, es adecuado que una comunidad cristiana dé prioridad a los prójimos en su medio, como dice Pablo en Gálatas 6. Y, siguiendo este mismo principio, es moralmente adecuado que las entidades civiles y las autoridades gobernantes den prioridad al bienestar de sus ciudadanos.⁸²

⁸² Peter C. Meilaender ha enfatizado el tema de la proximidad como un factor importante en el debate migratorio. Ver “Immigration: Citizens and Strangers”, 10-12.

Al mismo tiempo, esta preocupación por el “prójimo más cercano” no da permiso para negar que la persona que está más alejada sea mi prójimo. Cuando el abogado en la parábola del buen samaritano pregunta: “¿quién es mi prójimo?”, está tratando de “desviar de él la atención” para evitar el mandamiento de amar. Su pregunta “implica que hay algunas personas que *no* son mi prójimo”. Pero tal conclusión no es permitida por el Señor, cuyo ministerio muestra que “absolutamente *ninguna persona* está excluida de su amor” (ver Mt. 5:43-44).⁸³ Mientras que ningún cristiano es capaz de hacer el bien en igual medida a cada prójimo, nunca deberíamos asumir que Dios nos haría excluir a alguien de recibir el amor de prójimo al que hemos sido llamados a darle.

Inevitablemente, en un mundo que dista mucho de ser perfecto, abogar por un prójimo también puede significar no defender a otro prójimo. Por lo tanto, no debería sorprendernos que haya ciudadanos y residentes conscientes y justos que vayan a abogar por inmigrantes dedicados a sus trabajos cuya condición legal es cuestionable o difícil de regularizar pero que, a través de los años, han contribuido a la vitalidad económica del país, y cuyos hijos nacieron o fueron criados en este país y no conocen otro país que no sea esta tierra de libertad y oportunidad, y cuyas familias son un complejo conglomerado de ciudadanos, residentes y extranjeros indocumentados, todos viviendo bajo un mismo techo. Hablando en forma generalizada, quienes los defiendan seguramente presentarán iniciativas en pro de programas de visas de trabajo, una implementación más humana o justa de las leyes de inmigración, protección y acceso a la educación pública para los hijos de extranjeros indocumentados, unificación de familias, y formas de obtener la legalización. Tales defensores del prójimo inmigrante incluyen, pero no están limitados, a familiares y amigos de los indocumentados, abogados de inmigración pro bono, activistas de derechos humanos, cristianos y obreros eclesiales que trabajan muy de cerca o exclusivamente con inmigrantes, así como también otros grupos o instituciones de más alcance como Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS).⁸⁴

En un mundo pecador, donde hay tantas cosas que demandan nuestra atención y tantas clases de prójimos que piden nuestra ayuda, es inevitable que haya una cierta medida de conflicto. Nuestros prójimos—en un sentido bueno y real—son las cargas y cruces que debemos cargar. Dios nos ha dado a nuestros prójimos. Es correcto, entonces, que debatamos sobre *quién* debemos servir *primero*, y *cómo* hacerlo para servirles mejor.⁸⁵ No podemos evadir

⁸³ Arthur A. Just, Jr. *Luke 9:51-24:53* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 451-452.

⁸⁴ Aquí hablamos de defensa en el sentido amplio de promover el bienestar de los inmigrantes a través de diversos medios. Cuando se la define más específicamente como un medio para lograr un cambio sistémico en la ley migratoria, defensa representa sólo un 1% o menos de los servicios ofrecidos por LIRS. LIRS es un ministerio o servicio social motivado por la fe luterana, cuya misión es proteger refugiados y emigrantes en riesgo, y asistir con su reasentamiento en los Estados Unidos.

⁸⁵ Sánchez, “Misión e inmigración,” 71, 73. Con respecto a este tema, pero ya fuera del alcance de este documento, se podrían hacer otras preguntas, como la responsabilidad del gobierno

esa intención divina fundamental para nuestras vidas. Es parte de ser creaturas, de estar unidos o relacionados con las personas específicas que Dios nos ha dado para que sirvamos. Al tomar decisiones por tal o cual prójimo en el contexto de las vocaciones que Dios nos ha dado, a veces los cristianos vamos a experimentar una cierta medida de ambigüedad, y encontrar un cierto nivel de paradoja.

Tal paradoja surge cuando un cristiano considera su oficio, donde el prójimo a quien ha sido llamado a servir desde un estado particular en su vida depende de él, en relación a su propia relación individual o privada como cristiano hacia algún otro prójimo. Este estado paradójico de existencia en la vida del cristiano implica que “se debe hacer una distinción entre por un lado actuar (y sufrir) por mi mismo en una relación privada con mi prójimo, y actuar (y sufrir) en mi oficio, esto es, en la responsabilidad por otros inherente a mi estado.”⁸⁶ Como cristiano individual, por ejemplo, “en lo que respecta a ti y lo tuyo” quizás en privado ponga la otra mejilla y hasta sufra personalmente alguna injusticia a manos de un prójimo.⁸⁷ Dicho en forma positiva, como cristiano individual en forma privada puedo ser capaz, en caso de necesidad, de asistir hasta a mis propios enemigos.⁸⁸ Sin embargo, cuando soy llamado a un oficio y vocación específico para cuidar de ciertos prójimos en particular, ya no puedo actuar más como individuo, sino que debo dar prioridad y salir a la defensa de esos prójimos a los cuales fui llamado a defender en mi oficio y estado. En tal situación, ya no puedo simplemente “poner la otra mejilla” o ayudar a mis enemigos, si ello significa que esos prójimos a quienes he sido

para con sus ciudadanos, la responsabilidad del inmigrante de obedecer a las autoridades gobernantes en su nuevo país así como en su país de origen, etc.

⁸⁶ Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 68. Lutero escribe: Lutero escribe: “El cristiano debe ser de tal naturaleza que sufra todo mal e injusticia; que no tome venganza; que tampoco se proteja por medio de los tribunales, sino que en todas las cosas no necesite de la autoridad y del derecho seculares para sí mismo. Mas para otros puede buscar venganza, derecho, amparo y auxilio, y debe ayudar en cuanto pueda” (tílicas agregadas). Ver “La autoridad secular”, ODM 2:142; Lohse habla de la distinción entre el cristiano como una “persona cristiana”, y como una “persona mundana”. “Para aclarar la doble obligación del cristiano, [Lutero] habló del cristiano como ‘dos personas’: una persona cristiana y una persona del mundo.” Bernard Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 321.

⁸⁷ Comentando sobre las palabras de Cristo “no resistas al mal” (Mt. 5), Lutero muestra la tensión que existe al dar “satisfacción simultáneamente al reino de Dios y al reino del mundo, externa e internamente”, como sigue: “Porque con lo uno cuidas de ti y de lo tuyo, y con lo otro, al prójimo y lo suyo. En lo que respecta a ti y lo tuyo, te atienes al evangelio y sufres injusticia como buen cristiano. En cuanto al otro y a lo suyo, te riges por el amor y no toleras injusticia contra el prójimo”. Ver “La autoridad secular” ODM 2:138.

⁸⁸ “Como cristiano, cuando se trata de su bienestar personal, éste no busca otra cosa que servir a su prójimo, incluso si su prójimo es su enemigo. Está preparado a sufrir injusticia sin protegerse ni resistir al mal, sin buscar ayuda de las autoridades y del poder judicial, sin buscar venganza...” Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 69.

llamado a servir en mi oficio van a sufrir como resultado de mis decisiones y acciones individuales o privadas.⁸⁹

Apliquemos más aún la distinción entre el cristiano que actúa como individuo y el cristiano que actúa en un puesto u oficio particular. Pensemos, por ejemplo, en un agente fronterizo. Como cristiano individual, tal agente puede no estar de acuerdo con la ley migratoria actual y considerar injusto al sistema actual porque le puede parecer que no toma en consideración las necesidades económicas y las demandas de trabajo que tienen los más pobres en los Estados Unidos. Como cristiano individual, tal agente puede también mostrar compasión al inmigrante que viene a los Estados Unidos en forma ilegal y ayudarlo en sus necesidades básicas, incluyendo a veces el proveerle protección de los “coyotes” y otros que puedan querer hacerle daño. Como cristiano individual, actuando fuera de su trabajo u oficio particular, quizás también comparta el Evangelio con inmigrantes—estén aquí en forma legal o ilegal—en su vecindario y provea para sus necesidades a través de los programas de caridad de su congregación en la comunidad. Y sin embargo, en su vocación como agente de control de frontera en el reino de la izquierda, está obligado a parar el cruce de la frontera hacia los Estados Unidos hasta del prójimo más necesitado que busca una vida mejor para sus hijos. Al hacerlo, el agente fronterizo pone a su oficio, y el prójimo a quien ha sido llamado a servir a través de ese oficio, por encima de sus relaciones personales o privadas con ciertos prójimos inmigrantes.

Del otro lado de la frontera, consideremos a un padre mexicano que, además de vivir en un vecindario donde los narcotraficantes son una amenaza en el diario vivir, ha tratado desesperadamente, sin suerte, de encontrar un trabajo decente en su país. Como cristiano, más allá del llamado particular que Dios le ha hecho como esposo y padre, puede estar dispuesto a sufrir hambre, ansiedad y muerte—o sea, de “poner la otra mejilla”, y sufrir la injusticia a manos de algún prójimo, confiando en la liberación final que Dios le dará. Sin embargo, en su vocación recibida de Dios como esposo y padre, el hombre debe defender y proveer por su esposa e hijos. Por lo tanto, lo que una persona puede estar dispuesta a sufrir como individuo, es diferente de lo que ha sido llamada a hacer por el bien de otros cuyo sufrimiento ha sido llamada a aliviar. Por ejemplo, aun cuando el esposo y padre sabe que cruzar la frontera sin la visa adecuada es un acto ilegal, y que al hacerlo puede afectar a otros prójimos, su vocación de padre puede llevarlo a elegir cruzar a los Estados Unidos para encontrar seguridad, trabajo y paz para sus seres queridos, simplemente porque tiene la obligación de cuidar de aquellos a quienes Dios ha puesto en su vida.

⁸⁹ “Sin embargo, como persona secular, cumpliendo con su tarea de proteger a quienes fueron confiados a su cuidado, y actuando en asuntos que afectan el bienestar de su prójimo, debe, en todas las circunstancias, cumplir con su obligación de protegerles, oponerse al mal, frenarlo, castigarlo, y utilizar la fuerza para resistirlo.” *Ibid.*

A pesar que uno no puede tratar de cumplir la ley de Dios en un sentido abstracto sin tener en mente a un prójimo concreto, Lutero también nos enseña que la ley de Dios está por encima de tal o cual vocación, trabajo, oficio y prójimo en particular.⁹⁰ Esto agrega otra capa de complejidad al debate migratorio y evita que tomemos una postura exclusivista con respecto a nuestra vocación y oficio que convenientemente deje afuera algunos prójimos importantes que no caben dentro de nuestros estados. Sin lugar a dudas, a pesar de la distinción antes hecha entre el cristiano que actúa por sí mismo y el cristiano que actúa desde su oficio, los cristianos siempre deben buscar la forma, en tanto y en cuanto sea posible, de tratar con el prójimo sufriendo aun cuando éste se encuentre fuera del ámbito de su vocación particular.

Si bien uno debe luchar por cierto prójimo en particular, uno no puede utilizar esa lucha para justificar el dejar a otro prójimo sufriendo. Desafortunadamente, la vocación puede ser practicada de tal forma que algunos prójimos quedan automáticamente excluidos. Sin embargo, la ley de Dios nos llama a servir a cada prójimo—incluyendo a nuestros enemigos—cuando se presenta la oportunidad (Lc. 6:27-28). ¡Qué gran llamado! Da que pensar que Dios demande tanto de nosotros. Por un lado, debemos alegrarnos en nuestras vocaciones y asistir primero a los prójimos a quienes hemos sido llamados a servir. Por otro lado, cuando surge la oportunidad de servirles, debemos tener en mente las necesidades de todos nuestros prójimos—incluso de aquellos que viven entre nosotros sin documentación legal. Debemos estar prontos a servirles, y no podemos usar la vocación como una excusa para no hacerlo. Algunos cristianos, que no pueden hacerlo desde su oficio en particular (por ejemplo, el agente de frontera anteriormente mencionado), lo hacen en forma individual. Otros cristianos, cuya primera vocación los pone en una posición en la cual están llamados a cuidar de sus prójimos inmigrantes, también van a poder ofrecer tal servicio desde su oficio en particular (por ejemplo, un abogado de inmigración pro-bono).

En el debate migratorio también debemos hablar sobre la necesidad de servir a los prójimos más necesitados y vulnerables en nuestro medio al decidir a cuál "prójimo" servir primero. Los inmigrantes se encuentran entre los prójimos más pobres y más vulnerables de todos. La prioridad de amar al más necesitado debe ser seriamente considerada.⁹¹ Habiendo dicho esto, algunos

⁹⁰ "El 'orden común del amor cristiano' está por encima de 'los estados'. Al mismo tiempo, sólo los llamados a una vocación particular son responsables por las obras especiales de esa vocación. Las mismas obras no son requeridas para todos; más bien, cada uno tiene diferentes obras de acuerdo con su estado y vocación. Sin embargo, todos son igualmente llamados a amar de la misma manera; a través del amor, 'uno sirve no sólo los tres órdenes, sino también a cada persona necesitada en general, con toda clase de buenas obras.' Por lo tanto, el servicio del cristiano para con su prójimo va mucho más allá de las obligaciones regulares de su vocación... La ética de Lutero es una ética de estado y vocación, pero no en un sentido exclusivo." Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 40-41.

⁹¹ La prioridad de amar al más necesitado no debería confundirse con la expresión "opción preferencial por el pobre", si con este último término se quiere decir que el pobre está más cerca

dirán que otros prójimos, que no son inmigrantes pobres, también son muy vulnerables y necesitados en lo que se refiere a ciertas protecciones que la ley debe implementar a su favor y proveerles. En tales casos las prioridades se han argumentado desde una vocación en particular y abogando por algún prójimo o grupo de prójimos en particular. Y aún así, en todas sus discusiones sobre la ley civil, los cristianos son llamados a considerar no sólo sus vocaciones particulares y sus prójimos específicos, sino también la voluntad y mandatos claros y eternos de Dios dados en la Escritura de recordar, cuidar, y tratar justamente a los prójimos inmigrantes en su medio. Es cierto que los cristianos van a discrepar en cuanto a *cómo* tratar todos los temas y demandas que hemos mencionado, pero que *deben* hacerlo no es negociable.

Últimas observaciones y exhortación final

Al reflexionar sobre nuestra respuesta a los problemas migratorios hasta ahora, es tiempo de resumir algunas observaciones. La teología luterana contribuye con un número de pautas y principios escriturales y confesionales para encarar el debate migratorio actual, y deja lugar para desacuerdos entre los cristianos sobre temas del reino de la izquierda, sin disturbar la unidad en Cristo basada en el reino de la derecha, en donde el Evangelio salva. Mientras que la teología luterana afirma la responsabilidad de los cristianos de obedecer a las autoridades civiles, también deja espacio para que los cristianos juzguen el nivel de justicia y rectitud de ciertos aspectos de la ley migratoria. Tales juicios y respuestas dependerán del prójimo a quien han sido llamados a defender, y proteger y, por lo tanto, de su vocación y oficio. Por lo tanto, la teología luterana nos fuerza a considerar las leyes civiles no sólo en forma abstracta sino también en forma concreta, abogando por prójimos o grupos de prójimos particulares. En el debate migratorio siempre hay un rostro humano. Cuando los cristianos debaten sobre un tema complejo por el bien de su prójimo en el espíritu cristiano de amor y humildad, deben hacerlo no sólo apelando al uso de la razón y la persuasión, sino también pensando lo mejor del prójimo con quien y acerca de quien están hablando.

También debemos advertir contra el mal uso de la teología luterana para justificar una posición desequilibrada. Por un lado, el deseo de proclamar el Evangelio y hacer obras de caridad puede crear un rechazo a tratar el tema de las leyes migratorias. Al considerar lo que la Biblia dice acerca del mandamiento de Dios de amar a los extranjeros entre nosotros, debemos también tomar seriamente el mandamiento de Dios de obedecer a las autoridades. Por otro lado, el deseo de promover la ley puede fomentar una actitud pasiva y

de ganar el favor de Dios basado en su condición de vida y, por lo tanto, aparte de su fe en Cristo. Por lo tanto, en un marco de referencia luterano, el término "prioridad de amor" debería ser utilizado sólo en la esfera de la justicia de la ley, que trata con nuestra relación delante de los seres humanos o nuestros prójimos. No pertenece al artículo de justicia de la fe, que trata con nuestra relación delante de Dios a través de la fe en Cristo. Para una distinción entre las dos clases de justicia, ver Ap. IV, 21-26 (Lc. 81-82).

hasta idólatra hacia el gobierno y la ley civil que no lleva a una consideración sería de una situación potencialmente injusta. En este caso, el cristiano debería tomar seriamente el mandamiento de Dios de amar al prójimo inmigrante, pero también debería tratar de estar bien informado acerca del estado de la ley migratoria civil y sus potenciales problemas e injusticias, precisamente por respeto a la ley de Dios en general y por la ley en particular. La teología luterana nos ayuda a evitar extremos.

También debemos ser conscientes que la teología luterana puede ser utilizada incorrectamente, de tal forma que ninguna persona es llevada al arrepentimiento o a tratar con las consecuencias de sus acciones o actitudes hacia su prójimo. Los cristianos que correctamente defienden la ley pueden equivocadamente pensar que no necesitan arrepentirse si violan el octavo mandamiento al presentar las acciones de sus prójimos inmigrantes de forma negativa. Tales cristianos pueden estar tan enojados por los fracasos en el control de la inmigración, que excusan su falta de compasión por los inmigrantes sufridos. Otros cristianos, que abogan por mostrar misericordia y compasión al inmigrante en nombre del Evangelio, quizás se consideren más justos que otros y difamen a los gobernantes o agentes fronterizos que tratan de cumplir sus vocaciones en forma piadosa protegiendo a sus conciudadanos y a su país. Los cristianos que vehementemente apoyan los derechos de los inmigrantes pueden creerse justificados de vilificar a quienes no están de acuerdo con ellos. Los inmigrantes indocumentados pueden creer que no necesitan arrepentirse de desobedecer la ley o de negarse a reconocer la necesidad de un proceso de gobierno aceptable y ordenado.

Finalmente, la teología luterana puede ser utilizada para oscurecer el Evangelio. Una postura legalista sin una preocupación por la proclamación del Evangelio y por las obras de caridad entre los inmigrantes puede llevar a los inmigrantes a ver a los luteranos como cristianos que no practican lo que predicán. Más aún, una insistencia persistente sobre la necesidad de que los inmigrantes indocumentados se arrepientan de su pecado de quebrantar la ley, sin una insistencia similar sobre la necesidad de arrepentimiento de todos los que directa o indirectamente se benefician de sus labores, hace que la iglesia aparezca como hipócrita y como una iglesia a la cual no se le puede confiar el mensaje del Evangelio que predica.

Todo esto nos recuerda la lucha de la vida cristiana en un mundo caído. Nuestro pecado está siempre delante de nosotros (Sal. 51:3), y toda nuestra vida es una de arrepentimiento.⁹² La absolución del Evangelio es constantemente necesaria tanto para nuestros pecados obvios, como para todas las veces en que no vemos otra salida que elegir lo que parece ser "el menor de dos males". Pero nada de esto sacude nuestra confianza en la palabra de perdón de Dios, aun cuando siempre tratamos, una y otra vez, de actuar mejor.

⁹² Martín Lutero, "1. Cuando nuestro Señor y Maestro Jesucristo dijo: 'Haced penitencia...', ha querido que toda la vida de los creyentes fuera penitencia." Ver "Las 95 Tesis," ODM 1:7.

Debemos reconocer que fallamos en ayudar a algún prójimo y que no cumplimos con todo lo que la ley nos demanda. Todos pecamos de varias maneras cuando tratamos de cumplir con nuestras vocaciones en los reinos de la derecha y de la izquierda.⁹³ Por lo tanto, en lo que es uno de los temas más complejos y debatidos de nuestro tiempo, el Evangelio, por medio de la confesión y absolución, debe ser siempre tenido en cuenta cuando los cristianos se involucran en conversaciones sobre lo que es mejor para ciertos prójimos, y tratan de ejercer sus vocaciones en forma responsable y a conciencia por el bien de esos prójimos—incluyendo a los inmigrantes que hay entre nosotros.

⁹³ Althaus dice: "...no podemos cumplir con ninguna vocación sin involucrarnos en el pecado. Aquí otra vez es muy importante que todo el ethos cristiano ha de verse como ethos bajo la justificación. Esto es particularmente cierto de nuestra vocación, sea cual sea. Por lo tanto, la obra que hacemos en nuestra vocación no puede ser aceptable aparte de la certeza de que nuestros pecados son perdonados. Sin embargo, más allá de lo imposible que es evitar pecar en nuestro estado y vocación por causa de nuestra naturaleza pecadora, nuestro estado se mantiene puro y santo porque es establecido a través de la palabra de Dios." Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 41.

V. Respuestas a los problemas de la inmigración:

Algunas pautas para los obreros de la iglesia

Estas pautas tratan sólo algunas de las muchas preguntas que pueden surgir entre los obreros de la iglesia y otras personas involucradas en ministerios entre poblaciones inmigrantes. Al momento de escribir este trabajo, las pautas parecen ser consistentes con la ley migratoria actual. Sin embargo, dada la naturaleza rápidamente cambiante de la ley migratoria, el lector no debe tomar estas pautas como un consejo legal. A los obreros de la iglesia se los alienta siempre a buscar consejería legal en su propio estado.

1. El obrero de la iglesia puede proclamar el Evangelio y enseñar la Palabra de Dios a los inmigrantes, independientemente de su condición o estatus legal, y puede incorporarlos en la vida y membresía de la congregación.
2. También puede incorporar inmigrantes en la escuela parroquial. Puede dar a los inmigrantes indocumentados, y a sus hijos, acceso a educación cristiana en las escuelas luteranas, universidades y seminarios de la iglesia. No hay una ley federal que prohíba la admisión de inmigrantes indocumentados en las instituciones educacionales privadas sin fines de lucro de la iglesia.
3. Se puede dar asistencia a los inmigrantes a través de los ministerios de ayuda humanitaria de la iglesia, independientemente de su estatus legal.⁹⁴ Se puede ayudar al necesitado con comida, vestido, albergue, asistencia médica, y cuidado de niños. Se puede ayudar a las iglesias luteranas de los países de las que provienen los inmigrantes indocumentados, para que sus líderes lleguen a ellos con el Evangelio y los atiendan a través de sus ministerios de ayuda humanitaria para que puedan encontrar trabajos remunerados y dignos para mantener a sus familias.
4. Se puede ayudar a que los inmigrantes obtengan su legalidad en el país. Se puede consultar y buscar la ayuda de abogados y grupos que abogan para reunir a familias separadas a través de la puesta en práctica de leyes migratorias, o se puede buscar asilo para aquellos individuos o familias por los cuales hay una sospecha razonable de muerte o persecución si regresan a su país de origen.
5. Un obrero de la iglesia no tiene obligación de investigar el estatus legal de los inmigrantes que participan de la congregación local o de la escuela parroquial. Tampoco tiene obligación de informar a las autoridades estatales acerca de los participantes indocumentados.⁹⁵ Algunas situaciones, como las siguientes, pueden constituir una

⁹⁴ "Es legal proveer cuidado humano a una persona que no tiene documentación." LIRS, del estudio bíblico *No Temas: Recursos para las congregaciones y las familias de inmigrantes fracturadas por el temor*, disponible en <http://lirs.org/no-temas/>.

⁹⁵ "No está obligado a denunciar a alguien que no tiene documentación." *Ibid.*

intrusión del gobierno en el trabajo de cuidado espiritual de la iglesia: la presencia en los servicios de adoración de agentes de inmigración en busca de personas indocumentadas; el uso de la iglesia por parte de agentes de inmigración para realizar una redada; una demanda de parte de agentes de inmigración para que el clérigo dé a conocer información acerca de los miembros cuyo estado legal ha sido compartido con el pastor en el contexto de la confesión y absolución. La iglesia no es el gobierno, por lo que no debe esperarse que se dedique a implementar las leyes de inmigración. Al mismo tiempo, se debe alentar y ayudar a los miembros indocumentados del cuerpo de Cristo a cumplir la ley en toda forma posible. Al asistirlos, uno también debe estar preparado para ejercitar una buena medida de paciencia en lo que puede llegar a ser un proceso largo, complejo y caro hacia la legalización.⁹⁶

6. No se puede dar un empleo pago en la iglesia o escuela a los inmigrantes indocumentados, a menos que estén legalmente autorizados para ser empleados en los Estados Unidos. Se los puede involucrar legítimamente en la vida de la congregación en forma voluntaria (por ejemplo, sirviendo como ancianos, músicos, asistentes litúrgicos, o evangelizando en la comunidad).
7. Un pastor no debe compartir con las autoridades civiles información privilegiada y confidencial que ha recibido de un miembro inmigrante indocumentado de la congregación en el contexto de la confesión y absolución o consejería pastoral. Esto incluye el estado migratorio de la persona. Se aplica el principio general de que un pastor no debe divulgar los pecados que le han sido confesados para no romper el voto de la ordenación. Más aún, en el contexto amplio del cuidado pastoral en el reino de la derecha se aplica el mismo principio general de la confidencialidad, dado que el miembro indocumentado no ve o se acerca a su pastor como cualquier ciudadano del reino de la izquierda, sino específicamente como a su pastor en el reino de la derecha.⁹⁷ El alcance del privilegio clérigo/penitente varía de estado a estado, por lo que, si hay duda con respecto a si este privilegio se aplica a una comunicación particular, es importante buscar consejo legal.
8. Si un inmigrante indocumentado participa de actividades criminales que ponen en peligro la vida de personas, es causa probable para llamar a las autoridades. Sin embargo, en tales situaciones el tema inmediato no es la condición migratoria legal en sí, sino las actividades peligrosas de la persona. Algunas situaciones

⁹⁶ "No es legal ayudar a alguien a evitar cumplir con la ley migratoria, como por ejemplo una orden de deportación." *Ibid.* (Ver nota 41).

⁹⁷ Ver CTCR, *The Pastor-Penitent Relationship: Privileged Communications*, (1999); en línea en <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?stc=icm&id=412>.

que pueden requerir contactar a las autoridades incluyen el conocimiento de actividades criminales como terrorismo, tráfico de dinero, crímenes financieros, tráfico humano, crímenes relacionados con pandillas, tráfico de armas, explotación de niños/pornografía, tráfico de drogas, tráfico humano (trabajos forzados/esclavitud), y empleo/explotación de trabajadores ilegales.⁹⁸ En los casos en los que el compartir información sea vital para ayudar a salvar vidas, se aplica el principio de amor cristiano por el prójimo más necesitado.

9. Al proveer ayuda humanitaria a inmigrantes indocumentados, uno debe ser cuidadoso de no transportarlos a través de la frontera hacia los Estados Unidos. No se debe tratar con "coyotes" u otros elementos criminales que piden ayuda para traer personas a través de la frontera. Uno tampoco debe ocultar información de las autoridades gubernamentales con respecto a los inmigrantes que están ilegalmente en los Estados Unidos cuando las autoridades investigadoras le preguntan específicamente tal información. Encubrir información de las autoridades civiles es algo particularmente problemático si, sea que uno lo sabe o no, un inmigrante tiene un récord criminal. Uno siempre debe buscar consejo legal, especialmente cuando se encuentra en situaciones legales potencialmente ambiguas.

⁹⁸ Para más ejemplos de actividad criminal o violaciones que pueden poner las vidas de otros en riesgo, ver <http://www.ice.gov/exec/forms/hst-tips/tips.asp>.

APÉNDICE I

Un marco de referencia para considerar los problemas migratorios: Casos de estudio

Más que proveer "respuestas correctas y respuestas equivocadas", los siguientes casos de estudio tienen la intención de estimular la reflexión y discusión. En cada caso se alienta a que las personas piensen y discutan las situaciones que se presentan utilizando el marco de referencia bíblico y luterano delineado en este documento. Tal marco de referencia incluye temas importantes como: la misión de la iglesia de compartir el Evangelio con todas las naciones, el llamado de amar al prójimo, la importancia de la unidad de la iglesia, el respeto por la ley, la vocación, los dos reinos, etcétera.

*Caso de estudio 1 – La vocación, los dos reinos, y la misión de la iglesia*⁹⁹

Usted ha sido llamado a servir en una parroquia predominantemente anglosajona que funciona en un vecindario cada vez más latino. Un prominente miembro anglosajón de su congregación, que sirve en el concejo municipal, ha expresado abiertamente no sólo afuera, sino también dentro de la iglesia, su posición con respecto a la inmigración ilegal. Repetidamente insiste, basándose en Romanos 13:1-7, que debemos obedecer y poner en práctica nuestras leyes migratorias. Algunos miembros de la comunidad latina, cuya situación legal es desconocida pero seguramente incluye algunas personas indocumentadas, cada vez se sienten más reacios a participar de las actividades evangelísticas de la iglesia porque temen que este celo ciudadano en particular, u otros como él en la iglesia, puedan llamar la atención de "la migrá" (los oficiales de inmigración) para hacer una redada en sus hogares o lugares de empleo, o puedan hacer sospechar tanto a la policía sobre su situación legal, como para que decidan chequear sus papeles. Como resultado, los intentos evangelísticos y humanitarios de la congregación en la comunidad no inspiran confianza, y el Evangelio no está siendo proclamado entre esos prójimos latinos tan cercanos.

Preguntas para discusión:

1. Como alguien que trabaja en el reino de la derecha, ¿qué le diría a este querido miembro anglosajón? En particular, ¿qué le diría teniendo en cuenta que él vive y actúa según su vocación como miembro del concejo municipal y como ciudadano consciente en el reino de la izquierda?
2. Por otro lado, ¿cómo le hablaría al hermano anglosajón como miembro de la iglesia que también vive de acuerdo a su vocación

⁹⁹ Los casos 1 y 2 son versiones brevemente revisadas de un caso de estudio publicado en Sánchez, "Misión e inmigración," 73.

en el reino de la derecha como hijo bautizado de Dios? ¿Qué responsabilidades tiene este hermano como cristiano, en relación a la obra de misión y misericordia de la iglesia en ese vecindario predominantemente latino?

3. ¿Cuáles pueden ser algunas de las consecuencias de las acciones vocales de oposición de ese miembro a la inmigración ilegal, tanto para la iglesia como para el prójimo latino? ¿Cree que hay cosas que el cristiano *puede* decir pero *no debería* decir en ciertos contextos?
4. ¿Cree que la apelación que este miembro del concejo hace del texto de Romanos 13 es totalmente válida? ¿Cómo le ayudaría usted a considerar también el mandato bíblico de amar a su prójimo inmigrante como a sí mismo (por ejemplo: Lv. 19:33-34)? ¿En qué formas podría este miembro de la congregación cumplir razonablemente con ambas enseñanzas bíblicas?

Caso de estudio 2 – La vocación, los dos reinos, y la unidad de la iglesia

Una hispana, miembro de la congregación citada en el caso de estudio 1, que trabaja *pro bono* como abogada de inmigración, ha ofrecido muchos de sus servicios a los latinos en la comunidad. Como resultado de su trabajo incansable y de su consejo legal, algo que realiza en una oficina en la iglesia como parte del ministerio de caridad, muchos hispanos en la comunidad han estado haciendo preguntas acerca de la iglesia. Como abogada, esta persona respeta la ley. Pero a través de su práctica se ha convencido que la ley migratoria actual no trata adecuadamente a algunos prójimos. Su trabajo *pro bono* está inspirado por su deseo de utilizar la ley para ayudar a las personas que se encuentran en situaciones difíciles. Como cristiana toma muy seriamente el mandamiento de Dios de amar al prójimo extranjero como a nosotros mismos (Lv. 19:33-34). Está tan desilusionada con la verbalización que el miembro anglosajón hace de su oposición a la inmigración ilegal—a veces delante de latinos que buscan consejo legal—que no comulga con él en la mesa del Señor. La abogada *pro bono* le explica al pastor que está frustrada y hasta enojada por la falta de sensibilidad del hermano ante el sufrimiento de esos inmigrantes, sus luchas legales, los aspectos injustos y las fallas del actual sistema migratorio, y la importancia de la obra de caridad de la iglesia entre ellos.

Preguntas para discusión:

1. Como obrero de la iglesia en esta congregación, usted tiene que hablar con esta querida hermana latina miembro de la congregación que resiente las acciones de su hermano anglosajón. ¿Es posible que ella tenga razón, o incluso hasta una base bíblica, con respecto a su falta de sensibilidad hacia el prójimo extranjero, o será que está exagerando?
2. ¿Cómo hace para reconocer el valor de la vocación de esta hermana como el contexto concreto en el cual se cumple la ley de Dios y su

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prójimo es servido? Es evidente que la perspectiva vocacional de la abogada influye sus prioridades. ¿De qué manera el contexto o la perspectiva vocacional ayuda al ciudadano o residente cristiano a evaluar los diferentes aspectos de la ley migratoria?

3. ¿Cómo le explica a esa hermana el valor de saber distinguir entre la obra de Dios en el reino temporal y su obra en el reino espiritual? ¿Cuándo se convierte en problema la perspectiva vocacional? ¿Cuáles son las posibles consecuencias para la unidad de la iglesia, e incluso para la misión de la iglesia entre los hispanos en el vecindario, cuando se confunden los dos reinos?

Caso de estudio 3 – La vocación, los dos reinos y el prójimo

Del lado mexicano de la frontera, un padre de tres niños que viven en la pobreza trata de cruzar a los Estados Unidos para encontrar trabajo. Del lado estadounidense de la frontera, un miembro de la patrulla fronteriza—un mexicano americano—impide, por segunda vez el mismo año, que el desesperado padre logre cruzar. A través de las conversaciones mantenidas en tan extrañas circunstancias, descubren que son parientes lejanos.

Mientras conversan, el padre comparte los problemas que tiene y dice que desearía no tener arriesgarse a cruzar sin una visa (que, de todas formas, son casi imposibles de obtener). Sin embargo, dice que siente que es lo que debe hacer para poder alimentar y para procurar una vida mejor para sus hijos. El oficial comparte con él su frustración con respecto a algunos aspectos de la ley migratoria actual, pero le explica que su obligación es ponerla en práctica y que, desafortunadamente, tiene que asegurarse que regrese a México.

El oficial se asegura que el padre como algo antes de emprender el viaje. El padre le dice que no lo juzga por lo que hace, y que comprende que está cumpliendo con su trabajo. El oficial comprende las luchas del padre y le dice que respeta su deseo de proveer para sus hijos. Se dan la mano, se sonríen mutuamente, y se despiden con buenos deseos, sabiendo que probablemente se volverán a ver en las mismas circunstancias.

Preguntas para discusión:

1. ¿De qué manera estos dos hombres viven correctamente en el mundo? ¿De qué manera(s) sirven ambos a algún prójimo a través de sus vocaciones, cumpliendo así la ley de Dios? ¿Qué obligación está cada uno de ellos tratando de cumplir en su vocación en particular?
2. ¿De qué manera la ley civil, específicamente la referente a la inmigración ilegal, entra en conflicto, hasta cierto punto, con las vocaciones de estos dos hombres y con los mandamientos específicos que están tratando de obedecer? ¿Cómo reconocen o verbalizan ese conflicto? ¿Cómo resuelven ese conflicto a la vez que se mantienen fieles a sus vocaciones?

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3. ¿De qué manera estos hombres respetan la vocación del otro? En el encuentro entre estos dos hombres, ¿cómo se muestra la compasión por el prójimo? Dado que son parientes lejanos, ¿tienen otras obligaciones mutuas, más allá de las circunstancias específicas de su encuentro?

4. ¿Qué papel juega en este escenario la distinción o paradoja entre un cristiano que actúa en forma individual o “privada” en relación a un prójimo, y un cristiano que actúa “según su oficio”?

Caso de estudio 4 – La ley, el cuidado humano, y el prójimo¹⁰⁰

Tomás acaba de ser detenido. Se pregunta cómo estarán su esposa y sus dos hijos. El Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas (ICE) tuvo una redada hoy en su trabajo, y arrestó a todos los empleados que no tenían documentos. Tomás se culpa por lo que sucedió. Sabía los riesgos que corría si se quedaba a vivir aquí más tiempo que el que le permitía la visa. Hubiera querido encontrar una manera legal de quedarse, pero el riesgo de exponerse era demasiado grande.

Los miembros de su familia casi nunca salen de la casa porque tienen miedo. Su esposa Raquel observa con mucha ansiedad a los niños, que nacieron en los Estados Unidos y por lo tanto son ciudadanos, cuando van a la escuela en la mañana y cuando regresan a la casa cada tarde. Hasta el ir a la iglesia es causa de temor para la familia, pero esa ha sido una de las pocas cosas positivas que han tenido en la vida: crecer en la fe y mejorar su conocimiento del inglés. Otra cosa positiva ha sido el poder enviar dinero, las llamadas remesas, al hermano de Tomás para ayudar así a su familia. Pero ahora todo se ha terminado. Seguramente lo van a deportar.

¿Qué puede hacer Tomás para asegurarse que su esposa e hijos regresen con él a su país? Dado que los niños son ciudadanos estadounidenses, para poder viajar van a necesitar pasaportes, asumiendo que su país les permita entrar. Hasta que todas estas cosas se aclaren, Tomás se pregunta cómo va a hacer su esposa para pagar el alquiler y comprar comida. Y si a ella también la arrestan, ¿quién va a cuidar de los niños?

Preguntas para discusión:

1. ¿Qué aspectos de esta historia podrían ser tratados con un mejor control de la frontera y una mejor ley migratoria?
2. ¿Qué aspectos de esta historia podrían ser tratados por las iglesias tanto en los Estados Unidos como en el país de origen de Tomás?
3. ¿De qué forma alentaría a este padre detenido? ¿Cuál es su oración por las personas que se encuentran en una situación así?
4. A veces, cuando nos enteramos de los problemas de alguien, quisiéramos dejar de lado la ley; y a veces, cuando sabemos

¹⁰⁰ Este caso y preguntas aparece en LIRS, <http://lirs.org/no-temas/>.

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que alguien ha quebrantado la ley, quisiéramos dejar de lado la compasión. ¿Cómo evitamos caer en ambos extremos? ¿Cuál es la respuesta fiel?

Caso de estudio 5 – La vocación, los dos reinos y el prójimo

Juanita es un agente de control de frontera para el ICE y segunda generación de ciudadanos norteamericanos, cuya familia viene de México. Ella y su familia son miembros de una congregación LCMS. Juanita toma muy en serio su ciudadanía y su vocación como cristiana, tratando siempre de vivir una vida agradable a Dios. Ella reconoce la necesidad de la seguridad de las fronteras, y especialmente el peligro del tráfico ilegal de drogas a través de la frontera del sur de los Estados Unidos. Aun así, tiene problemas de consciencia cuando tiene que apoyar las leyes migratorias que considera favorecen a las personas con mucha educación y preparación técnica, mientras que hacen prácticamente imposible que las personas honestas, pero con poca educación, entren legalmente a los Estados Unidos, aun cuando haya demanda de tales trabajadores en la agricultura y otras industrias. Juanita y su esposo tienen parientes en ambos lados de la frontera. Ellos sufren por las circunstancias alarmantes que enfrentan en México, y simpatizan con el deseo de tantos de emigrar a los Estados Unidos en busca de seguridad y bienestar.

Preguntas para discusión:

1. ¿Cómo aconsejaría a Juanita si ella le confiara sus remordimientos?
2. De qué formas pueden estar en conflicto sus vocaciones como ciudadana, agente de control fronterizo y miembro de familia? ¿De qué manera nuestras experiencias y trasfondo afectan y a veces confunden nuestra visión y actitudes? ¿Cómo cree que esas responsabilidades deberían ser priorizadas?
3. ¿Bajo qué circunstancias—si hay algunas—un oficial de gobierno podría criticar o cuestionar las funciones que ella debe cumplir?
4. ¿Existe un conflicto entre la compasión y la ley? ¿Cómo alentaría a Juanita a mantener tanto el respeto por el gobierno y por quienes tienen autoridad, como la compasión por su familia y por otros inmigrantes en situaciones similares?

Caso de estudio 6 – La vocación, los dos reinos y el prójimo

James también es un agente de control de frontera. Luego de haber visto a personas lastimadas abandonadas a su propia suerte y corriendo peligro de muerte, y de haber pasado por situaciones en las que tanto él como sus colegas se han enfrentado en tiroteos, ha desarrollado una cierta antipatía hacia los “coyotes” que trafican personas y drogas hacia los Estados Unidos. James sabe que el problema migratorio es complejo, pero no tiene ninguna simpatía por quienes cruzan ilegalmente porque cada caso pone en peligro vidas, incluyendo la de él.

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Cuando su pastor alentó a la congregación a ser compasivos con todos los inmigrantes, tanto legales como ilegales, sin poder dejar de pensar en su trabajo diario James se sintió incómodo. Pensó que el pastor había fallado en reconocer tanto los peligros inmediatos de la inmigración ilegal, como los problemas que acarrea a largo plazo cuando un número cada vez mayor de inmigrantes pobres se inscribe en las escuelas y requiere atención médica.

Preguntas para discusión:

1. ¿Cómo trataría la legitimidad de las actitudes y preocupaciones de James desde una perspectiva cristiana?
2. ¿Qué le diría si él compartiera con usted su angustia por los comentarios del pastor? ¿Qué le diría a su pastor?
3. ¿De qué manera se aplican las enseñanzas cristianas—como el amor por el prójimo, la sumisión a la autoridad, el pecado y la gracia—a esta situación?
4. ¿De qué manera nuestra vocación particular por un lado nos presenta oportunidades para servir a nuestro prójimo, y por otro nos tienta a ser parciales?

Caso de estudio 7 – La vocación, el prójimo, y el ministerio

El pastor de una congregación cercana a un puerto de entrada a los Estados Unidos se ha enterado que una de sus miembros es una trabajadora indocumentada. Ella se lo ha confiado porque teme que no va a poder seguir trabajando y que quizás sea deportada. Su esposo e hijos son ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos. Luego de pedirle permiso, el pastor discutió el tema con los ancianos de la congregación. Cada uno tuvo su opinión. Uno cree que esta señora debería ser obligada a entregarse a las autoridades o ser excomulgada, otro que la iglesia debería proveer apoyo legal para la familia, mientras que otros no están seguros de lo que debería hacerse.

Preguntas para discusión:

1. ¿Cómo le aconsejaría a este pastor que ministrara a esta señora y su familia? ¿Cuáles deberían ser sus prioridades como su pastor?
2. ¿Hasta qué punto la iglesia—esta congregación en particular—tiene una obligación corporativa para con sus miembros? ¿Tiene una obligación corporativa hacia el gobierno? ¿Cómo deberían ser priorizadas?
3. ¿Qué importancia se le debe dar a la responsabilidad de mantener la unidad familiar, en relación a la responsabilidad de obedecer a la autoridad gubernamental?
4. ¿De qué maneras puede nuestra teología ayudar a que los ancianos lleguen a un consenso piadoso y a una mayor unidad al tratar con situaciones de este tipo?

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Caso de estudio 8 – La confesión, la absolución y el cuidado pastoral

Una señora comienza a participar regularmente de la iglesia y expresa interés en ser miembro de la misma. En la clase para miembros nuevos, mientras discuten el cuarto mandamiento y su significado, el pastor ve que la mujer está llorando. Hablando con ella en forma privada le pregunta si puede ayudarla en algo, a lo que ella le confiesa que hace varios años que está ilegalmente en los Estados Unidos, por lo que se siente culpable y avergonzada. La señora tiene dos hijos en la escuela que son residentes legales. El pastor escucha su confesión y la absuelve. Luego se ponen de acuerdo en ir a juntos a ver a una abogada de inmigración. Lo que la abogada les dice no es muy optimista, pero dice que es posible para esta señora obtener la legalidad, por lo que inician el proceso. La señora y sus hijos completan la clase en la iglesia, y el pastor y la congregación los reciben como miembros. Sin embargo, como el caso legal se extiende, la mujer continúa luchando espiritualmente y busca el alivio del perdón del pastor.

Preguntas para discusión:

1. ¿Cómo deben guiar al pastor, en este caso, sus llamados como siervo de la Palabra y también como ciudadano?
2. ¿Cómo debe tomar en consideración el pastor la vocación de madre dada por Dios a esta mujer cuando la aconseja?
3. ¿Fue correcto que el pastor la absolviera la primera vez? ¿Debe seguir dándole de comulgar? ¿Debe seguir absolviéndola si ella sigue luchando con la culpa y la vergüenza? ¿En qué basa sus respuestas?
4. ¿Se debe informar a la congregación acerca de la situación legal de esta señora en los Estados Unidos? ¿Cuáles serían las ventajas, y cuáles las desventajas?
5. Si el pastor compartiera aspectos generales de este caso con sus colegas la reunión de circuito, ¿qué consejo esperaría que le dieran otros pastores del circuito?
6. En la consejería que el pastor hace con esta señora, ¿qué diferencia haría, si alguna, si la señora en este caso de estudio fuera soltera y sin familia en los Estados Unidos?

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APÉNDICE II

Términos

A. Términos de inmigración:¹⁰¹

1. Personas que buscan asilo: Personas que han sido forzadas a escapar de su país natal sin tener acceso al proceso de reasentamiento de refugiados. Para poder ser consideradas elegibles, estas personas deben solicitar asilo dentro del año de entrada en los Estados Unidos, a menos que se apliquen ciertas limitadas excepciones. A los que reciben asilo se les denomina *asilados*.
2. Inmigrantes: Las personas a quienes se les ha admitido para vivir permanentemente en Estados Unidos como residentes permanentes legales.
3. Residentes permanentes legales: las personas que tienen autorización legal (una "tarjeta verde") para vivir y trabajar en los Estados Unidos por un periodo indefinido de tiempo, pero que no son ciudadanos y no tienen derecho a voto. Generalmente, las personas nacidas en el extranjero intentan convertirse en residentes permanentes legales en una de tres formas:
 - *Patrocinio familiar*. Los ciudadanos estadounidenses adultos pueden patrocinar a sus cónyuges, padres, hijos, hermanos y hermanas nacidos en el extranjero. Los residentes permanentes legales pueden patrocinar a sus cónyuges, hijos menores de 21 años e hijos adultos solteros.
 - *Patrocinio laboral*. Las empresas estadounidenses pueden patrocinar a personas para puestos específicos si demuestran que hay escasez de trabajadores altamente calificados.
 - *Lotería de diversidad*. Los inmigrantes de ciertos países pueden registrarse para obtener una de 50,000 visas disponibles cada año.
4. Familias de estado mixto: Las familias de estado mixto tienen uno o más miembros que no son ciudadanos estadounidenses. Los miembros familiares que no son ciudadanos pueden o no tener documentos. Por ejemplo, una familia de estado mixto podría ser un ciudadano estadounidense casado con un inmigrante indocumentado con hijos ciudadanos nacidos en Estados Unidos.
5. Ciudadanos naturalizados: Los residentes permanentes legales son elegibles para solicitar la ciudadanía estadounidense mediante un proceso denominado naturalización. Para calificar para la

¹⁰¹ La definición básica de los términos de inmigración en este Apéndice proviene, con pequeñas alteraciones, de *No Temas*, 18-19, 21-22. LIRS, en línea <http://lirs.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/NoTemasManualWorship.pdf>

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naturalización, los solicitantes deben satisfacer los siguientes requisitos:

- Deben haber vivido en Estados Unidos por cinco años, o tres años si están casados con ciudadanos estadounidenses, sin haber cometido ningún delito grave.
 - Deben demostrar que han pagado sus impuestos y que son de "buen carácter moral".
 - Deben demostrar que conocen la historia y el gobierno de Estados Unidos, así como la habilidad de entender, hablar y escribir el inglés básico.
6. No inmigrantes: Las personas que tienen permiso para entrar a Estados Unidos por un período limitado. La mayoría de los no inmigrantes deben solicitar una visa antes de entrar. Los que tienen visa también deben pasar por una inspección de inmigración a su llegada.
 7. Refugiados: Personas que escaparon de sus países natales debido al acoso o miedo al acoso debido a su raza, religión, nacionalidad, participación en un grupo social u opinión política. Generalmente, antes de ser reasentados en otro país, los refugiados se quedan en campamentos en un país más seguro. El proceso usualmente lleva años.
 8. Inmigrantes indocumentados: Personas que están en los Estados Unidos sin el permiso del gobierno de los Estados Unidos. Los inmigrantes indocumentados entran a los Estados Unidos sin que los oficiales de inmigración los inspeccionen, o usando documentos falsos. Una persona nacida en el extranjero que entró al país con permiso del gobierno de Estados Unidos se puede convertir en indocumentada al quedarse "más tiempo" después que su condición de temporario expira.
 9. Visa: Un documento de viaje otorgado por funcionarios consulares. Las visas no garantizan la entrada a los Estados Unidos.

B. Términos teológicos:

1. Ley: La voluntad de Dios escrita en el corazón de cada criatura humana (ley natural), y específicamente revelada al pueblo de Dios en los Diez Mandamientos.
2. Ley civil: En contraste con la manera en que el término "ley civil" es utilizado en la jurisprudencia estadounidense (refiriéndose a relaciones privadas entre miembros de una comunidad, más que a asuntos criminales), este documento utiliza el término en un sentido teológico que incluye todas las leyes de la sociedad (o sea: civil, criminal, etc.). En este sentido teológico tal ley civil, que es formulada a través del uso de la razón, es establecida e implementada por el gobierno temporal (las autoridades civiles), por lo cual es falible.

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No obstante, y dado que la ley civil trae y mantiene un cierto orden de acuerdo con la voluntad y diseño de Dios, debe ser reconocida y obedecida como un don de Dios, a menos que sea directamente contraria a su voluntad, según está expresada en la Sagrada Escritura.

3. Prójimo: Traducción del hebreo *rea* (רֵעַ) y del griego *plesion* (πλησιον). En el Antiguo Testamento el término se refiere, en su acepción más literal, a un miembro de la casa de Israel. Por lo tanto, las obligaciones morales bajo la ley de Dios comienzan con aquéllos que viven dentro de la relación del pacto con Dios y entre ellos (por ejemplo: Lv. 19:18), pero tal "amor por el prójimo" se extiende también hasta el extranjero en su medio (cf. Lv. 19:33-34). Jesús habla del "prójimo" de una forma que trasciende las relaciones que incluyen sólo al pueblo de Israel—los que compartían una misma religión—para incluir a toda clase de personas que necesitan nuestra ayuda (Mt. 22:39). Sin lugar a dudas, deja claro que el amar a nuestro prójimo incluye amar a nuestros enemigos (Mt. 5:43-48)—diciendo cómo un judío fue ayudado por un improbable buen samaritano (Lc. 10:25-37). En su explicación del quinto mandamiento en *El Catecismo Mayor*, Martín Lutero habla de los prójimos en sentido amplio como "quienes están en necesidad y peligro físico y de vida."
4. Inmigrante: Una de las muchas posibles traducciones de la palabra hebrea *ger* (גֵר), que también puede traducirse como residente temporal, peregrino o extranjero. En contraste con el uso técnico del término (ver "Inmigrantes" más arriba), el presente estudio utiliza el término en forma más amplia para referirse a quienes no son ciudadanos estadounidenses pero viven, estudian y/o trabajan en los Estados Unidos legalmente o sin documentación apropiada (ver "Inmigrantes indocumentados" más arriba).
5. Dos reinos (dos reinos, dos gobiernos): la doble obra, reinado o gobierno de Dios en el mundo para lograr la redención de los pecadores a través del perdón de los pecados (reino de la derecha), y establecer paz y justicia en la sociedad civil a través del uso de la ley para castigar el mal y recompensar el bien (reino de la izquierda).
6. Vocación: el llamado que Dios hace a cada cristiano a cumplir su ley o mandamientos a través del servicio concreto a cierto prójimo en el ejercicio de un oficio o estado particular en la vida. Los oficios o estados incluyen padre y madre, hijo o hija, cónyuge, maestro, estudiante, granjero, trabajador, gobernador, policía, agente de frontera, abogado de inmigración, trabajador social, ciudadano, anciano de la iglesia, diaconisa, y pastor.

Response to *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*¹A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
April 2012

Introduction

The 2010 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) adopted Resolution 3-05 directing “That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, in consultation with the faculties of our seminaries, develop a thorough, biblical, and confessional analysis of and response to *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* with particular attention to the concept of ‘bound conscience.’” (2010 Convention Proceedings, 117). This document is offered as the response called for by the convention’s resolution. Given the fact that *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (hereafter HSGT) was developed as the theological rationale for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to change its practice to allow for the liturgical blessing of same gender couples and the ordination of practicing homosexuals, the necessity of a careful and critical response was recognized by the LCMS. The implications of the ELCA’s actions for its own internal life, its ecumenical partners throughout Christianity, and its connections with the LCMS in recognized social ministry organizations and military chaplaincies are immense and far reaching. It is hoped that this document will provide a basis for an evaluation of HSGT in keeping with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

1. Foundational and Methodological Considerations

Debates over sexuality, inherited from its predecessor bodies, have been present in the ELCA from its inception. Christian Batalden Scharen’s *Married in the Sight of God: Theology, Ethics and Church Debates Over Homosexuality* documents the broad contours of the debate even as the author takes a strong partisan stance in advocating for a revised theology of marriage, expanded to embrace same-gender unions.² HSGT itself is the product of a nearly decade-long process of study, deliberation, and debate. Clearly the ELCA was tilted toward change. Numerous ELCA teaching theologians were speaking and writing on behalf of changes that would be adopted in 2009 on the basis of HSGT. Paul Jersild, a professor of ethics at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, advanced the case against an “excessively physicalist” approach to homosexuality, suggesting instead attention to the more personal dimensions of a committed relationship.³ Jersild’s book, *Spirit Ethics: Scripture and the Moral Life*, provides a more detailed account of the approach to ethics which is realized in HSGT. In his 2004 book, *Many Members, Yet One Body*, Craig Nesson of Wartburg Theological Seminary argued that committed, same-gender relationships do not impact core doctrines and

¹ This “social teaching statement” of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) was adopted by a two-thirds vote (676-338) by the eleventh biennial Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA on August 19, 2009 at Minneapolis, Minnesota. The statement can be found online at <http://www.elca.org/-/media/Files/What%20We%20Believe/Social%20Issues/sexuality/Human%20Sexuality%20social%20Statement.pdf>.

² Christian Batalden Scharen, *Married in the Sight of God: Theology, Ethics and Church Debates Over Homosexuality* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000).

³ Paul Jersild, *Spirit Ethics: Scripture and the Moral Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 139.

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should not impair church unity and mission.⁴ Even though it was advertised as representing both sides of the debate, *Faithful Conversations: Christian Perspectives on Homosexuality*, edited by James M. Childs, Jr., included only one essay that is reflective of the classical Lutheran position on homosexuality.⁵

The brief introduction in HSGT begins with Jesus’ great “love commandment” in Matthew 22:36-40, understood by the document as his “invitation to love God and our neighbor” (HSGT, 1). It is the aim of HSGT to set the discussion of sexuality within the context of this twofold command to love. From the standpoint of theological methodology, this starting point is immediately problematic on a number of levels. A definition of love is perhaps assumed but not given, thus leaving the way open for what might be called “disembodied love,” love disconnected from the reality of created, bodily existence and without historical form. Starting with the command to love God and the neighbor also avoids the Holy Scriptures own understanding of sexuality as God’s gift instituted in the creation of our first parents and distorted by their fall into sin.

HSGT claims to offer a “distinctively Lutheran approach” (HSGT, 1) grounded in a Christological reading of Holy Scriptures and centered in justification by grace through faith, with its corollary of vocation in the world for the neighbor’s sake. The application of this hermeneutic in HSGT is uneven at best, however, often tending toward a reduction of ethical considerations to variable options that are open to the Christian who lives “by faith alone.” The language of Lutheranism has been disconnected from its historical origin in Scripture, Luther, and the Lutheran Confessions. It has been rendered symbolic,⁶ so that it can be employed to support conclusions previously drawn to advocate a particular agenda.

Several critical issues emerge that will become foundational for the remainder of HSGT. The document is marked by an eschatological enthusiasm⁷ when it asserts

As Lutherans, understanding that God’s promised future is the transformation of the whole creation, we believe that the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is engaged

⁴ Craig Nesson, *Many Members Yet One Body: Committed Same-Gender Relationships and the Mission of the Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004).

⁵ *Faithful Conversations: Christian Perspectives on Homosexuality*, edited by James M. Childs, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003). Only the chapter by James Arne Nestingen, “The Lutheran Reformation and Homosexual Practice” defends the traditional reading of the biblical evidence.

⁶ James Nestingen, in private correspondence, has described HSGT’s approach to creeds and the Lutheran Confessions as merely “symbolic.” This contrasts with the historic description of such works as “symbols,” a term which indicated their full and continuing authority as standards for doctrine and practice.

⁷ As it emerged in the Reformation, “enthusiasm”—literally “God-within-ism”—disjoined God’s Spirit from God’s Word incarnate in Christ and revealed in Holy Scripture. When this separation occurs, the future sets aside the past, leaving it without value; the inspiration claimed by the individual or community devalues the inspiration of the Word; the resurrection annuls the cross; the historical realities of life and death dissolve into mere concepts to be arranged at will by theologians, bishops, or church assemblies. “Eschatological enthusiasm” here refers to the tendency to make assertions about life in this present, fallen world as though the arrival of the new age of God’s kingdom invalidates the created structures which govern created life and curb sin. While it is true that eschatology (the doctrine of the last things) has a “now and not yet” character, this teaching does not mean that God’s creation is restructured. Rather the Triune God has promised to restore His fallen creation to His original purpose. The eschatological emphasis in HSGT is described here as “enthusiasm” in the theological sense of that word, namely seeking the will of God in one’s own imagination rather than His revealed will, in one’s internal speculation rather than in God’s external Word.

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deeply and relationally in the continuing creation of the world. We anticipate and live out the values of this promised future concretely in the present. It is therefore in the midst of daily life in the world that we are given the vocational task of serving the neighbor. (HSGT, 2.)

The language of this paragraph seems to echo ELCA theologian Ted Peters’ description of Christian ethics as a “proleptic ethic,” which he describes as the evangelical emancipation of human beings from legalistic oppression so that they may engage in the expression of co-creative love. This love is said to produce new forms of human community marked by reconciliation.⁸

While the promise of a new heaven and new earth (see Isaiah 11:1-16, Isaiah 65: 17-25; II Peter 3:13) has always been embraced in Christian hope and confession, it would be wrong to suppose that the “transformation of the whole creation” includes the establishment of a new ethic that is in conflict with God’s original creation instituted by His Word. The language of relationship, so prominent in HSGT, becomes abstract and overrides categories of nature and history.⁹ The future promised in Scripture, however, is not the sort of transformation that would render God’s original creation obsolete, displacing His good design of humanity as male and female. It is instead a restoration of His human creatures to live before Him in righteousness and holiness forever.

HSGT is dependent on the vocabulary of “trust.” There is a curious turn away from the language of fidelity, so prominent in classical Lutheran treatments of marriage, to the vocabulary of trust. So the document claims “Central to our vocation, in relation to human sexuality, is the building and protection of trust in relationships” (HSGT, 2). These relationships remain undefined in terms of the gender or the number of the participants. This nebulous language is unsuited for a concrete discussion of sexual ethics.

Attempting to orient the discussion of the ethics of sexuality by the centrality of justification by grace through faith, three of the Reformation *solae* are invoked: *solus Christus*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*. It is noteworthy that *sola scriptura* is not mentioned. In fact, the document avoids any exegetical engagement with specific biblical texts that speak to sexual behavior. Instead the document speaks vaguely of the Scriptures as “the living Word” (HSGT, 2) asserting that “Scripture is to be interpreted through the lens of Christ’s death and resurrection for the salvation of all” (HSGT, 2) but without giving any indication as to how this hermeneutic might actually function in regard to a Christian ethic of sexuality.

⁸ This language has become popular in the ELCA. See Ted Peters, *God—The World’s Future: Systematic Theology for a Postmodern Era* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 357-377. “Having been freed from the tyranny of the law and having received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Christians can develop an ethic that seeks to give co-creative expression to the power of love” (357). On the language of human participation in the continuing creation, i.e. human beings as co-creators, see Philip Hefner, *The Human Factor: Evolution, Culture, and Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). Also see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, translated by Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 176-190. Moltmann’s thought seems to inform this conceptualization.

⁹ Here see Christian Batalden Scharen, “Gay Christians: Symbols of God’s New Creation,” *The Lutheran* (March 2003), 22-23. Scharen writes “Could God be speaking a new word to the church, in effect saying that gay Christians, through their efforts to live in faithful covenant partnerships, witness to God’s covenantal purposes for sexuality and marriage? In so doing, God would be claiming them as symbols among us of the new creation” (23).

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According to HSGT, Scripture alone is not sufficient for adjudicating ethical questions which emerge in regard to sexuality. It is asserted that “we look to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions,” but also “to the social and physical sciences, and to human reason, mercy, and compassion” (HSGT, 14) in seeking to determine a moral path. The document does not at all reflect the strong assertion of the Formula of Concord that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone are “the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged.”¹⁰ Set alongside other authorities and put in dialogue with other disciplines, the Holy Scripture is no longer seen as normative for a sexual ethic. Failing to distinguish between the Scriptures’ magisterial authority for all matters of faith and life in the church, the domains of psychological and social sciences are assumed by HSGT to function in something other than a ministerial manner. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that sources other than Holy Scripture are normative for the ethic promoted by HSGT.¹¹ While HSGT often calls for the church to be attentive to contemporary scientific studies that might impact Christian moral deliberation, it fails to provide any critical hermeneutic for the analysis of the data yielded from these studies.¹²

The observation of Gerhard Forde is to the point:

The attempt to marshal so-called scientific evidence to prove that homosexuality is an orientation and not a choice and to call Paul’s indictment into question on this score, is, it seems to me, not a proper or careful way to argue. In the first place, the evidence is still eminently doubtful. There is no agreement in the scientific community, and even if there were, most true scientists would be more modest. But in the second place it hardly seems appropriate for those who seek to honor the normative character of Scripture to call it into question on such a slim basis.¹³

Justification by grace through faith alone is essential for a Lutheran ethic, but it can never be used as a principle that negates ethical discernment. The doctrine is misused when it is taken as a justification for sin rather than the justification of the sinner. Lacking Luther’s clarity that God’s forensic work of justification entails death to the old man and the bringing forth of the new man

¹⁰ Formula of Concord, Epitome 1, 1 in *The Book of Concord*, edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert (hereafter KW followed by page number) (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 486.

¹¹ Here see Craig Nesson, “Three Theses on the Theological Discussion of Homosexuality in the Global Lutheran Community” *Currents in Theology and Mission* (June 2010): 191-197. Writing in an attempt to address the negative reaction from Lutheran World Federation churches in the global south to the move of the ELCA to endorse the blessing of same-gender couples and the ordination of practicing homosexuals, Nesson attempts to minimize the controversy by arguing that “[t]he discussion of homosexuality is about matters of biblical interpretation, not biblical authority” (193) and as long as there is agreement “in the right preaching of the gospel” (194) matters of sexuality are penultimate. He further argues that because “[m]arriage is a ‘worldly thing’ whose structure is conditioned by history, culture, and context and whose value is to be measured by how it contributes to the common good” (196) its configuration is open to readjustment and need not be the same from place to place.

¹² Here see Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yathouse, *The Use, Misuse, and Abuse of Science in the Ecclesiastical Homosexuality Debates* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000); Also see Stanton L. Jones, “Same Sex Science” *First Things* (February 2012), 27-33.

¹³ Gerhard Forde, “Human Sexuality and Romans, Chapter One” in *The Preached Word: Proclamation in Word and Sacrament*, edited by Mark C. Mattes and Steven D. Paulson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 213. Also note the comment of Oliver O’Donovan that “Light and lazy talk about ‘development’ and ‘new insights’ may often do no more than announce a change of fashion.” See “Homosexuality in the Church: Can There be a Fruitful Theological Debate?” in *The Way Forward: Christian Voices on Homosexuality and the Church*, edited by Timothy Bradshaw (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2003), 23.

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who walks before God in righteousness and holiness, HSGT diminishes the dynamic of Lutheran teaching, providing a way for a sexual ethic that is elastic and ultimately undefined. Faith in Christ becomes permission for the Christian to determine his or her course of action when it comes to a sexual ethic within the nebulous bounds of self-designated love for the neighbor.

2. The Category of “Paradox” in Relation to Christian Freedom

Drawing on Luther’s 1520 treatise, *The Freedom of the Christian*, HSGT seeks to develop a paradoxical understanding of sexuality as marked both by God’s grace and human sinfulness: “Lutheran theology prepares us precisely to hold in creative tension the paradoxes and complexities of the human situation. This is also the case with regard to human sexuality. God has created human beings as part of the whole creation and with the intention that we live actively in the world (Romans 12-13; Ephesians 5-6)” (HSGT, 3).

The reading of *The Freedom of the Christian* in HSGT is selective at best and at worst deceptive. While HSGT uses fragmented slogans from Luther’s treatise, it fails to grasp the Reformer’s argument and instead makes a misapplication of the argument in matters of sexual ethics. Isolating Luther’s well-known paradox that a Christian is a perfectly free lord of all while at the same time a perfectly dutiful servant of all from the full scope of the Reformer’s argument, HSGT fails to take into account his distinction of the “inner person” from the “outer person.” The inner person or the new man is the spiritual nature of the believer. The outer person or the old man is his sinful, fleshly nature. Luther bases this distinction on 2 Corinthians 4:16 and Galatians 5:17. The soul’s freedom is not an external liberty (lack of political captivity, bodily illness, poverty and the like) but an endowment of the Gospel. This is the “one thing and one thing alone that leads to Christian life, righteousness, and freedom.”¹⁴

The freedom of the Gospel for Luther is not a bodily freedom from the demands of the law which remain in creation. The Christian freed from the condemnation of the law in conscience is not evacuated from creation but is enlivened to serve the neighbor within the structures which God has established and instituted within the world. Works are not necessary for salvation but they are necessary for the service of the neighbor. Hence Luther returns to the controlling paradox of the tract: “Insofar as a Christian is free, no works are necessary. Insofar as a Christian is a servant, all kinds of works are done.”¹⁵

The inner person is free, but because we also live in this world the outer person must remain under discipline so that the body is conformed to the Spirit and does not undermine the faith of the inner person. These bodily disciplines do not limit faith’s freedom but in fact serve to guard that freedom so that the Christian does not become a slave to sin and thus forfeit the freedom in Christ. Here Luther cites Romans 7:22-23, 1 Corinthians 9:27, and Galatians 5:24.

It is in the body that the Christian submits to serve the neighbor in love:

We must also understand that these works serve the purpose of disciplining the body and purifying it of all evil desires. The focus should be on these desires and the best means of

¹⁴ Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, translated with an introduction by Mark Tranvik (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 52.
¹⁵ Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, 71.

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purging them. Since by faith the soul is made pure and enabled to love God, it wants all things—the body in particular—to join in loving and praising God. Thus we cannot be idle. The needs of the body compel us to do many good works in order to bring it under control. Nevertheless, it must always be kept in mind that these works do not justify a person before God. Rather, by yielding wholly to God, one does these works out of a spirit of spontaneous love, seeking nothing other than to serve God and yield to him in all earthly labors.¹⁶

Luther says we should consider the works of the Christian as we would those of Adam in paradise before the fall into sin. Adam’s work was instituted by God (Genesis 2:15) and was done to please God, not to obtain righteousness. HSGT is silent on these aspects of *The Freedom of a Christian*. Slogans are extracted from Luther’s treatise to promote an emancipation from the very orders God has set in place to protect and preserve human life.

3. The Doctrine of Creation

Luther’s confession of the First Article embraces the personal (“has made me”), the cosmic/universal (“and all creatures”), the communal (“He also gives me...house and home, wife and children, land, animals and all that I have”), the providential (“He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil”), and the doxological (“For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him”).¹⁷ By way of contrast, HSGT describes creation with vague and imprecise language repeatedly resorting to the rhetoric of relationship.¹⁸ Thus we are told: “Both narratives of God’s creative activity in the book of Genesis (Genesis 1 and 2) reveal God’s goodness and desire for a close relationship with human beings as integral to the ongoing handiwork of creation” (HSGT, 4). Further the document makes the claim: “As a mark of personal confidence, the Creator even entrusts to human beings the task of naming and tending the inhabitants of the earth God so clearly loves. The tender love and goodness of God’s creative activity includes sexuality and gendered bodies (Genesis 2:23-25)” (HSGT, 5). The theological significance of sexuality and gendered bodies is left undefined, without connection to the Creator’s intention in creating humanity as male and female.¹⁹

The use of relational terminology is imprecise and deceptive in HSGT. Surely all human beings are set in a relationship with their Creator by virtue of their being, in fact, creatures made by God, preserved by Him, and accountable to Him. The human being is in a relationship with God; this relationship is never a matter of neutrality since it is either of wrath or of grace.²⁰ Even more problematic is the assertion that God “trusts” human beings and that human beings “violate

¹⁶ Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, 73.

¹⁷ *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991 [2005]), 15-16.

¹⁸ Relationship in HSGT is considered one-sidedly, almost exclusively on the horizontal level—human to human. Certainly the importance of human relationships is never to be denied or minimized, least of all by confessional Lutheran theology. However, HSGT’s failure to consider the importance of the vertical relationship we human creatures have with our Creator leaves human relationships morally vacuous. Only a right relationship with God enables a full and godly understanding of human relationships.

¹⁹ For a scriptural discussion of the theological significance of humanity created as male and female, see *The Creator’s Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationship* (Saint Louis: Commission Theology and Church Relations, 2009), 7-15.

²⁰ “Luther does not know of a neutral sphere ‘beyond’ wrath and grace,” says Oswald Bayer, “Creation as History” in *The Gift of Grace: The Future of Lutheran Theology*, edited by Niels Henrik Gregersen et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 258.

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God’s trust” (HSGT, 5). These expressions are without biblical support and actually convey a cozy and natural partnership between God and humanity rather than the Scriptural distinction between Creator and creature. Sin is then seen in HSGT as a resistance of identity and not a fundamental mistrust of the Creator. There is no hint in HSGT that human beings “are born with sin, that is, without fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence”²¹ to use the language of Article II of the Augsburg Confession.

The treatment of creation in HSGT is fragmentary and lacking in coherence. The law is affirmed as ordering and preserving the world and exposing human sin. Yet HSGT never really demonstrates how the law accomplishes these tasks. There is nothing in HSGT that would suggest anything resembling the orders of creation²² as creational structures that remain intact even though they might not be recognized by those whose perception is blinded by sin. Note 11 in HSGT explains the avoidance of the vocabulary of “orders of creation” as this form is “linked to a static notion of creation” and instead suggests the language of social structures as this term “is less technical and more suggestive of God’s ongoing creative activity to shape and reshape social structures for human protection and good” (HSGT, 39-40). Yet social structures are not synonymous with orders of creation, since social structures are sociologically rather than theologically defined.

HSGT invokes a vision of existence evoked by the eschatological expectation of a transformed creation which renders relative the place of God’s law in governing the behavior of mankind. The new creature now transcends the structures and boundaries given in creation to participate in a world that is made flexible for a variety of expressions determined by the self. There is, in fact, something Gnostic-like here in the suggestion that human beings might be liberated from physiological boundaries imposed by bodies which are either male or female.²³

4. Sexuality and Vocation

The section, “Our vocation to serve the neighbor” (HSGT, 8) begins with the recognition that “we do not live in private worlds” but quickly slips into a discussion of individualistic actions. It speaks of “complex and varied situations people have relative to sexuality: being in relationships, being single, being a friend, living in a young or aging body, being male or female, being young or old, or having different sexual orientations and gender identities” (HSGT, 9).²⁴ Privacy has become a key component in current moral discourse as it is widely assumed that within the

²¹ Augsburg Confession II: 1, KW 38-39.

²² For a discussion of how a rejection of the orders of creation is problematic not only for ethics but also for soteriology, see Armin Wenz, “Natural Law and the Orders of Creation” in *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*, edited by Robert Baker (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 79-95. On the necessity of the orders of creation for the biblical understanding of marriage, see Nathan Yoder, “The Order of Marriage and the Lord of the Order,” *Lutheran Forum* (Summer 2009): 42-45.

²³ Here see Philip J. Lee, *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Gnosticism is an ancient philosophical system that held to the existence of a secret knowledge (*gnosis*) that would provide the initiated person access to reality apart from bodily existence. Lee argues that the so-called Gay Rights movement is a modern form of Gnosticism in that it seeks to define sexuality apart from something as mundane as biology. Lee concludes “In short, there are important forces within liberal American Protestantism that would like to escape the concerns of the physical body, of sexuality. Ironically, this movement reaches its culmination in the denial of the importance of the family, procreation and, therefore, of human life itself” (139).

²⁴ Note the inherently Gnostic formulation of “living in” a body, as if there is another way of living that is outside or apart from a body. Cf. footnote 23 above.

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seclusion of consensual arrangements, individuals may act without restraint if these activities do not interfere with others in their own self-enclosed lives. HSGT misses the opportunity to critique this individualism that is so evident in discussions of sexuality.

Morally, virtually all that the document can affirm is that “In whatever the situation, all people are called to build trust in relationships and in the community” (HSGT, 9). This invites a situational ethic that fails to address life lived in the body before both God and the neighbor. Without examination or critique the psychological/political language of “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” is adopted, rendering theological evaluation inappropriate.²⁵

While earlier HSGT made the claim to ground its discussion of ethics in the Lutheran teaching of justification by grace through faith, now the document slips into a way of speaking that would seem to disregard the radical proclamation that God justifies the ungodly. Instead this section of HSGT speaks of “flawed and imperfect human beings” who experience brokenness, loneliness, and loss yet who know “that our efforts are still infused with God’s love and blessing for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world” (HSGT, 9). This sentimental language is hardly adequate for the Holy Scriptures’ proclamation of human sin and God’s grace in Christ Jesus. Tolerance is a poor substitute for absolution. The restoration of trust is not the same thing as the redemption of our bodies and rescue from God’s judgment.

In keeping with the document’s overall orientation toward a particular form of realized eschatology, HSGT sets God’s rule in the present world in contrast with His rule in the coming kingdom by citing Paul’s description of “the groaning of creation” in Romans 8: 22-23. Yet the Apostle’s words in Romans 8 make little sense if they are divorced from the first chapter of his epistle. In Romans 1 Paul writes of God’s wrath being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness precisely in the arena of creation, where the truth of God is exchanged for a lie and human beings worship the creature rather than the Creator. It is in this exchange of the truth for the lie that another exchange is executed. Paul writes: “For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error” (Romans 1: 26-27).²⁶ Richard Hays comments:

Paul singles out homosexual intercourse for special attention because he regards it as providing a particularly graphic image of the way in which human fallenness distorts God’s created order. God the Creator made man and woman for each other, to cleave together, to be fruitful and multiply. When human beings “exchange” these created roles

²⁵ For a critique of this language by a Lutheran pastor who is also a research psychologist, see Merton P. Strommen, *The Church & Homosexuality: A Middle Ground* (Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers, 2001), 57-76.

²⁶ For a very thorough treatment of the use of this pericope in the current debate on homosexuality, see Armin Wenz, *The Contemporary Debate on Homosexual Clergy: A Theological Discussion in the Formerly Lutheran State Churches in Germany*, trans. Holger Sonntag (Saint Louis: LCMS World Relief and Human Care, 2006), 3-34. Also see Gerhard Forde, “The Normative Character of Scripture for Matters of Faith and Life in Light of Romans 1:16-32” *Word & World* (Summer 1994): 305-314; Jonathan F. Grothe, *The Justification of the Ungodly: An Interpretation of Romans*, Volume 1 (Privately published in Canada, 2006), 84-101; and John T. Pless, “Using and Misusing Luther on Homosexuality” *Lutheran Forum* (Winter 2004): 24-30.

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for homosexual intercourse, they *embody* the spiritual condition of those who have "exchanged the truth about God for a lie."²⁷

Romans 8:22-23 disconnected from Romans 1:18-32 is used as something of a proof text for making a sexual ethic that is elastic and flexible. HSGT states: "Therefore, we believe that the way we order our lives in matters of human sexuality is important to faithful living, but not central to determining our salvation. We are to be realistic and merciful with respect to our physical and emotional realities, not striving for angelic perfection as if our salvation were at stake" (HSGT, 9). With these lines, HSGT is setting the stage for making the argument that New Testament scholar Robert Gagnon has identified as "the non-essential issue argument": since matters of sexuality do not constitute the major theme of Scripture, Christians may freely adopt differing ethical evaluations of homosexual activity.²⁸

In buttressing this argument, HSGT wrongly enlists Luther's teaching on the two kingdoms (or the two realms). The introduction of this teaching is misplaced at this juncture as it is construed in such a way to make space for a more permissive sexual ethic. Oswald Bayer suggests that Luther's treatment of the three estates²⁹ is actually a more accurate starting point than the two kingdoms for understanding Luther's ethic.³⁰ This is so, Bayer argues, because the three estate framework is Luther's hermeneutic of primeval history. It demonstrates that God's Word has instituted estates or places in life that are fundamental and universal for human existence. This instituting word of the Creator establishes marriage as a lifelong, monogamous union between

²⁷ Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), 388. Also see Douglas Moo, *Romans 1-8* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 111 and Thomas Oden, "The Classic Christian Exegesis on Romans 1:22-28" in *Staying the Course: Supporting the Church's Position on Homosexuality*, edited by Maxie D. Dunnam and H. Newton Maloney (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 85-96.

²⁸ Robert Gagnon, "The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Theology, Analogies, and Genes" *Theology Matters* (November/December 2001), 4. Also see Gagnon's *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001) as this book provides a comprehensive treatment of relevant biblical texts which are largely ignored in HSGT. Also see "Exkursus: Homosexuality" in Gregory J. Lockwood, *Concordia Commentary: I Corinthians* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 204-209.

²⁹ The three estates in Luther are the three "institutions established by God," namely, the church, marriage (the household), and civil government (see *Luther's Works*, Vol. 37: Confession Concerning Christ's Supper [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961], 364. Hereafter, references to the American Edition of Luther's Works, published by Fortress Press and Concordia Publishing House [various dates], are abbreviated as AE, followed by volume number: page number[s] [e.g., AE 37:364]). In *The Large Catechism*, Luther speaks of the different "fathers" to whom honor is commanded (fathers of blood or households, fathers of a nation, and spiritual fathers (First Part [Ten Commandments]:158, KW, 408). The two realms or kingdoms doctrine is Luther's shorthand for God's two-fold rule of both the church and the world. The church is his spiritual kingdom, and the world is the secular or civil kingdom. For example, the *Augsburg Confession* says, "Christ's kingdom is spiritual, that is, it is the heart's knowledge of God, fear of God, faith in God, and the beginning of eternal righteousness and eternal life. At the same time, it permits us to make outward use of legitimate political ordinances of whatever nation in which we live, just as it permits us to make use of medicine or architecture or food, drink, and air" (162, KW 231). The teaching of the three estates might best be understood as presupposed by Luther's exposition of the two kingdoms, for it is the one God who is active in instituting and upholding life in both the worldly and spiritual realm. See also Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, translated by Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 120-153.

³⁰ Oswald Bayer, "Nature and Institution: Luther's Doctrine of the Three Estates" in *Freedom in Response-Lutheran Ethics: Sources and Controversies* trans. Jeffrey Cayer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 94. Bayer adds that "The two kingdoms doctrine and the doctrine of the three estates should not be opposed" (95).

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man and woman which is not open to any cultural redefinition that violates this creation given.³¹

Yet at this juncture in HSGT, the teaching of the two kingdoms is invoked to give "reason, imagination, the social and physical sciences, cultural understandings, and the creative arts" as items that might aid in the church's deliberations on questions of sexual morality (HSGT, 10). Here HSGT is suggesting that, perhaps, contemporary scientific research might alter traditional readings of Scripture on homosexuality. From the standpoint of theological ethics, however, it is irrelevant whether homosexuality is a result of a genetic order, environment, or personal choice, since Christians recognize that all of creation after the fall is subject to bondage, disorder, and death. Robert Jensen wisely observes:

We need not here resolve the question of whether there are such things as 'sensual orientations' and if so how they are acquired. What must anyway be clear is that 'homosexuality,' if it exists and whatever it is, cannot be attributed to creation; those who practice forms of homoerotic sensuality and attribute this to 'homosexuality' cannot refer to the characteristic as 'the way God created me,' if 'create' has anything like its biblical sense. No more in this context than in any other do we discover God's creative intent by examining the empirical situation; ...I may indeed have to *blame* God for the empirically present in me that contradicts his known intent, but this is an occasion for unbelief, not a believer's justification of the evil.³²

One may not appeal to "God made me this way" as a justification for sexual sin any more than he or she could invoke this for any other sinful inclination or behavior.

5. The Language of Trust and Relationship

The definitions of sexuality given in HSGT are largely shaped by the vocabulary of contemporary social and psychological sciences with eclectic references to God. Throughout HSGT, the language of "trust" predominates (as we have already noted). This is especially the case in Section III "Trust and Human Sexuality" (HSGT, 10-15). After asserting that "Sexuality especially involves the powers or capacities to form deep and lasting bonds, to give and receive pleasure, and to conceive and bear children" (HSGT, 10), the document proceeds to assert that "Sexuality consists of a rich and diverse combination of relational, emotional, and physical interactions and possibilities" (HSGT, 11). The potency of this combination is recognized as a gift that is open to abuse through unrestrained desires for self-gratification, coercion, and irresponsibility with damaging consequences. Trust is seen as the necessary ingredient to safeguard the appropriate expression of sexuality within the human community.

³¹ Note Luther in "On Marriage Matters" (1530): "Now we have taught so often that we should do nothing unless we have the express approval of God's word, God himself has nothing to do with us, nor we with him, except through his word, which is the only means by which we recognize his will, and according to which we have to govern our actions. Whoever has a god but not his word has no god, for the true God has included our life, being, estate, office, speech, action or inaction, suffering, and everything in his word and shows us by example that we must not and shall not seek or know anything apart from his word, even of God himself, for apart from his word he does not wish to be understood, sought, or found through our invention or imagining" (AE 46:276).

³² Robert W. Jensen, *Systematic Theology*, Volume II: The Works of God (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 93.

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The discussion of social trust references the place of conscience: "Social trust is grounded in the practice of mutual respect for the dignity of all people and their consciences. Strong communities ensure social trust when they provide social support for disagreement and dissent, and nurture the values of mutual respect and regard for the opinions of others" (HSGT, 13). With these words HSGT puts in place a significant plank in the platform that it will seek to build for the application of the "bound conscience" as a means of establishing a churchly community capable of living together with diverse opinions on sexual morality in general and homosexuality specifically (see section 7 below).

The ever strong and present focus on qualitative characteristics of human relationships and the ascendancy of trust (and by default the capacity for human trustworthiness), become key elements in a revised sexual ethic. Here the warning of Gilbert Meilaender is particularly relevant: "In a world in which the languages of love and consent have gradually come to trump all other moral language, we do well to remind ourselves at the outset that marriage, the first of all institutions, is not simply about love in general. It is about the creation of man and woman as different yet made to be true to each other; it is about being fruitful, begetting and rearing children. This pours content and structure into our understanding of sexual love, and it takes seriously the body's character within nature and history."³³

With this shift away from an ethic marked by attentiveness to the character of the body in nature and history to the relational language of social trust, the church's task is changed. This is a change that is noted and celebrated in HSGT:

As this church and its members engage the changes and challenges of contemporary society related to human sexuality, careful thought must be given to which changes enhance and which erode social trust. The development of social trust must be a central concern for Christians who seek the good of the neighbor in pursuit of justice and the common good. This church must be a leader in refocusing attention on practices and attitudes that build social trust. Likewise, it must contribute to the development of responsible economic and social policies and practices that shape the expression of sexuality within social life (HSGT, 13).

Here the church appears to be envisioned as an institution for social change and justice, taking on the responsibilities that properly belong to the realm of God's left hand.³⁴

The rhetoric of justice in relation to sexuality as noted in HSGT is a dominant theme. With this accent on justice, there is a distancing from the body as the locale of human life. The distinctiveness of the body as male or female and the requirements evoked by this reality given in creation are diminished or ignored by giving primary place to discourse that is governed by

³³ Gilbert Meilaender, "The First of Institutions" *Pro Ecclesia* (Fall 1997): 446. Also see Meilaender's "Honoring the Bios in Lutheran Bioethics" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* (Summer 2004): 118-124. Bernd Wannewetsch detects a kind of doxism that would separate "body" and "spirit" in contemporary efforts to legitimize homosexuality. See Bernd Wannewetsch, "Old Doxism—New Moralism? Questioning a New Direction in the Homosexuality Debate" *Modern Theology* (July 2000): 353-364. See also the CTCR's *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective* (Saint Louis: Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 1981), especially 6-9 and 32-36.

³⁴ For a more careful and thorough discussion of the church's role in the left-hand kingdom, see *Rendur Unto Caesar...and Unto God: A Lutheran View of Church and State* (Saint Louis: Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 1995), online at <http://www.lcms.org/Document/fdoc?src=lcsm&id=360>.

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contemporary canons of egalitarianism. The words of Colin Gunton are a bracing corrective to this line of ethical reasoning: "Modern Christianity is so strongly inclined to lecture the world on the merits of justice, that we are in danger of neglecting the weightier matters of the law: our dealings with our bodies and our immediate neighbours."³⁵

Arguing that "sexual relationships may be among our most profoundly intimate, crucial, and self-giving expressions of trust" (HSGT, 13), the document advances its case that the church should work toward the creation of "trustworthy relationships and social structures" that will promote human dignity, protect from physical, emotional and spiritual harm, demonstrate compassion, ensure accountability, provide for the welfare of the individual as well as the common good of society, and value the protection afforded through the making of promises and contractual agreements (see HSGT, 14). Through the advancement of these social virtues, it is said that the neighbor is served. The claim is made that, "We look to the Scriptures, to the Lutheran Confessions, to the social and physical sciences, and to human reason, mercy, and compassion" in determining what "trust" looks like "in relation to human sexuality" (HSGT, 14).³⁶ In formulating the above-mentioned list, the document makes no attempt to provide either scriptural or confessional references to support its rather expansive claims.

Instead, "trusting relationships" are described as loving, life-giving, self-giving, nurturing, truthful, faithful in word and deed (including sexual fidelity), committed/loyal, supportive, hospitable, and a blessing to the larger community (HSGT, 14-15). These "trusting relationships" appear to be inclusive of marriage but far broader than marriage in HSGT. But "trusting relationships" lack the physicality of marriage which is a "one flesh" union of man and woman. Oswald Bayer's words serve as a corrective to this lacuna in HSGT: "The importance of being one flesh cannot be stressed too greatly. Marriage is not a kind of harnessing together of two individuals; it is a third, new entity, that is, *one* flesh, one distinct and substantial whole. In this conjoint being as 'one flesh' lies the 'great mystery' of Eph. 5:32."³⁷ The adjectival descriptions of marriage catalogued in HSGT may be applied to variety of human relationships; marriage is distinguished, however, in that it is the "one flesh" union established by God in creation (Genesis 1-2). Paul's treatment of marriage in Ephesians 5 as an icon of the union of Christ with His bride, the church, is anchored in creation. Just as Christ (the Bridegroom) is not interchangeable with His church (the Bride) so male and female are not interchangeable.³⁸

Intimacy, safety, and trust are underscored in HSGT as best protected within the context of family understood in the sense of a household (HSGT, 21). Given the fundamental significance of family in human community, "Lutherans take great care to support whatever creates and sustains strong families as a foundation and source of trust" (HSGT, 21). Here HSGT uses

³⁵ Colin Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 226.

³⁶ By way of contrast note Bayer's description of Luther's approach: "Luther did not give in to the temptation to search for clarity other than the reliable word of promise. Therefore, the world is not perspicuous to him, not through and through calculable and disposable; his theology is unyielding to any historical-philosophical speculation of unity. To the extent to which his theology contradicts such speculations – for instance, the illusion of a constant progress of world history – it is sober, realistic, and full of concrete experience of the world. Thus, the much invoked but frequently misunderstood 'worldliness' of Luther is something thoroughly theological. For with this worldliness the world is perceived as created by God's reliable word and preserved through constant threats. This perception is a forensic one – a perception of judgment and grace." (See "Creation as History," 259).

³⁷ Oswald Bayer, *Freedom in Response*, 160.

³⁸ Here see *The Creator's Tapestry*, 47-48. Also see John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (Boston: Pauline Books, 2006).

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relational language in such a way as to diminish or ignore the bond of biological connectivity. Once again, Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions are used as decorative symbols, bases to touch, while their dogmatic assertions are being set aside.

HSGT devotes sparse attention to divorce: “This church recognizes that in some situations the trust upon which marriage is built becomes so deeply damaged or is so deeply flawed that the marriage itself must come to a legal end” (HSGT, 17). Supportive pastoral care is suggested but without meaningful reference to sin, confession and absolution. Nor is there the recognition in HSGT that divorce—even when allowed on account of the hardness of the human heart (see Matthew 19:3-9)—is incompatible with the New Testament’s picture of marriage. Rather, “If marriage is the New Testament’s final symbol of eschatological redemption, then divorce cannot be consonant with God’s redemptive will.”³⁹ Evangelical pastoral care of divorced persons will be grounded in confession and absolution not in therapeutic affirmations.⁴⁰

While highlighting the relational dimensions of life within various configurations of “family,” HSGT gives only brief mention to the sexual bond between man and woman, the one flesh union that engenders new life. Rather the document asserts, “The critical issue with respect to the family is not whether it has a conventional form but how it performs indispensable social tasks. All families have the responsibility for the tasks of providing safety, shielding intimacy, and developing trustworthy relationships” (HSGT, 23). Regret is expressed for ways in which historical Christian teachings on sexuality (i.e. pregnancy outside of marriage, homosexuality) have made a negative impact on families. HSGT calls “for greater understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity” (HSGT, 24) within the church and continuing evolution of family law in the civil realm to enhance and protect intimacy, trust, and safety.

The relational theme is further developed in an extensive discussion on “sexuality and trust in relationships” (HSGT, 27-33). In language that in large part seems to be more reflective of a popular use of psychological and social sciences, the document discusses growth and development with maturity and responsibility in view as questions of appropriate sexual expression are addressed, including self understanding, gender and friendship, and cohabitation. Non-monomogamous, promiscuous, or casual relationships of any kind are opposed on the grounds that “such relationships undermine the dignity and integrity of individuals because physical intimacy is not accompanied by the growth of mutual self-knowledge” (HSGT, 31). This section is almost totally devoid of any theological reflection and framed instead with therapeutic categories.

A final section of HSGT treats “sexuality and social responsibility” (HSGT, 33-36). Noting that because individuals and families are set within larger social contexts, the church needs to address patterns of abuse and discrimination for people “with varied sexual orientation and gender identity” (HSGT, 33). Prostitution and pornography are rejected as detrimental. Efforts to halt discrimination toward those afflicted with sexually transmitted disease are encouraged, as is sex

³⁹ Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), 366. Also see Richard Hays, “Relations Natural and Unnatural: A Response to J. Boswell’s Exegesis of Romans 1” *Journal of Religious Ethics* (Spring 1986): 184-215.

⁴⁰ See *Divorce and Remarriage: An Exegetical Study* (Saint Louis: Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1987), 37-39. Also note Oswald Bayer: “The Church has to deal with divorces without justifying them; what it must do in particular is to speak about sin and forgiveness” (*Freedom in Response*, 166).

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education and the development of medical means of birth control (HSGT, 34-35). A strong warning is given against inappropriate sexual behavior by professional church workers as such activity is a violation of trust (HSGT, 35). Given the previous arguments advanced for a more generous approach to sexual ethics, it seems not a little incongruent that HSGT now adopts a rather assertive tone in admonishing church members on these issues.

6. The Place of Marriage

While the historic Christian teaching on marriage is acknowledged, the trajectory of the document moves in the direction of emphasizing the relational dimensions of marriage at the expense of marriage as a gendered and engendering estate of creation. HSGT defines marriage “as the covenant of mutual promises, commitment, and hope authorized legally by the state and blessed by God” (HSGT, 15). Citing Mark 10:6-9, HSGT notes “The historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions have recognized marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman” (HSGT, 15). Yet the next two pages of HSGT reflect a discussion of marriage without a reference to the gender of those who enter into this covenant. It is no surprise, therefore, that the section on marriage ends with this summary:

Recognizing that this conclusion differs from the historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions, some people, though not all, in this church and within the larger Christian community, conclude that marriage is also an appropriate term to use in describing similar benefits, protection, and support for same gender-couples entering into lifelong, monogamous relationships. They believe that such accountable relationships also provide the necessary foundation that supports trust and familial and community thriving. Other contractual agreements, such as civil unions, also seek to provide some of these protections and to hold those involved in such relationships accountable to one another and to society. (HSGT, 18.)

Yet, without sexual differentiation there is no marriage. Carl Braaten’s words may appear harsh but are nevertheless true: “It is possible to blaspheme the Creator by degenerating the dignity and goodness of human sexuality in its differentiation between male and female.”⁴¹

Legal scholars Robert P. George, Sherif Girgis, and Ryan T. Anderson make the argument from the perspective of jurisprudence that marriage is unique in that it entails a conjugal act that unites a man and a woman organically and is distinct from every other contractual agreement, including civil unions:

Because bodies are integral parts of the personal reality of human beings, only coitus can truly unite persons organically and thus, maritally. Hence, although the state can grant members of any household certain legal incidents, and should not prevent any from making certain private legal arrangements, it cannot give same-sex unions what is truly distinctive of marriage—i.e., it cannot make them actually comprehensive, oriented by nature to children, or bound by the moral claims specific to marriage.⁴²

⁴¹ Carl Braaten, *Eschatology and Ethics: Essays on the Theology and Ethics of the Kingdom of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974), 165.

⁴² Sherif Girgis, Robert P. George, and Ryan T. Anderson, “What is Marriage?” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 34 (Winter 2010): 282.

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In HSGT marriage might be seen as having an erotic or sensual dimension, but it would not necessarily involve a conjugal act which unites male and female organically. George and his colleagues argue that “the conjugal view” of marriage serves the common good in such a way that the “revisionist view” cannot, precisely at the point of procreation. HSGT will not concede this point.

Even though HSGT sees in the creation of Adam and Eve as male and female the revelation of God’s creation of gendered beings with the capacity for companionship and procreation, this is largely disconnected from a discussion of gender. The sturdy language of God’s institution of marriage in the Holy Scriptures is absent in HSGT. Again we may contrast HSGT with Luther: “He has established it (marriage) before all others as the first of all institutions, and he created man and woman differently (as is evident) not for indecency but to be true to each other, to be fruitful, to beget children, and to nurture and bring them up to the glory of God.”⁴³ Marriage is a divine institution that is lived out within the sphere of creation (“kingdom of the left hand”) according to God’s purposes:

- God established marriage as the relationship of mutual love between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:18).
- God locates the procreation of children within the bond of the one flesh union of marriage (Genesis 1:28).
- God uses marriage as a way of curbing and healing sinful lust (1 Corinthians 7:2).⁴⁴

These purposes are summarized by Luther in his lectures on Genesis:

Yet the true definition of marriage is this: marriage is the divine and lawful union of a male and female in the hope of children, or at least to avoid the cause of fornication and sin, to God’s glory. Its ultimate end is to obey God; to remedy sin; to call upon God; to seek, love, and educate children to God’s glory; to live with one’s spouse in the fear of the Lord; and to bear the cross.⁴⁵

⁴³ LC 1:207, KW, 414.

⁴⁴ Note CTCR *Human Sexuality*, 10-32. See also Paul Althaus: “This marriage is both God’s original intention for his creation before all sin and the means he now uses to protect people against the destructive power of unrestrained sexuality” (*The Ethics of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert Schultz [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972], 85). Also Albrecht Peters: “As God’s ordinance, marriage is an estate that, as a widely observed one, permeates not only Christendom but all of humanity. It connects all who have a human face; all people know it as a public estate and protect it in manifold forms and different shapes by means of custom and law” (*Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Ten Commandments*, trans. Holger Sonntag [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009], 247).

⁴⁵ Martin Luther cited by Albrecht Peters, 257. See also Oswald Bayer, “Luther’s View of Marriage” in *Freedom in Response*, 169-182. Bayer says that Luther placed emphasis on the “estate” of marriage as “the concept of estate was intimately connected with both steadfastness and energy, products of the reliability of the Word that ensures that life together will have the quality of endurance. The Word holds all the various facets of an active life together, its beauty and peace as well as its crises and conflicts. The Word of God lends stability to marriage and brings about the unconditional and permanent unity of one man and one woman” (170).

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The redefinition of marriage suggested by HSGT discounts the heart of Luther’s definition. More importantly, the document represents a radical departure from what God has instituted and it opens the way for the church to bless what God condemns.⁴⁶

7. Bound Conscience and Sexual Ethics

HSGT next proceeds to lay out a way for the ELCA to change its practice so as to allow for churchly recognition and blessing of individuals in “lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” (HSGT, 18). HSGT acknowledges “that consensus does not yet exist [in the ELCA] concerning how to regard same-gender committed relationships after many years of thoughtful, faithful study and conversation. We do not have agreement on whether this church should honor these relationships and uplift, shelter, and protect them or precisely how it is appropriate to do so” (HSGT, 19). It is argued that this lack of consensus, however, should not prevent pastoral care, which the document understands as inclusive of some form of blessing and recognition for those who are in same gender relationships.

Without giving any biblical or confessional documentation HSGT asserts that in response to this need and in the face of the impasse in failure to reach consensus, “this church draws on the foundational Lutheran understanding that the baptized are called to discern God’s love in the service to the neighbor” (HSGT, 19). In a crucial move HSGT does two things. First, it identifies the question of same-gendered relationships as falling into the arena of ethics and church practice, suggesting that this not an issue of doctrine which should divide the church. Second, HSGT argues that committed Christians engaged in moral deliberation and discernment may indeed arrive at conflicting conclusions. These varying conclusions could be protected by an appeal to “the bound conscience;” thus, “We further believe that this church on the basis of ‘the bound conscience,’ will include different understandings and practices within its life as it seeks to live out its mission and ministry in the world” (HSGT, 19). There is no hint in HSGT that the failure to reach consensus in the ELCA on the morality of homosexual activity might lead the church to *retain* the received catholic tradition.⁴⁷

HSGT then goes on to outline four positions that different individuals in the ELCA hold “with conviction and integrity,” each on the basis of conscience-bound belief:

- Same-gendered sexual behavior is contrary to both biblical teaching and natural law. Pastoral care is to call for repentance and to work toward a change of behavior and/or a celibate lifestyle.
- Acknowledgement that homosexuality, even when expressed through a lifelong monogamous relationship, reflects a broken world not in keeping with God’s pattern for creation. These relationships are recognized as being lived out with mutuality and care, but they should not be given the status of marriage.

⁴⁶ On the misapplication of “blessing” to homosexual unions, see Ephraim Radner, “Blessing: A Scriptural and Theological Reflection” *Pro Ecclesia* (Winter 2010): 7-27. “To bless is a resolutely public thing to do, because it is at base a *confessional* thing to do that is bound to a particular claim about who God is and what God does” (27).

⁴⁷ “Catholic” tradition refers to the consistent teaching of Christianity on this issue since its very origin.

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- Belief that the Scriptures do not address same-gender relationships as they are known in the contemporary world. The community is best served when these relationships are held to high standards of public accountability but these relationships are not equated with marriage. They should receive the support of the community and may be blessed with prayer.
- Belief that the Scriptures do not speak to sexual orientation and committed relationships as they are experienced today. These relationships should be held to the same standards as heterosexual marriage and receive the same benefits of such marriages (HSGT, 20-21).

After outlining these positions currently present in the ELCA, the document repeats its plea that a lack of consensus ought to make space for the bound conscience:

Although at this time this church lacks consensus on this matter, it encourages all people to live out their faith in the local and global community with profound respect for the conscience-bound belief of the neighbor. The church calls for mutual respect in relationships and for guidance that seeks the good of each individual and of the community. Regarding our life together as we live with disagreement, the people in this church will continue to accompany one another in study, prayer, discernment, pastoral care, and mutual respect. (HSGT, 21.)

An explanation for the conceptuality of the bound conscience is supplied in note 26 of HSGT (see Excursus, below, for a further discussion of bound conscience as the concept is used in HSGT). This footnote is instructive as it sheds light on the way the terminology of "conscience" is used in the document in at least three ways. First, the conscience is identified in connection with moral responsibility as expressed in the first chapters of Romans: "The Apostle Paul testifies to conscience as the unconditional moral responsibility of the individual before God (Romans 2:15-16). In the face of different conclusions about what constitutes responsible actions, the concept of 'the conscience' becomes pivotal" (HSGT, 41). Second, both Paul in Galatians and Luther at Worms are said to have taken a stand on the basis of conscience for the sake of the Gospel. Third, when salvation is not at stake, Christians are free to give priority to the well being of the neighbor and so protect the neighbor's conscience as matters of diet or ritual observance of holy days. Thus the footnote concludes: "This social statement draws upon this rich understanding of the role of conscience and calls upon this church, when in disagreement concerning matters around which salvation is not at stake, including human sexuality, to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), honor conscience, and seek the wellbeing of the neighbor" (HSGT, 41).

While HSGT connects conscience with moral responsibility, it fails to attend to how the conscience functions "as the self's *internal court of judgment*"⁴⁸ to use the words of Uwe Schnelle. The conscience lacks an autonomous capacity to moral responsibility. "For Paul, conscience does not itself contain the basic knowledge of good and evil but rather a *co-knowledge*, a knowledge-with, of norms that serve as the basis for making judgments that can be either positive or negative."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Uwe Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, translated by M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 313.

⁴⁹ Uwe Schnelle, 314.

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It appears that the HSGT's appeal to "conscience" is at least in part anchored in a history of interpretation that goes back to the claim of Karl Holl (1866-1926), a professor at the University of Berlin and leader in the "Luther Renaissance."⁵⁰ Holl wrote, "Luther's religion is a 'religion of conscience' in the most pronounced sense of the word, with all the urgency and personal character belonging to it."⁵¹ This religion of the conscience was seen by Holl as evidence that Luther was not a medieval but a modern man and therefore relevant to the world of the twentieth century.

The application of "bound conscience" to the issue of homosexuality is deeply problematic from a confessional Lutheran perspective. Classical Lutheran theology makes a distinction between *adiaphora*, *mandata*, and *damnabilia*.⁵² Matters of *adiaphora* are not binding on conscience, but Christian conscience is bound to keep what God has commanded and avoid what he prohibits. HSGT quotes Luther's speech at Worms: "Unless I am persuaded by the testimony of Scripture and by clear reason...I am conquered by the Scripture passages I have adduced and my conscience is captive to the words of God. I neither can nor desire to recant anything, when to do so against conscience would be neither safe nor wholesome" (HSGT, 41; see AE 32:112). However, the document incorrectly attributes to Luther an understanding of conscience that is autonomous and capable of functioning reliably apart from God's Word. Randall Zachmann rightly observes "The conscience does not have the ability to judge the truth or falsehood of the positions themselves; otherwise Luther's appeal at Worms to be further instructed would be meaningless."⁵³ He then concludes "The conscience is a capacity for judging good and evil but it is not in itself an infallible source for knowing what is good and what is evil. One can have a true conscience only if one follows true teaching, not if one follows the feeling of the conscience."⁵⁴

HSGT assigns to the conscience an autonomy that it does not have in Luther. Conscience is given a mastery over the Word of God. In this scenario amply illustrated by HSGT, individual consciences are then bound by their own interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, so we are left with a variety of options for moral action but no certainty. In contrast, Luther, in his 1525 lectures on Deuteronomy, asserts that "God wants our conscience to be certain and sure that it is pleasing to Him. This cannot be done if the conscience is led by its own feelings, but only if it

⁵⁰ The Luther Renaissance is the title usually given to the reawakening of scholarly interest in Luther and his work which took place in the period between the two wars in Germany. It is associated especially with Karl Holl. For a helpful overview, see Thomas Brady, Jr. "Luther Renaissance" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, Volume 2 (Dord-Manu), edited by Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 473-476.

⁵¹ Karl Holl, *What Did Luther Understand by Religion?* Edited by James Luther Adams and Walter F. Bense, translated by Fred W. Meuser and Walter R. Wietzke (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 48. For a critique of Holl and a further exploration of Luther's understanding of conscience see George Forell, "Luther and Conscience" in *Martin Luther: Theologian of the Church: Collected Essays* edited by William R. Russell (Saint Paul: Luther Seminary 1994), 57-65.

⁵² Oliver K. Olson, "Adiaphora, Mandata, Damnabilia" *Lutheran Forum* (Spring 2010): 22-25. *Adiaphora* are things neither commanded nor forbidden by God's Word. *Mandata* are things God commands. *Damnabilia* are things God forbids and condemns.

⁵³ Randall C. Zachmann, *The Assurance of Faith: Conscience in the Theology of Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 23.

⁵⁴ Zachmann, *The Assurance of Faith*, 28.

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relies on the Word of God."⁵⁵ Michael Baylor describes this regency of Scripture over conscience in Luther's thinking:

Repeatedly at Worms Luther asserted that his conscience was captive to the Word of God. But he did not say, and should not be interpreted as having intended to say, that Scripture was captive to his conscience. In that Luther's defiance at the Diet of Worms was based upon both evident reason and especially, the literal sense of Scripture as the two objective and legitimate authorities with the power to bind and instruct his conscience, he was not a subjectivist in religion. The subjective sense of certainty with which he held his theological convictions did not function, either materially or formally, as a criterion for the truth of these convictions. It acted rather, as the basis from which he resisted the claims of what he refused to accept as a legitimate authority—any human authority, especially popes and councils. Luther did not raise the conscience itself to the status of such an authority, parallel to that of reason or Scripture, with its own power even to share in or partly determine the content of faith.⁵⁶

HSGT, however, gives wide berth to the function of conscience, neglecting its limitations and unreliability.⁵⁷ For Luther conscience is not bound to itself. Bound to itself, the conscience will either be captivated by the terror of the law's accusations or driven by impulses toward self-justification. The conscience is alternately accusing or excusing (see Romans 2:15-16).⁵⁸ This aspect of conscience is ignored in HSGT. HSGT seems to use interchangeably "the bound conscience" and "conscience-bound belief." In truth, only the conscience bound to the consoling word of the Gospel is given certainty and peace in the forgiveness of sins. "Conscience-bound beliefs," on the other hand, bind us to our own opinions. No matter how deeply treasured these convictions are, they provide no certainty. In elevating "conscience-bound beliefs," HSGT reveals a stridently anthropocentric position that is detrimental both for ethics and pastoral care. Conscience-bound beliefs can be wrong, since the conscience is untrustworthy.⁵⁹ It is, in the words of Gerhard Forde, "insatiable, fickle, and arbitrary. It does not represent God's presence within us, it represents his absence, that we are left to ourselves. Conscience can unpredictably

⁵⁵ AE 9:123.

⁵⁶ Michael G. Baylor, *Action and Person: Conscience in Late Scholasticism and the Young Luther* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), 267-268.

⁵⁷ Here also note the extensive discussion of conscience by Helmut Thielicke, *Theological Ethics*, Volume 1: Foundations, edited by William Lazareth (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 298-358. In his discussion of the "autonomous conscience," Thielicke observes that conscience cannot be synthesized with God's revelation (332); Also see Mary Jane Haemig: "The conscience is not 'sacred' and thus exempt from sin: it is part of the created world and thus as subject to sin as any other part of the world. The view that the conscience is 'sacred' can lead to the elevation of human conscience above the law and thus to an antinomianism inimical to the Lutheran Confessions." See "Lutheran Thinking on Church-State Issues" in *Church & State: Lutheran Perspectives*, edited by John R. Stumme and Robert W. Tuttle (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 15. HSGT errs precisely in this way as it elevates the conscience over God's Word.

⁵⁸ Also note Werner Elert: "Conscience must be held to be the same as the 'conflicting thoughts which accuse and excuse each'...The conscience is no information center to furnish ready answers to the question, 'What must I do?' Conscience is no specific quality but a continuous process, the process of conflicting thoughts which accuse and excuse each other." See *The Christian Ethos*, trans. Carl J. Schindler (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), 33.

⁵⁹ The Bible is replete with warnings about unwarranted trust in conscience alone: e.g., Num. 15:39; Judg. 17:6; 21:25; Ps 31:1-2; Prov 3:7; 12:15; 14:12; 16:2; 16:25; 21:2; 30:12; Is. 5:20-21; Jer. 13:10, 17:5-9. The NT generally uses the term "conscience" (συνείδησις) with the understanding that it has been shaped by the Word of God (e.g., because Paul refuses to tamper with God's Word and speaks it openly, he commends such conduct to the conscience of the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 4:2).

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make mockery of presumed freedom and emancipation."⁶⁰ Given the unpredictability of the conscience as it is driven to excuse and accuse, it is hardly a trustworthy anchor for belief or action. One's conscience-bound beliefs may include an array of opinions and activities from theft to racism, from bestiality to child sacrifice. The subjectivity of conscience is indeed a slender thread to hold a responsible morality in place.

Where conscience-bound beliefs govern rather than the Word of God, we are led to what Luther sees as an identifying mark of the theologian of glory. Such a theologian, Luther asserts, "calls evil good and good evil. A theology of the cross calls the thing what it actually is."⁶¹ Theologians of glory, as Forde explains, "think one can see *through* the created world and the acts of God to the invisible realm of glory beyond it."⁶² The argument advanced for the bound conscience, unfortunately, is such an attempt to "see through the created world," the bodies God has created, and the revelation of God in Christ. In its attempt to accommodate diverse teachings on homosexuality, HSGT also accommodates a false optimism about the human condition instead of the call of the Cross to death and resurrection with Christ.

Over and against HSGT, confessional Lutheranism bears witness to the truth of the Holy Scriptures' teaching on God's creation of humanity, namely, as male and female designed by Him to live within the fidelity of the one flesh union He has established in marriage—a union, that His creative Word makes life giving. The Christian church has no authority to bless what God condemns. Brevard Childs writes:

The recent attempt of some theologians to find a biblical opening, if not warrant, for the practice of homosexuality stands in striking disharmony with the Old Testament's understanding of the relation of male and female. The theological issue goes far beyond the citing of occasional texts which condemn the practice (Lev. 20:13). Nor is the heart of the issue touched by the historicist's claim that Israel was obsessed with the propagation of children to assure the nation's survival. Rather, it turns on the divine structuring of human life in the form of male and female with the potential of greatest joy or deepest grief. The Old Testament continually witnesses to the distortion of God's intention for humanity in heterosexual aberrations (Judg. 20; 2 Samuel 13). Similarly the Old

⁶⁰ Gerhard Forde, "Eleventh Locus: The Christian Life" in *Christian Dogmatics*, Volume 2, edited by Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 417. Also see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Volume 6: Ethics, edited by Clifford Green, translated by Reinhard Krauss et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). Bonhoeffer writes "Men of conscience fend off all alone the superior power of predicaments that demand decision. But the dimensions of the conflicts in which they have to choose, counseled by and supported by nothing but their own conscience, tear them to pieces. The countless respectable and seductive disguises and masks in which evil approaches them make their conscience anxious and unsure until they finally content themselves with an assuaged conscience instead of a good conscience, that is, until they deceive their own consciences in order not to despair. Those whose sole support is their conscience can never grasp that a bad conscience can be stronger and healthier than one that is deceived" (79).

⁶¹ Martin Luther, "Heidelberg Theses" in AE 31:53.

⁶² *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 12. Robert Kolb and Charles Arand remind us that only Christ's cross "enables his people to confront and describe themselves and the world around them honestly and forthrightly. The theology of the cross liberates God's children from having to construct falsehoods in order for life to make sense." See *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 147. Gene Edward Voth has a basic discussion of the theology of the cross in *The Spirituality of the Cross* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 57-60.

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Testament views homosexuality as a distortion of creation which falls into the shadows outside of blessing.⁶³

In spite of many thoughtful and critical voices within the ELCA,⁶⁴ HSGT became the theological foundation for a devastating departure from Holy Scriptures in regard to the blessing of same sex couples and the ordination of practicing homosexuals. In an essay written in 1936, Lutheran theologian Hermann Sasse observed that “where man can no longer bear the truth, he cannot live without the lie.”⁶⁵ Sasse then goes on to describe forms that the lie takes on: the pious lie, the edifying lie, the dogmatic lie, and finally the institutional lie. We must frankly conclude that each of these aspects of the lie finds its way into HSGT. Most pertinent for our response is the fact that what Sasse called the dogmatic lie—the notion that our age has greater understanding than our ancestors and so we have reached a “doctrinal maturity” that enables us to modify dogma—has now been made concrete in the ELCA by means of “the institutional lie” as that church body has officially adopted a heretical position on human sexuality. This is not merely a case of misapplied ethics but a dogmatic decision that is, in fact, schismatic. The evaluation of Wolfhart Pannenberg rings true: “If a church were to let itself be pushed to the point where it ceased to treat homosexual activity as a departure from the biblical norm, and recognized homosexual unions as a personal partnership of love equivalent to marriage, such a church would stand no longer on biblical ground but against the unequivocal witness of Scripture. A church that took this step would cease to be the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.”⁶⁶ The ELCA has now taken this step, embodying apostasy from the faith once delivered to the saints.⁶⁷

⁶³ Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 194. Also OT scholar Hans Walter Wolff: “Homosexuality is a failure to recognize the differences of the sexes, and with it the basic way of arriving at a fruitful life through the over-coming of self-love.” Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 176. The fact that homosexual intercourse lacks the capacity for procreation is not a biological irrelevancy in the OT understanding of the divine blessing pronounced on Adam and Eve in creation.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Marianne Howard Yoder and Larry Yoder, “Natural Law and the ELCA” in *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*, 157-177.

⁶⁵ Hermann Sasse, “Union and Confession” in *The Lonely Way*—Volume 1 (1927-1939), edited by Matthew C. Harrison (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 266.

⁶⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, “Revelation and Homosexual Experience” *Christianity Today* (November 11, 1996): 37. It should not be assumed that not all congregations or all individuals affiliated with the ELCA are outside the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” That is not Pannenberg’s point nor is the opinion of the CTCR. It is the case, however, that to stand “against the unequivocal witness of Scripture” is contrary to the faith of the church catholic. Appended to this document are four resolutions adopted by the LCMS at its 2010 Convention which express grave, love-based concern for the ELCA and its congregations and church workers in view of the sexuality decisions made at the 2009 Assembly of the ELCA: 2010 Res. 3-01A “To Commend ILC and Task Force Statements as Responses to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Actions”; 2010 Res. 3-02A “To Support Confessional Lutheranism at Home and Abroad”; 2010 Res. 3-03 “To Cooperate in External with Theological Integrity”; and 2010 Res. 3-05 “To Request a Thorough Response to the ELCA Social Statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*.” Noteworthy is the first “Resolved” of 2010 Res. 3-02A: “That the LCMS earnestly pray for her brothers and sisters in the ELCA, including those who have departed from this biblical and Christian understanding [of human sexuality], asking that the ELCA would reconsider—even now—its actions.”

⁶⁷ Note the words of Richard J. Niebank: “Of the blessed union of Christ and the church, the marriage of one man and one woman is the matchless icon. The willful departure from this norm is an offense for which ‘heresy’ is too mild a designation.” “Marriage at the Crossroads” *Lutheran Forum* (Summer 2005), 37. See also Mark Chavez, “Biblical Authority in the ELCA Today” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (January/April, 2010): 105-121.

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Conclusion

HSGT is deeply problematic from a number of perspectives. It operates with a hermeneutic that renders the Scriptures unclear and uncertain concerning the fundamental nature of human existence, i.e., as male and female created by the Triune God in His image to live in communion with Him by faith and in love for the neighbor within the structures of His creation. Biblical and catholic teaching on God’s design for sexuality and the essential place of marriage as an estate of His creation are rendered optional. While HSGT claims to work with primary Lutheran categories such as justification by grace through faith, the distinction of law and Gospel, the duality of faith and love, and vocation, they are distorted to serve an ideological purpose that can in no way be identified with confessional Lutheranism nor catholic Christianity. While the language of “gift” is dominant in HSGT, it misses the point that gift also implies a certain “givenness.”⁶⁸ Strong and passionate voices within the ELCA⁶⁹ have warned their church body for over two decades of the dangerous path which has now reached its conclusion in HSGT. It is with profound grief that the LCMS can do nothing other than conclude that HSGT represents a “different gospel” (Gal. 1:6).⁷⁰

In attempting to distance the ELCA from a past where it is assumed that matters of sexuality were dealt with repressively and legalistically, with embarrassment and shame, HSGT is replete with the rhetoric of openness and a refusal to speak in any way that might imply judgment and the call to repentance. In what is intended to be compassionate and pastoral, there is a deep cruelty in HSGT for it is incapable of finally speaking either law or Gospel. Failing to do this, tolerance and affirmation of freedom for choice within the bounds of a community of love and trust take the place of absolution. Our deepest disappointment with HSGT is not only that it is a revised ethic that only mimics our decadent culture but that it undercuts the church’s proper work of absolving sinners in the name of Jesus Christ.

A challenge before confessional Lutheran churches is to continue to bear clear witness to the biblical and creedal truth which has been seriously distorted in HSGT. In catechetical instruction, youth gatherings, Bible classes, publications, and other forums, our laity needs to be taught what the Scriptures tell us regarding God’s design for sexuality in contrast to alternative teachings present in the larger culture and, as we have observed, even within other churches that identify themselves as Christian and Lutheran.

⁶⁸ See Oswald Bayer, “The Ethics of Gift” *Lutheran Quarterly* (Winter 2010): 447-468. Bayer points out that the theme of ethics is not merely “What should I do?” but “What has been given to me?” (447). HSGT redefines the gift of sexuality apart from the Word of the Giver.

⁶⁹ A few examples of these voices will suffice: Robert Benne, “Reinventing Sexual Ethics” in *Reasonable Ethics* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 259-265; Carl Braaten, *Because of Christ: Memoirs of a Lutheran Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 164-178; Gerhard Forde, “Law and Sexual Behavior” *Lutheran Quarterly* (Spring 1995): 3-22; Richard J. Niebank, “What’s at Stake?” *Lutheran Forum* (Winter 2003): 12-16; William Lazareth, “ELCA Lutherans and Luther on Heterosexual Marriage” *Lutheran Forum* (Autumn 1994): 235-268; James Arne Nestingen, “The Lutheran Reformation and Homosexual Practice” in *Faithful Conversations: Christian Perspectives on Homosexuality*, edited by James Childs (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 41-58.

⁷⁰ The Task Force on Theological Implications of the 2009 ELCA Decisions provided an initial LCMS response to the 2009 ELCA sexuality decisions. 2010 Res. 3-01A commended the task force statement for affirming the “continuing relevance” of the biblical teaching that every homosexual act “violates the will of our Creator,” that there is forgiveness in Christ for all sin including homosexual sin, that a biblical response to homosexuality requires both compassion toward the sinner and condemnation of sin, and that scriptural commands are “kind words” by which God seeks our wholeness.

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The catechesis provided by culture in this matter is pervasive and influential, and when it is wrapped within theological language it is hardly surprising that it can be deceptive and misleading to well-meaning Christians who desire to show compassion to all people. Proper Christian compassion for and patience with sinners must not be confused with generic notions of acceptance, affirmation, and tolerance.⁷¹

It is imperative that confessional Lutheran church bodies continue to develop theologically responsible ways to provide authentic pastoral care to individuals whose lives have been marred by sexual sin of whatever kind. Our unflinching rejection of current attempts to provide theological justification for homosexual behavior is not born out of a Pharisaical stance of self-righteousness or a squeamish homophobia but from a commitment to God’s truth revealed in Holy Scripture. We are equally committed to showing appropriate compassion to those who struggle with this sin. Sin is never to be addressed with hateful attitudes, words, or actions. The truth of God’s law must be spoken with clarity but it must be articulated with kindness and care for those to whom it is addressed. Bigotry and disdain will only deepen the resistance of those who are secure in their sin. Ministry to people who are enticed with same gender attractions or who have committed homosexual sins will require patient and consistent speaking of both God’s law and Gospel, even as congregations support them in the struggle to live as sons and daughters of the Father in the freedom that comes only in the forgiveness of sins. Given the climate of our culture this is a daunting work. Yet we have the promise that the Word of the Lord will not return to Him empty. Clothed with the deep compassion of Christ for sinners, we will seek to undertake this work with both truth and mercy.⁷²

God’s Word calls each of us to repent and to turn away from any and all sin. Confidence before God can never be based on our own actions, for we can never justify ourselves. Instead, our sole comfort is found in the fact that Jesus Christ has taken all our sin into Himself, for He “was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25). Because of Christ’s cross and His rising from the dead, the Lord forgives our iniquity and remembers our sin no more (Jeremiah 31:34).

⁷¹ The Scriptural posture toward sin is not tolerance, but rather *patience*. Such patience has repentance, forgiveness, and salvation from divine judgment as its explicit goal. 2 Peter 3:9 describes God as “patient (μακροχρημις) toward you, not wanting anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance.” (See also Romans 2:4-5). Merciful patience, rooted in God’s essential character (Exodus 34:6, Septuagint: μακρο, χρημις), should also characterize the approach of pastors and congregations toward those who struggle with homosexual sins.

⁷² Helpful theological reflection and pastoral guidance is offered by Tom Eckstein, *Bearing Their Burden* (Galatians 6:1-2): *Speaking the Truth in Love to People Burdened by Homosexuality* (n.p.: Lulu, 2010); James Arne Nestingen, “Ministry to the Sexually Conflicted” in *The Jasper Commission* (Delhi, New York, 2009), 15-25; and Phillip Max Johnson, “The Spiritual Nature and Destiny of the Human Body: A Pastoral Perspective on Human Sexuality” in *Christian Sexuality: Normative & Pastoral Perspectives* edited by Russell E. Saltzman (Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers, 2003), 73-88. Also see *A Plan for Ministry to Homosexuals and Their Families* (The Task Force on Ministry to Homosexuals and Their Families, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1999).

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Excursus: Brief Analysis of Timothy J. Wengert’s “Reflections on the Bound Conscience in Lutheran Theology”

Given the central place that the conceptuality of “the bound conscience” plays in the overall structure and argument set forth in HSGT, Dr. Timothy J. Wengert, Ministerium of Pennsylvania Professor of the History of Christianity at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and a member of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality authored an interpretative and apologetic essay of ten pages, “Reflections on the Bound Conscience in Lutheran Theology” (hereafter Wengert).⁷³ This document deserves some comment as it helps to inform readers as to how the terminology of “bound conscience” is used in HSGT.

Wengert begins his essay by noting that Luther used the language of conscience in at least two ways: “On the one hand, he sometimes simply accepts the medieval scholastic understanding of the conscience as a faculty of the soul that can distinguish right from wrong and truth from falsehood. However, both Luther and Melancthon also use the term more generally to apply to the entire person as we stand before God and view ourselves in the light of God’s Word, understood as Law and Gospel” (Wengert, 1).

Citing Luther’s words to Cardinal Cajetan that he does not want “to be compelled to affirm something contrary to my conscience, for I believe without the slightest doubt that this is the meaning of Scripture” (Wengert, 2),⁷⁴ Wengert argues that Luther appeals to his conscience as a way of avoiding having to choose between the Holy Scripture and obedience to the Pope. On the basis of Luther’s words, Wengert says, “the bound conscience always appeals for comfort from those who speak God’s Word of promise and hope” (Wengert, 2). However, Luther says nothing of a “bound conscience” in this setting. He does make a plea that church officials do not force him to act against his conscience, which Luther sees as instructed by the Holy Scriptures.

Three years later, before Emperor Charles V, Luther would make his confession at the Diet of Worms: “I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience.”⁷⁵ Here Luther is asserting not an autonomous conscience but a conscience that is subject to the Holy Scriptures. From Luther’s statement at Worms, however, Wengert draws the erroneous conclusion: “This means that we cannot simply assert one interpretation of Scripture over another but must always respect the conscience of others with whom we may disagree. If Luther had no choice but to appeal to the conscience bound to the gospel in his case before Rome, so much more must we respect lesser cases of bound consciences regarding matters of law and ethics” (Wengert, 2).

At least three points need to be made in response to this argument. First, Wengert does not adequately grasp the fact that Luther’s conscience is bound to the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. This is helpfully put by Bernhard Lohse: “Luther no longer saw the conscience as subject to the decision of the church, with the result that we may no longer act contrary to our

⁷³ This essay can be found online at http://www.elca.org/~media/Files/What%20W%20Believe/Social%20Issues/In%20Process/Human%20Sexuality/Wengert_on_Bound_Conscience.pdf

⁷⁴ From Luther’s “Proceedings at Augsburg 1518,” AE 31:275.

⁷⁵ AE 36:112.

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own conscience. On the other hand, however, Luther saw the conscience as basically being under the authority of Holy Scripture. We therefore have no basis for interpreting Luther as teaching that the conscience is autonomous.⁷⁶ Second, the conscience bound to the Holy Scriptures cannot but confess what the Holy Scriptures teach. One example of this is that of Luther confessing the Lord's Supper against Zwingli's denial at Marburg. Luther was certainly not prepared to respect Zwingli's interpretation as an alternative even though, no doubt, Zwingli's conscience was bound to it. Similarly, Erasmus was conscience bound to defend the freedom of the human will but Luther could not let this Gospel-denying teaching go unchallenged. Third, Wengert implies that the dispute over homosexuality is merely a matter of law and ethics. Seen from the clear teaching of Holy Scriptures, the issue of homosexuality cannot be divorced from the doctrine of the Triune God and His work in creation, redemption, and sanctification. The biblical doctrine of man created in the image of God as male and female is at stake here.

Wengert offers other examples from Luther's own biography in an attempt to show that Luther utilized the category of "bound conscience" to allow for flexibility in theological and moral issues. Presented as examples of such flexibility are Luther's pastoral instinct in allowing the laity to receive only Christ's body in the Sacrament after Karlstadt's premature, over-zealous liturgical reform in 1521 in Wittenberg and the "Visitation Articles" of 1528.

The case of Luther's advice regarding the bigamy of Philip of Hesse is likewise used by Wengert as an example of Luther acting against the church's understanding of marriage for the sake of a weak Christian. Philip of Hesse was married to Christina, the daughter of Duke George of Albertine Saxony in 1523. Philip was nineteen years old at the time of the marriage. Although he claimed that "he never had any love or desire for her on account of her form, fragrance, and manner,"⁷⁷ he fathered seven children with Christina. Through Martin Bucer, Philip contacted Luther and sought his endorsement in taking another wife. In what Luther thought was a private, pastoral piece of advice, Luther reluctantly concurred that a second marriage would be better than a scandalous divorce or open fornication. Philip publicized Luther's pastoral advice to defend his bigamy.

It seems that Luther sees Philip caught between two wrongs—divorce and bigamy. In light of the fact that God permitted the patriarchs to have multiple wives, Luther concludes that less damage would be done if Philip took a second wife secretly without divorcing Christina. Luther's advice to Philip would be in keeping with a comment he made in 1520 in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*: "As to divorce, it is still a question for debate whether it is allowable. For my part I so greatly detest divorce that I should prefer bigamy to it; but whether it is allowable I do not venture to decide."⁷⁸

Luther thought that his advice was given under "the seal of the confession" and was the best that could be offered under the circumstances. In defending his advice he recalled the words of one of

⁷⁶ Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 59. Here one might also note Luther's discussion of "conscience" in his 1522 postil on "The Gospel for the Festival of Epiphany" in AE 52: 244-286. Luther argues that "Christian faith cannot exist alongside of such allegiance or duty-bound conscience" (244), as though the consciences of the Magi were bound to follow Herod's decree that they report to him the location of the infant Jesus.

⁷⁷ Theodore Tappert (editor and translator), *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Press, 1955), 288.

⁷⁸ AE 36: 105.

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his teachers: "Alas, these cases are so confused and desperate that neither wisdom, law, nor reason can be of any help. They must be committed to God's mercy."⁷⁹ Luther did not see his attempt at making the best of a bad situation as establishing a precedent for pastoral or churchly practice in cases of marriage. Much less should it be invoked as an endorsement of homosexual unions. This and other examples drawn from Luther by Wengert are cases of strategic pastoral care that are open to criticism. They are certainly not evidence that Luther departs from the Holy Scripture to institute something that is contrary to the revealed will of God.⁸⁰

Luther recognized that a conscience bound to false teaching is, in fact, endangered and in need of correction for the sake of its salvation. Wengert misses the mark when he says that "concern for the bound conscience is not simply a matter of toleration for different points but more profoundly realizing that the neighbor's conscience is bound to a totally different, perhaps even incorrect, understanding of the matter and that to uproar that understanding would shake the neighbor's faith and trust in God's mercy and forgiveness" (Wengert, 6).

Wengert also takes up a discussion of Christian freedom in relationship to adiaphora. His treatment of Article X of the Formula of Concord is misleading as it would extend the category of "adiaphora" to embrace sexual practices that God's Word has not instituted and, in fact, would encourage practices that God condemns.⁸¹

Finally, Wengert concludes his document with a discussion of "enthusiasm." He cites the *Smalcald Articles* III:8.3-9 where Luther asserts that the devil tempts and entices people away from the external Word to their own imaginations of who God is and what He desires. In a strange turn, Wengert suggests that those who insist on the clarity of Scripture on matters about which Christian fervently disagree might be enthusiasts. For Luther, however, it was rather the Word of God that governs everything in Christ's holy church and thus guards against enthusiasm. Conscience may be bound by false interpretations of the Word of God. The pastoral response can never be merely tolerance or respect when God's truth and the salvation of those ensnared in sin is at stake.

Adopted by the CTCR
April 27, 2012

⁷⁹ Tappert, *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, 290.

⁸⁰ Here see Reinhard Slenczka, "When the Church Ceases to be Church" in *The Banff Commission*, edited by K. Glen Johnson (Delhi, New York: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 2008), 37-59. Slenczka writes "The church is in no way a democracy but she is a Christocracy. Spiritual authority is not a political authority, otherwise this would be a state church or a church state. In his disputation on the authority of councils Luther puts it this way: 'Christ has authority and His word, neither majority nor minority. Therefore we must distinguish truly, eagerly, and intelligently if Christ said so or not. If he said so, we have to accept this; if not we must refuse it' (*Disputatio de proleatate concilii*, WA 39, I, 194, 10-13)" (43).

⁸¹ See Olson, "Adiaphora, Mandata, Damnabilia, 22-25. Also see the extensive treatment by Albert Collver III, "According to Nature, *Adiaphora*, and Ordination" in *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*, 249-266.

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**To Commend ILC and Task Force Statements as Responses
to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Actions**

RESOLUTION 3-01A

Overtures 3-11-12 (CW, p. 168)

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its August 2009 Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis resolved to recognize "publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships" as morally acceptable and to authorize the ordination into pastoral ministry of individuals who are living in such relationships; and

WHEREAS, The Bible plainly forbids all same-gender genital sexual activity as contrary to the will of God and contrary to nature (e.g., Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach that God created man and woman for one another and that, according to His blessing and design, they may be united in marriage and become one flesh in the sexual union which also may result in the procreation of children (Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 2:18-25); and

WHEREAS, Our Lord warns us about the danger of false teaching (e.g., Matt. 7:15-17); and

WHEREAS, The ELCA actions have received wide publicity in our nation's press, and many may think that all "Lutherans" share these beliefs; and

WHEREAS, Many Lutherans and other Christians throughout the world have expressed dismay over and disagreement with the ELCA resolutions and the fact that they depart from Holy Scripture and 2000 years of Christian tradition; and

WHEREAS, The International Lutheran Council (ILC), comprising 34 member churches, unanimously adopted the statement "Same-Gender Relationships and the Church" in opposition to the claims of various Lutheran church bodies "that sexually active, same-gender relationships are an acceptable way of life for Christians" (2010 *Convention Workbook* [CW], p. 66); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been asked by individuals, organizations, congregations, national church bodies, and others to declare its understanding of these issues; and

WHEREAS, It would be unloving and uncaring for the LCMS to take no action with respect to the heterodox actions of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture calls us to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15; see also 2 Thess. 2:10; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 John 1:1) and such love involves heart-felt concern, tenderness, and humility (1 Peter 3:8; see also Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12); and

WHEREAS, President Gerald B. Kieschnick has on several occasions spoken publicly in opposition to the decisions regarding homosexuality by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (e.g., 2010 CW, pp. 12-13) and also formed the Task Force on Theological Implications of the 2009 ELCA Decisions; and

WHEREAS, The task force unanimously adopted a statement, which the President endorsed and published, responding to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly actions (March 15, 2010—see 2010 CW, pp. 14-18); and

WHEREAS, LCMS leaders have discussed the task force document with ELCA leaders; and

WHEREAS, This issue "impacts the Gospel itself. A church body's acceptance of homosexual activity promotes a false security about behavior and conduct which God has forbidden and from which He longs to redeem us. As such, it leads to a false gospel: to self-justification rather than that justification for repentant sinners which

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God has promised to all who trust in His forgiving mercy through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" ("Theological Implications," 2010 CW, p. 17); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS join with the ILC in declaring "our resolve to approach those with homosexual inclinations with the deepest possible Christian love and pastoral concern, in whatever situation they may be living" ("Same-Gender Relationships," 2010 CW, p. 66); and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS recognize that "Our Lord's intentional outreach to those who were marginalized and excluded during His earthly ministry is a reminder that the Scriptural judgments against homosexual behavior must not become the cause for hatred, violence, or an unwillingness to extend the Gospel's promises of forgiveness and reconciliation to the homosexual or any person caught in sin's traps" ("Theological implications," 2010 CW, p. 15); and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS affirm that love for the neighbor includes not only that we accept and welcome (Luke 15:1-2) our neighbor as a fellow human creature for whom Christ has died and risen, but also that we speak the truth of God's Word to our neighbor; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2010 LCMS convention commend the statement of the ILC, "Same-Gender Relationships and the Church," for study and reference; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2010 LCMS convention commend the President's task force statement, "Theological Implications of the 2009 ELCA Decisions," for study and reference; and be it finally

Resolved, That the 2010 LCMS convention affirm that

- "[W]here the Bible speaks clearly regarding matters of human values, conduct, or behavior, such teachings may not be denied or qualified, but must have continuing relevance in every era of the Church" ("Theological Implications," 2010 CW, p. 15);
- "[T]he LCMS believes and teaches that same-gender genital sexual activity—in every situation—violates the will of our Creator and must be recognized as sin" ("Theological Implications," 2010 CW, p. 15);
- "Though we affirm the demands of God's Law without reservation, we Christians confess that the sins of the world have been forgiven through Christ's suffering and death on the cross" ("Same-Gender Relationships," 2010 CW, p. 66);
- "Loving, compassionate recognition of the deep pain and personal struggles that same-sex inclinations produce in many individuals, families, and congregations may not be neglected in the name of moral purity" ("Theological Implications," 2010 CW, p. 15); and
- "The healing voice of Jesus—Sacred Scripture—seeks to lead us into the richness of the life God intends for us. Prohibitions against adultery, homosexuality, and promiscuity of any sort are kind words, warning us against behavior that would diminish or destroy human wholeness" ("Theological Implications," 2010 CW, p. 15).

Action: Adopted (6)

(After Res. 3-01A was formally introduced, debate was ended immediately and the resolution was adopted as presented [Yes: 1,133; No: 35].)

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To Support Confessional Lutheranism at Home and Abroad

RESOLUTION 3-02A

Overture 3-14 (CW, p. 169)

WHEREAS, The decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its August 2009 Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis regarding homosexual relationships are contrary to Scripture and 2000 years of Christian teaching and to confessional Lutheranism in particular; and

WHEREAS, Many congregations and individuals have withdrawn from or are considering withdrawal from affiliation with or membership in the ELCA and consider their decision necessitated by conscience, Holy Scripture, and right reason; and

WHEREAS, For the sake of good order and in furtherance of the clear proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, many of these same congregations and individuals have organized themselves into groups such as Word Alone, Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), Lutheran CORE, etc.; and

WHEREAS, Individual and congregational contacts from the ELCA with LCMS congregations and officials have increased significantly since August 2009; and

WHEREAS, This decision by the ELCA has also grieved Lutherans and upset inter-church relations among confessional Lutheran church bodies outside the United States; and

WHEREAS, While this state of disruption and uncertainty among confessional Lutherans threatens to hinder the proclamation of the Gospel, it also calls us to confess our faith anew; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS, while not encouraging discord in the ELCA, nevertheless cannot turn away from those who dissent from the ELCA, lest we deny our own convictions; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has been encouraged to provide leadership and support to emerging and formative Lutheran church bodies; therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS earnestly pray for her brothers and sisters in the ELCA, including those who have departed from this biblical and Christian understanding, asking that the ELCA would reconsider—even now—its actions; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS provide encouragement to other Lutheran church bodies as they strive to remain faithful to confessional Lutheranism; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS commend groups such as Word Alone, Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), Lutheran CORE, and others for their courage and faithfulness in opposing the ELCA's recent decision; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS commend efforts such as the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR)-sponsored Confessional Leadership Conference (June 2010) which gathered Lutheran leaders from around the world for the purpose of promoting confessional Lutheranism; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR be requested to continue to develop plans for confessional leadership (cf. 2007 Res. 3-03) by sponsoring an international model theological conference on confessional leadership in the 21st century; and be it finally

Resolved, That the LCMS through the Office of the President and the CTCR continue to explore ways together with the ILC to bring together Lutherans for the purpose of promoting confessional Lutheranism throughout the world.

Action: Adopted (6)

(Debate was quickly ended and the resolution was adopted as presented [Yes: 1,093; No: 61].)

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To Cooperate in Externals with Theological Integrity

RESOLUTION 3-03

Overtures 3-01-02, 3-05-08 (CW, pp. 165-167)

WHEREAS, The 2001, 2004, and 2007 conventions of the Synod asked that various aspects of cooperative working arrangements with the ELCA be evaluated by the Præsidium with results and recommendations reported to the subsequent conventions; and

WHEREAS, In 2010 President Kieschnick formed a task force to address the theological implications of the decisions of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly regarding homosexuality; and

WHEREAS, The task force produced a document titled "Theological Implications of the 2009 ELCA Decisions" (2010 Convention Workbook [CW], pp. 14-18); and

WHEREAS, "Theological Implications" refers to the Synod's longstanding position: "Our Synod should clearly recognize that, in cases of necessary work on the local, national, or international level, where the faith and confession of the church are not compromised, and where it appears essential that the churches of various denominations should cooperate or at least not work at cross purposes, our churches ought to cooperate willingly to the extent that the Word of God and conscience will allow" (1965 Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) Report, *Theology of Fellowship* [p. 43], officially adopted by the Synod in 1967 [Res. 2-13]); and

WHEREAS, The Synod's position stated above clearly sets forth two fundamental principles:

1. "the church cannot compromise its faith and confession;" and
2. "there are circumstances in which churches 'ought to cooperate' to the extent that the Word of God and conscience will allow;"

and

WHEREAS, The task force statement goes on to offer the following analysis and guidance:

In light of these two principles, it has been the longstanding practice of confessional Lutheran churches to distinguish between joint participation by churches and church workers in Word and Sacrament ministry ("altar and pulpit fellowship" or *communio in sacris*) and cooperation between churches in matters of physical need (*cooperatio in externis*). To maintain such a distinction carefully and conscientiously prevents both compromise of the teachings of the Christian faith and disregard of human needs which can be addressed more effectively by groups working together than by individuals or churches working on their own.

Because of doctrinal differences, the LCMS is not now nor has it ever been able to be in a relationship of altar and pulpit fellowship with the ELCA. Nevertheless, we have engaged in many cooperative activities with the ELCA, nationally and locally, in order to meet physical needs. These cooperative activities, however, are threatened by the sexuality decisions of the ELCA, because, in some cases, the ELCA's new affirmation of same-gender relationships may contradict understandings or goals that have enabled cooperative activities in the past. As one example, the CTCR already in 2006 addressed the decision of an adoption agency to treat same-gender relationships as equal to marriage for adoptive purposes. The opinion states: "On the basis of the clear teaching of Scripture regarding homosexual behavior and about God's will and design for marriage and the family as foundational units for society as a whole, it is the express opinion of the CTCR that a policy of placing adopted or foster children into homosexual contexts would stand in opposition to the official doctrinal position of the LCMS."

In areas where we currently have working arrangements with ELCA congregations and entities, the status of those working relationships is dependent on policies and actions taken by the various

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entities from national to local levels. We do not believe the ELCA's recent sexuality decisions should necessarily or summarily end our work together in these agencies. However, we hope and expect that the leadership of such entities will respect the theological position of the Synod (including its position on same-gender sexual activity) and avoid any policies or decisions which would require us to cease our support and involvement in their activities.

We cannot dictate the exact direction(s) various cooperative relationships will take in the future, primarily because the nature of agreements between ELCA and LCMS congregations and entities varies on a case-by-case basis. Frank and serious discussion on this issue needs to continue on various levels so that convictions and beliefs are not compromised and that worthy projects, activities, and relationships between our church and others may continue wherever possible. We urge LCMS participants in such cases to make decisions about whether to continue involvement on the basis of the principles we have discussed. We also suggest the following questions for consideration in making these decisions:

1. Is the purpose of the joint work fully consistent with the positions, policies, and objectives of the Synod?
2. Do cooperative efforts imply doctrinal unity with the ELCA or endorsement of ELCA positions on same-sex relationships or other matters of disagreement with the LCMS?
3. Does the joint agency or organization distinguish itself as an entity from the churches that support it?
4. Are all the policies and programs of the organization consonant with the doctrinal position of the LCMS?
5. Do the individuals who lead the organization openly support and encourage efforts, positions, or policies which compromise the theological stance of the Synod?

We urge LCMS participants to answer such questions as these and to make decisions about whether to continue involvement on the basis of the principles we have discussed [2010 CW, p. 16].

Therefore be it

Resolved, That the task force be thanked and commended for its work on identifying practical implications of the 2009 ELCA decisions on human sexuality; and be it further

Resolved, That, in keeping with the basic principles set forth in the task force statement, cooperation in externals with other churches, including the ELCA, continue with theological integrity; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God for the opportunity to give witness to God's care for all people through such cooperative work; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR, in consultation with the Præsidium and other entities and individuals as needed, develop more in-depth theological criteria for assessing cooperative endeavors, determining what would necessitate termination of such cooperative efforts; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Præsidium, in consultation with the CTCR, provide an assessment of the current state of cooperation in externals and a full report of criteria for on-going assessment of the same by July 13, 2011.

Action: Adopted (9)

(During initial discussion during Session 6, an amendment deleted the words "the next convention" at the end of the final resolve and replaced them with the words "July 13, 2011" [Yes: 783; No: 359]. After further discussion, a motion was introduced to consider Ov. 3-05 (CW, p. 166) as a substitute resolution. The assembly declined to consider the substitute [Yes: 495; No: 653]. During continued discussion during Session 7, John Nunes, President and Chief Executive Officer of Lutheran World Relief spoke in support of the resolution. An amendment to delete the words "and conscience" at the end of the fifth whereas

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paragraph was ruled out of order by the chair, the words in question being a part of a quotation from the Synod's position. An amendment was proposed to add a final resolve "that the President of the Synod, the Præsidium, and the Council of Presidents develop a plan to sever those joint actions with the ELCA to present to the next Synod convention if the ELCA does not listen to the pleading of their brothers and sisters from the Word of God." During extended discussion of the proposed amendment, an amendment to the amendment was proposed to insert the word "contingency" before the word "plan." This change was agreed to by the maker of the amendment as a friendly amendment. The motion to amend was not carried [Yes: 415; No: 723]. A motion to strike the word "Lutheran" in the second resolve was accepted by the floor committee as a friendly amendment. A motion to replace the date "July 13, 2011" from an earlier amendment with "September 1, 2011" was ruled an improper motion unless changed to a motion to reconsider the amendment made earlier. The assembly was asked whether it wished to reconsider the earlier amendment and declined [Yes: 400; No: 708]. When discussion was continued in Session 9, debate was ended and Res. 3-03 was adopted as amended [Yes: 961; No: 175].)

CTCR Response to Matthew Becker Dissent of 6/29/11**Becker's Dissent**

In correspondence to the CTCR dated June 29, 2011, the Rev. Dr. Matthew Becker, a rostered and ordained minister of the LCMS, formally expresses his dissent from "the synod's practice of restricting the office of pastor only to men" and from "the synod's position of interpreting the first two chapters of Genesis to mean that God created the universe over the course of six twenty-four hour days, and that the natural law of evolution must be rejected." For his dissent on these issues, Dr. Becker directs the CTCR to two essays he has written, "A Case for Female Pastors and Theologians" [CFPT] and "The Scandal of the LCMS Mind" [SLM], both of which were originally published in *A Daystar Reader* (Portland, Oregon: Daystar.net, 2010), edited by Dr. Becker.

Synod Bylaws and CTCR Policy on Dissent

Regarding "Dissent," the Synod bylaws (1.8) state the following:

While retaining the right of brotherly dissent, members of the Synod are expected as part of the life together within the fellowship of the Synod to honor and uphold the resolutions of the Synod.

Dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers and then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescission. While the conscience of the dissenter shall be respected, the consciences of others, as well as the collective will of the Synod, shall also be respected.

Nowhere do the Synod bylaws specify the nature of a response by the CTCR to dissent brought to its attention as a result of Bylaw 1.8. The CTCR has, however, developed its own internal policy for responding to expressions of dissent (see attached). This policy lists several procedural steps, culminating in "a determination regarding whether or not there is sufficient basis in the dissent for supporting the dissenter's claim(s) that the doctrinal position of the Synod is in need of revision" and "an explanation or presentation of the *theological* basis for this determination" (2.d and 2.e; cf. also 3).

Problematic Issues with Becker's Dissent

It is clear to the CTCR that Dr. Becker is, in fact, in dissent from the position of the Synod on the question of the ordination of women to the pastoral office and on issues related to the Synod's stated position on creation and evolution. However, responding to this dissent in a clear and helpful way is difficult because of several problematic issues in the way this dissent is presented. While these problematic issues do not ultimately form the theological basis for the CTCR's determination regarding Dr. Becker's dissent (see below), they are significant issues and they seriously impede the CTCR's ability to respond to this dissent in a way that might be helpful to the dissenter and to others who have encountered this dissent.

1. First, there are problems of *specificity* or *focus*. Bylaw 1.8.2 speaks of "dissent from doctrinal resolutions and statements" (emphasis added). *CFPT* does not reference or quote a single resolution or doctrinal statement of the Synod regarding the service of women in the church. The concern here is not for the mere technicality of adding a footnote or including a parenthetical reference. The Synod has adopted dozens of doctrinal resolutions over the years on the service of women which include specific theological language and a certain kind of theological argumentation or reference to reports and documents that set forth

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2. Second, and to some extent related to the first, there are serious problems with the content of Dr. Becker's dissent on these issues. We limit ourselves here to an illustrative (yet significant) example. *CFPT* refers repeatedly to "the LCMS 'order-of-creation' argument," although it does so without reference to any LCMS doctrinal resolution or statement, or any theological documentation from official LCMS sources of any kind. It then characterizes "the LCMS 'order-of-creation' argument" in any number of ways that are not consistent with what the LCMS itself has said in its official resolutions, statements, or theological documents. For example, *CFPT* depicts the LCMS "order of creation" argument as having primarily to do with the "order" (the "chronological sequence") in which God created Adam and Eve. It speaks of the LCMS "notion that God's order means that women are subordinate to men in that created order" and that "this ordering means that women cannot serve in the pastoral office because such service would put them in a position of authority over men." The Synod's foundational resolution on this issue, however (1969 Res. 2-17), does not argue in this way. It does not begin with some "notion" of an "order of creation" which subordinates all women to men and to male authority, with the result that women cannot hold the pastoral office merely because this would involve them in a "position of authority over men." Rather, this resolution begins with a clear and simple (and restrained) statement about the Synod's understanding of specific passages of Scripture: "Those statements of Scripture which direct women to keep silent in the church and which prohibit them to teach and to exercise authority over men, we understand to mean that women ought not to hold the pastoral office or serve in any other capacity involving the distinctive functions of this office." In other words, says the Synod, the Scriptural prohibitions against women "teaching" and "exercising authority" are *not* to be applied indiscriminately to "any and all teaching" done by women or "any and all authority" exercised by women, but they have specific reference to "the pastoral office" and service in the church "involving the distinctive functions of this office." Numerous CTCR documents (including the 1968 report *Woman Suffrage in the Church*, which provided the basic theological rationale for 1969 Res. 2-17) offer further commentary on these and related exegetical issues and on the broader issue of the "order of creation" (which is never presented narrowly in LCMS documents as a mere matter of "chronological sequence"). It is very difficult to respond helpfully to an expression of dissent that does not engage the actual arguments that the Synod has made in its doctrinal resolutions and theological documents and instead engages in arguments against undocumented characterizations and even caricatures of the Synod's position, such as Dr. Becker does in the following:

If the LCMS truly applied the texts consistently, it would not only prohibit women from serving as pastors and theologians, but it would teach that women are more prone to temptation by Satan because they are the weaker sex, that women should remain silent in the churches, and that they will be saved by giving birth to children. The LCMS would also teach women to keep their heads covered in public and during the divine service so as not to offend the angels. The LCMS would teach women to keep their hair long and free of braids and not to wear expensive clothes or jewelry. To be fully consistent, the synod would have to teach that no women may serve in authority over a man anywhere, in the church or in society, since this is "an order of the Creator" that is in the very structure of creation. How would such teaching be generally received in a culture far different from the apostles, a culture in which women regularly serve as judges, legislators, presidential candidates, company CEOs, professors, surgeons, airline pilots, military officers? (*CFPT*, 6)

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this argumentation in more detail. *CFPT* often describes (and then "dissents from") the "position of the Synod" in ways that do not correspond to the actual position of the Synod or positions set forth in supporting Synod documents (see point two below). *CFPT* refers only twice in passing (both times in a parenthetical comment) to one particular CTCR report on the service of women, without engaging the theological arguments in that report (or any other CTCR report on this issue). While CTCR reports do not themselves constitute "the official position of the Synod," several of its reports on the service of women are referenced in significant doctrinal resolutions on this issue. Where this is the case, it seems reasonable to expect some engagement with the theological argumentation of these reports and the resolutions themselves.

Dr. Becker's dissent regarding creation and evolution also suffers from a lack of specificity and focus. His letter of June 29 states that he is dissenting from "the synod's position of interpreting the first two chapters of Genesis to mean that God created the universe over the course of six twenty-four hour days"—but this language has never been used by the Synod in any doctrinal resolution or statement. *SLM* begins by offering quotations from the (1932) *Brief Statement* and from what is erroneously identified as the (1972) *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* (throughout *SLM* Becker confuses *A Statement* with its "study version," which was never adopted by the Synod but rather issued by the President's office to facilitate study of *A Statement*), but focuses most of his attention on 2004 Res. 2-08A "To Commend Preaching and Teaching Creation" and the CTCR's 1967 report *Creation in Biblical Perspective*. He speaks of the latter as if it were "accepted" as an official doctrinal statement or position of the Synod (which is not the case—1971 Res. 2-12 simply "receives" this report and "commends it for reference and guidance" in a way quite typical for CTCR reports, without elevating it to the status of an official Synod doctrinal statement), and criticizes the former (2004 Res. 2-08A) primarily for what he sees as its lack of clarity and its potential to "stifle fruitful learning and scientific exploration in LCMS high schools and colleges." The precise nature of his "doctrinal dissent" from this resolution is difficult to discern. In view of Dr. Becker's positive comments about the CTCR's 1967 report, it would have been helpful for him to respond in some way to what is perhaps the Synod's clearest doctrinal resolution on the subject of creation, 1967 Res. 2-31 "To Reaffirm Our Position on Creation, Fall, and Related Subjects" (attached).

Finally, the lack of specificity or focus is evident in both *CFPT* and *SLM* in that dispersed throughout both essays are frequent references to what "many in the LCMS assert" (*CFPT*, 5), various arguments that are "often made in the LCMS" (*CFPT*, 2), the views of "some individuals in the LCMS" and "some members of the LCMS" (*SLM*, 2), certain things that "many LCMS Christians have said" (*SLM*, 6), the views of various "LCMS interpreters" (*SLM*, 13), etc.—all of which are completely irrelevant to the matter at hand (i.e., formal dissent from the doctrinal position of the Synod) and exacerbate the difficulty of responding to Dr. Becker's dissent in a meaningful way.

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The lack of focus and specificity in *SLM* (described above) present the same difficulties in responding to the specific content of its argumentation.

CTCR Determination and Its Theological Basis

The CTCR takes very seriously the right and responsibility of members of the Synod to express dissent and its own role in responding to expressions of dissent. The purpose of the section above is primarily "apologetic" in nature—i.e., to explain, at least in part, the difficulties it encountered in attempting to "do justice" to Dr. Becker's dissent and to respond to the various arguments and opinions he has expressed. Ultimately, however, what is said above by way of "apology" is not foundational for the following determination by the CTCR:

Dr. Becker's dissent does not provide a sufficient scriptural or confessional basis to support his claim that the doctrinal position of the Synod is in need of revision on the issue of the ordination of women to the pastoral office or on the issue of creation and evolution.

The theological basis for the CTCR's determination is the evidence provided in Dr. Becker's essays that he is operating on the basis of an understanding of the authority and interpretation of Scripture that is at odds with the Lutheran Confessions (see, for example, the Preface to *The Book of Concord*; FC Ep Summary, 2; FC SD Summary, 9, 20; Ap XXIII, 71; Ap VII, 27; Ap XII, 106, etc.) and the scripturally and confessionally-based position of the Synod as set forth in the *Brief Statement* (see paragraphs 1-3) and *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* (see especially "The Infallibility of Scripture" and "Historical Methods of Interpretation"). Statements such as the following in Dr. Becker's essays reflect a view of and approach to Scripture that are clearly incompatible with the Synod's doctrinal position on the authority and interpretation of Holy Scripture:

Those biblical texts that imply the subordination of women to men are the result of an influence of Aristotle on a pattern of patriarchy found in Hellenistic Judaism that had been adopted by some early Christians but was not normative in all places or for later times. While traditional Judaism and some early Christian writings view the inferior ontology of women as obvious, this was not the dominant view in early Christianity, especially in the Johannine and Pauline communities that stressed the Christian mandate to love as Christ loves and that subordinated traditional patterns of female-male relationships on the basis of power and authority to a pattern that was based on Christian love and the dynamic working of the Holy Spirit to equip both men and women for ministry. In this later view, great importance is put upon mutual service under Christ. Thus, the views toward women that one finds in Aristotle and Jewish rabbinic thought seem sharply opposed to a central consequence of the gospel, namely, that "in Christ there is neither male and [sic] female" (Galatians 3:28). (*CFPT*, 3)

While some biblical texts suggest such an "ordering" of female subordination to men, these texts no longer make any sense in contemporary western, scientific societies. The cosmological foundation on which such an "order of creation" argument rests has been overturned by knowledge from the natural sciences and by cultural changes in the west over the past three hundred years. Given the plethora of data in nature that support the theory of the evolution of human beings, is it really possible any longer to maintain with theological integrity that a man ("Adam") was created "first" and a woman ("Eve") created "second"? Has not this traditional view been overturned by physical data and contemporary scientific investigation of nature and natural history, in a manner similar to what has taken place in the interpretation of those biblical texts that imply and support a Ptolemaic, geocentric understanding of the universe? To argue that God

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actually created the man first, and then the woman from the rib of the man, and that this chronological sequence has significance for the ontological authority of men over women, is as outdated as the traditional interpretations of those biblical texts that speak of the earth being founded on pillars, of the earth not moving, of the sun going around the earth, of the sun rising and setting, of the earth as the center of God's creation, and so on. Just as the data from Galileo's investigations confirmed the Copernican theory and brought about the end of literalistic interpretations of these cosmological passages, so the data from natural history and anthropology have spelled the end of this kind of literalistic "order of creation" construct. (CFPT, 3-4)

If a woman has been given the creaturely gifts of intellect, an aptitude for teaching, and the Spirit's gifts for ministry, her gifts ought to be used in service to the church. Why should that final, 23rd chromosomal pair be more important to the "ordering" of a woman to a man in the church than the gospel itself? (CFPT, 4)

While no Christian theologian will teach that modern evolutionary theories offer a sufficient explanation for the origin of the world or a complete and exclusive account for the nature of human beings as creatures of God, Christian theology has the responsibility to let "nature speak on its own terms." Theology cannot interfere with scientific investigation by simply appealing to "what the Bible says." (SLM, 9)

Scripture itself indicates that we can trust the facts of nature and need not try to re-interpret their "speech" to us, even if such "speech" apparently conflicts with our particular readings of Scripture. If there is such an apparent conflict, then we need to re-examine our interpretation of Scripture and our understanding of nature.... Since God's "book of nature" is reliable and not deceptive, and since human reason is a creaturely gift of God the Creator, human reason is a generally reliable means for "reading" that God-given "book." (SLM, 11)

Of course a "figurative" interpretation of Genesis 1-9 (not to mention the many other passages in Scripture that speak of God as creator, of the world as God's creation, and of the new creation) does entail a revision of the traditional "creationist" manner of articulating the doctrines of creation, anthropology, and sin, and many Christians are deeply uncomfortable with such a prospect. This "discomfort" is at least as great as the discomfort many 16th-Century Christians must have felt in view of the revision to traditional teaching that the Copernican Theory entailed. As then, however, so also now: such modification would not necessarily undermine an orthodox understanding of creation, human beings, sin, and grace. For example, scientific data about the reality of physical death in the animal and plant kingdoms prior to origin of human beings (e.g., fossils of animals that lived long before the origin of human beings) must lead those who interpret the Bible in light of scientific knowledge to restate the nature of God's good creation prior to the advent of human sin (e.g., such a good creation must have included the reality of death prior to the existence of human beings) and the character of the historical origin of sin (e.g., the advent of sin is to be traced to the first hominids who disobeyed God's will but not necessarily to their having eaten from a tree in an actual place called the Garden of Eden several thousand years ago). (SLM, 12)

Statements such as these by Dr. Becker speak for themselves in conveying his understanding of the authority and interpretation of the Scriptures. As noted above, this understanding is

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clearly incompatible with the Synod's doctrinal position on the authority and interpretation of Scripture. For this reason, the Commission affirms once again its determination that Dr. Becker has not provided sufficient basis for his claim that the position of the Synod is in need of revision, and expresses once again its conviction that Dr. Becker is in dissent from the position of the Synod not only on the specific issues of the ordination of women to the pastoral office and the issues of creation and evolution, but also on the more foundational position of the Synod on which these positions are based: namely, the authority, infallibility, and faithful interpretation of the Holy Scriptures themselves.

The CTCR therefore appeals to Dr. Matthew Becker, by the mercies of God, to reconsider his dissent and to reexamine, on the basis of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, his positions on the authority of Scripture and the two issues concerning which he has expressed dissent, even as the Synod expects him to honor and uphold the doctrinal positions of the Synod.

Conclusion: "Life Together"

The Synod's process for expressing dissent begins with this reminder: "While retaining the right of brotherly dissent, members of the Synod are expected as part of the life together within the fellowship of the Synod to honor and uphold the resolutions of the Synod" (Bylaw 1.8).

Numerous resolutions of the Synod have been adopted over the years that help to explain this expectation and how it relates to the *safo Scriptura* principle, unconditional subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, and questions of Christian conscience. Attached to this response is one particularly significant and time-honored resolution that merits careful review and reflection by all members of the Synod, 1971 Res. 2-21 "To Uphold Synodical Doctrinal Resolutions." It seems fitting to close this response by quoting the final two paragraphs of the preamble of this resolution:

The object of the Synod, as stated in Article III, 1, of the Constitution, is (1) to conserve and promote a unity in which all are "united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor.1:10), and (2) to avoid schism caused by contrary doctrine (Rom.16:17). This purpose of the Synod is defeated when individuals are permitted to teach in accordance with their private views, for then there can be no such thing as a synodical position, and a meaningful corporate confessional commitment is impossible. Formal commitment of the Synod to a confessional base is pointless unless the Synod has the right as a synod to apply its confessional base definitively to current issues and thus conserve and promote unity and resist an individualism which breeds schism.

The Synod holds that a member cannot justly charge the Synod with "binding his conscience" when the Synod, in applying its confessional base to current issues, adopts doctrinal statements which it believes to be in harmony with the Word of God and requires that such resolutions be considered normative for every member. A doctrine of Scripture remains a doctrine of Scripture despite the fact that it is formulated in synodically adopted resolutions. If a member cannot for conscience' sake accept a doctrinal resolution of the Synod, he has the obligation and opportunity through mutually approved procedure to challenge such a resolution with a view to effecting the changes he deems necessary. Failing in that, he is completely free by reason of his wholly voluntary association with the Synod to obey his conscience and disassociate himself from the Synod.

¹ See *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* for a discussion of critically related issues such as the proper (ministerial) and improper (magisterial) use of reason in approaching and interpreting Scripture, the relationship between the Gospel and Scripture (material and formal principles), the role of historical and scientific methods in Biblical interpretation, etc.

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Meanwhile every member of the Synod is held to abide by, act, and teach in accordance with the Synod's resolutions.

Adopted by the CTCR
November 11, 2011

APPENDIX III



FREE EXERCISE OF RELIGION: Putting Beliefs into Practice

An Open Letter from Religious Leaders in the United States to All Americans

Dear Friends,

Religious institutions are established because of religious beliefs and convictions. Such institutions include not only churches, synagogues, mosques, and other places of worship, but also schools and colleges, shelters and community kitchens, adoption agencies and hospitals, organizations that provide care and services during natural disasters, and countless other organizations that exist to put specific religious beliefs into practice. Many such organizations have provided services and care to both members and non-members of their religious communities since before the Revolutionary War, saving and improving the lives of countless American citizens.

As religious leaders from a variety of perspectives and communities, we are compelled to make known our protest against the incursion of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) into the realm of religious liberty. HHS has mandated that religious institutions, with only a narrow religious exception, must provide access to certain contraceptive benefits, even if the covered medications or procedures are contradictory to their beliefs. We who oppose the application of this mandate to religious institutions include not only the leaders of religious groups morally opposed to contraception, but also leaders of other religious groups that do not share that particular moral conviction.

That we share an opposition to the mandate to religious institutions while disagreeing about specific moral teachings is a crucial fact. Religious freedom is the principle on which we stand. Because of differing understandings of moral and religious authority, people of good will can and often do come to different conclusions about moral questions. Yet, even we who hold differing convictions on specific moral issues are united in the conviction that no religious institution should be penalized for refusing to go against its beliefs. The issue is the First Amendment, not specific moral teachings or specific products or services.

The HHS mandate implicitly acknowledged that an incursion into religion is involved in the mandate. However, the narrowness of the proposed exemption is revealing for it applies only to religious organizations that serve or support their own members. In so doing, the government is establishing favored and disfavored religious organizations: a privatized religious organization that serves only itself is exempted from regulation, while one that believes it should also serve the public beyond its membership is denied a religious exemption. The so-called accommodation and the subsequent Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (AN-PRM) do little or nothing to alleviate the problem.

No government should tell religious organizations either what to believe or how to put their beliefs into practice. We indeed hold this to be an unalienable, constitutional right. If freedom of religion is a constitutional value to be protected, then institutions developed by religious groups to implement their core beliefs in education, in care for the sick or suffering, and in other tasks must also be protected. Only by doing so can the free *exercise* of religion have any meaning. The HHS mandate prevents this free exercise. For the well-being of our country, we oppose the application of the contraceptive mandate to religious institutions and plead for its retraction.

Sincerely yours,

Leith Anderson
President
National Association of Evangelicals

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Sister Loraine Marie Maguire, l.s.p.
Provincial Superior, Baltimore Province
Little Sisters of the Poor

Gary M. Benedict
President
The Christian and Missionary Alliance U.S.

Bishop Harry R. Jackson Jr.
Senior Pastor, Hope Christian Church
Bishop, Fellowship of International Churches

The Rev. John A. Moldstad
President
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Bishop John F. Bradosky
Chancellor
North American Lutheran Church

The Very Rev. Dr. John A. Jillions
Chancellor
Orthodox Church in America

Deaconess Cheryl D. Naumann
President
Concordia Deaconess Conference
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod





The Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson
Archbishop of St. Louis

The Most Blessed Jonah
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada
Orthodox Church in America

The Rev. Samuel Rodríguez
President
NHCLC
Hispanic Evangelical Association

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York
President
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Imam Faizul R. Khan
Founder and Leader
Islamic Society of Washington Area

Sister Joseph Marie Ruessmann,
R.S.M., J.D., J.C.D., M.B.A.
Generalate Secretary
Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan

Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, S.V.
Superior General of the Sisters of Life

The Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky
Director of External Affairs
and Interchurch Relations
Orthodox Church in America

The Rev. Mark Schroeder
President
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Sister Barbara Anne Gooding,
R.S.M.
Director, Department of Religion
Saint Francis Health System

The Most Rev. William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore
Chairman
USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty

L. Roy Taylor
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the
Presbyterian Church in America

Sister Margaret Regina Halloran,
l.s.p.
Provincial Superior, Brooklyn Province
Little Sisters of the Poor

Sister Maria Christine Lynch, l.s.p.
Provincial Superior, Chicago Province
Little Sisters of the Poor

Sister Constance Carolyn Veit, l.s.p.
Communications Director
Little Sisters of the Poor

Dr. George O. Wood
General Superintendent
The General Council of the Assemblies of God



APPENDIX IV

SPECIFIC MINISTRY PASTOR (SMP) TASK FORCE

Report to the President

Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Task Force
September 1, 2012

Introduction

With this document the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Task Force delivers its final report to the President of the Synod. In his January 26, 2012 appointment letter to the members of the task force, President Matthew Harrison requested that the task force “commence a thorough evaluation of the SMP program,” with staff assistance to be provided by Rev. Dr. Glen Thomas, Executive Director of the Synod’s Office of Pastoral Education. In the letter he also stated his “deepest concern”:

If the Synod fails to be very deliberate about the nature, size, and growth of this program, we may very well jeopardize residential seminary education altogether and severely compromise the integrity of the ministerium of the LCMS in the long term.

The President asked that the task force answer the following questions regarding the SMP program and related issues, its report to be completed by September 1, 2012:

1. What are the current alternate routes into the pastoral office, and what has been the long-term trend of all those routes with respect to numbers, curriculum, requirements, location of programs, cost? Where does the SMP program fit into this mix, and what impact, if any, has the SMP program had on other programs?
2. What is the bylaw and Synod resolution history of the SMP program?
3. Is the intent of the Synod in convention being carried out by the current program? The program was advocated as a way to provide pastoral care for small and struggling rural and urban parishes, but it appears that a great many SMP participants are associated with large church staffs and mission planting.
4. Do we have statistics for the number of licensed laymen serving in each district, or eligible for such service? Is there any uniform process for this activity? Was not the SMP program created to greatly reduce or eliminate the practice of “licensing” (which has been specifically and virtually rejected throughout the history of the Missouri Synod as being contrary to both Scripture and the Confessions)?
5. What are the dynamics of the SMP program with respect to the seminaries? What are the financial ramifications? Is the SMP program profitable? What is the comparative staff time required for such students? Why do we have some 125 SMP students registered at the St. Louis seminary, and only a dozen or so at Ft. Wayne? Why did not or could not the seminaries cooperate on one program?
6. I am hearing of a number of troubling situations involving SMP vicars. Please survey the seminaries, district presidents, and others involved so that problems may be addressed.
7. How are SMP vicars and clergy performing? Are they following the confessional commitments of the Synod? Are they effective in ministry?
8. How may the program be improved? What should be its scope so that we retain flexibility for special circumstances, yet clearly do not jeopardize residential seminary education?

President Harrison closed his letter by stating his hope that the work of the task force would help the Synod move forward in facing “some very hard questions,” specifically mentioning seminary funding and the licensing of non-ordained persons to carry out the duties of the pastoral office.

This report will be structured in seven parts, according to the following general outline:

Introduction

- I. **First Things First: The SMP Program in Its Context (p. 399)**
- II. **Process Used to Carry Out Assignment (p. 400)**
- III. **Information Gathered (p. 401)**
 - A. 2007 Res. 5-01B
 - B. Results of Task Force Evaluation of White Paper
 - C. Other Data
- IV. **What Others Have Written (p. 406)**
 - A. About the Importance of Well-Trained Clergy
 - B. About Contextual v. Residential Seminary Education
 - C. About the Role of the Lay Person in Answer to Modern-Day Ministry Needs
- V. **What Participants Have Said (p. 409)**
 - A. Strengths of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program
 - B. Concerns Regarding the Specific Ministry Pastor Program
 - C. Suggestions for Improvement
- VI. **Recommendations (p. 412)**
- VII. **The Best Way Forward: A More Acceptable Outcome (p. 413)**

Conclusion

I. First Things First: The SMP Program in Its Context

As the task force carried out its assignment to “commence a thorough evaluation of the SMP program,” it reflected upon the significance of its assignment in light of its context—called by A.H. Schwermann in an essay to the 1954 South Dakota District convention “the Glorious Office of the Holy Ministry.” In his words,

The Office of the Holy Ministry did not come into existence because in the flux of human events man gradually planned and evolved it. No; it was God who planned it and gave it to the Church... Counselors tell us that there are today in North America about 30,000 different professions and occupations. Some of these were planned by seamen, some by aviators, some by surgeons, some by engineers, some by farmers, and one of these 30,000 was planned by God—the Office of the Holy Ministry.

The task force in no way wishes to diminish the importance of other professions and occupations, of Christian vocation and the priesthood of all believers—also important and God-given. He does His work in all these different ways. But it is the uniquely God-given office of the public ministry, earth’s most important and glorious work, that is discussed in this report. This high regard for the office is repeatedly supported throughout Holy Scripture, some of which passages are read whenever men are ordained and installed into this highest of offices. Many of these passages are also referenced in the 1973 document of the Synod’s Commission on Theology and Church Relations, “The Ministry in Its Relation to the Christian Church.”

The CTCR document also describes the pastoral office in relation to the total Gospel ministry:

The office of pastor is therefore a most important office in the service of the Gospel. People who have, through Word and Sacrament, been incorporated into the body of Christ need to be gathered into congregations where they continue to be instructed in the Word, nourished with the Sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord, and in every way

edified in Christ and equipped for the church's mission in the world. The pastor stands in the place of Christ in his relation to the people of God. He is entrusted by God through the call of the church with the responsibility of expounding and proclaiming the Word of God, of administering the Sacraments, and of exercising supervision of the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made him overseer (cf. Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17).

Perhaps no passage better underscores the significance and glory of the Office of the Holy Ministry than the Old Testament lesson appointed for the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost that was recently read in many Synod congregations. Speaking through His prophet, the Lord chastises those who were to be caring for His people: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and you have not attended to them." He then describes what is to be the true nature of the Office of the Holy Ministry: "I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing" (Jeremiah 23:1–6, emphases added).

The Office of the Holy Ministry was instituted by the Lord of the Church to care for His flock, making it the most important responsibility in the world. This understanding of this office, the "Glorious Office of the Holy Ministry," now provides the context for the following discussion of the SMP program.

II. Process Used to Carry Out Assignment

In response to the President's assignment and with his series of questions in mind, the task force met six times over the past seven months, one of the meetings via conference call, two of the meetings on the campuses of the Synod's seminaries.

With staff assistance from Dr. Glen Thomas, Executive Director of the Synod's Office of Pastoral Education, the task force gathered information regarding the SMP program and related topics, beginning with the resolutions of the Synod leading up to the action of the 2007 convention that initiated the SMP program. The task force carefully examined 2007 convention Res. 5-01B "To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program" and Res. 5-02 "To Address Licensed Lay Deacons" (attached to this report as *Addendum A*, pp. 37ff.). It also reviewed video tapes of the presentation of the resolution to the 2007 convention. For objective information regarding the SMP program since its inception until the present, the task force relied on the March 15, 2012 "White Paper" prepared and distributed by the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee (attached as *Addendum B*, pp. 44ff.).

For additional information and opinion, the task force obtained input from those most closely involved in the SMP program:

- Direct input from eight (8) current members of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Committee;
- In-person conversations with seven (7) members of the Fort Wayne seminary faculty and staff most closely involved with the SMP program;
- In-person conversations with six (6) members of the St. Louis seminary faculty and staff most closely involved with the SMP program;
- Documents and other materials prepared by the seminaries to explain and promote the SMP program to the Council of Presidents, prospective participants, and the general public;
- Conversations with or email input from eleven (11) district presidents with SMP program participants in their districts;
- Conversations with or email input from numerous supervising pastors (mentors) of SMP program participants;
- Conversations with or email input from numerous SMP participants at all class levels.

Task force members also prepared personally for this assignment by reading books and articles germane to the subject, including:

- "A Letter from C.F.W. Walther to Jacob Aall Ottesen." Trans. William M. Cwirla. *Concordia Journal* 18, 1992;

- "A Proposal to Address Needs for Pastoral Ministry in Specialized Situations." Paper prepared by L. Dean Hempelmann in response to 2001 Res. 3-08B;
- "A Tale of Two Seminaries." Jackson W. Carroll, Barbara G. Wheeler, Daniel O. Aleshire, and Penny Long Marler. *Christian Century*, February 1997;
- "Absent in Body: Is Spiritual Formation Possible in Online Christian Education?" Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe. *Christianity Today*, May 2010;
- Being There—Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools." Jackson W. Carroll, Barbara G. Wheeler, Daniel O. Aleshire, and Penny Long Marler. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997;
- *Christ's Church: Her Biblical Roots, Her Dramatic History, Her Saving Presence, Her Glorious Future*. Bo Giertz, trans. Hans Andr. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010;
- *Christian Dogmatics*. Francis Pieper. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950;
- *Church and Ministry: The Collected Papers of the 150th Anniversary Theological Convocation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*. Jerald C. Joerz and Paul T. McCain, eds. LCMS Office of the President, 1998;
- "Costs for Online Education Versus Residential." Get Educated Consumer Reporting Team. GetEducated.com (2011);
- "Duties of an Evangelical Synod." *At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth*. C.F.W. Walther 1829. Trans. Matthew Harrison. Lutheran Legacy, 2009;
- *Earthen Vessels: Hope Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools*. Daniel O. Aleshire. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2008;
- *Ecclesiastes*. James Bollhagen. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2011;
- *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*. Charles R. Foster, Lisa Dahill, Larry Golemon, Barbara Wang Tolentino, Lee S. Shulman, William M. Sullivan. JB Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2006;
- "Employers Weigh In on How They View Online Degrees." Sarah Baraba. *Metro St. Louis Suburban Journals*, July 30, 2012;
- "Evangelism in the Early Church." William C. Weinrich. *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 45 (April 1981);
- *God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations (Pulpit and Pew)*. Jackson W. Carroll. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2006;
- *Luther's Works* Vol. 26. Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974;
- "Pastors Who Play God." Timothy Saleska. *Concordia Journal* 31 (2005);
- *Preaching to Young Theologians: Sermons of Robert Preus*. Klemet Preus. Luther Academy Publishing, 2010;
- "Preparation of Commissioned Lay Pastors—A Study of the Features of Representative Programs." Barbara G. Wheeler. New York: Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education, 2008;
- "Presbytery Survey About Commissioned Lay Pastors." Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Louisville, Kentucky, 2007;
- "Ready to Lead?—The Problems with Lay Pastors." Barbara Wheeler. *Christian Century*, July 2010;
- *Reclaiming Patterns of Pastoral Ministry: Jesus and Paul*. Jonathan Grothe. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988;
- "Rethinking Theological Education Again." Phyllis Anderson. ELCA Website, January/February 2010;
- "Sanctification in Lutheran Theology." *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 49 (1985);
- "Strategies for God-Talk in a Pluralistic Society." *Witness and Worship in Pluralistic America*. Charles Arand. St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 2003;

- “Teaching New Dogs Old Tricks: Reconsidering Theological Education in a Postmodern Society.” Paul Jacobs. *American Theological Inquiry* July 2008;
- *The Anonymous God: The Church Confronts Civil Religion and American Society*. David L. Adams and Kenneth Schurb. St. Louis: Lutheran News, Inc.;
- “The Call Into the Glorious Office of the Holy Ministry.” A.H. Schwermann. Convention Essay to the 1954 South Dakota District Convention;
- “The iSeitiinary Cometh—Online Education is Jolting Seminaries with Rapid Enrollment Growth.” John W. Kennedy. *Christianity Today*, April 2010;
- “The Ministry and Its Relation to the Christian Church As Seen On the Basis of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions with Applications to Specific Problems of the Church of Our Time.” Report of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (March 1973);
- “The Problems with Lay Pastors: Ready to Lead?” Barbara Wheeler. *Christian Century*, July 13, 2010;
- “The Sheep and the Voice of the Shepherd: The Ecclesiology of the Lutheran Confessional Writings.” Robert Kolb. *Concordia Journal* 36;
- “The Spirit’s Gifts in the Confessions and in Corinth.” *Concordia Journal* 18, no. 3 (1992);
- “Theological Education in the Changing Context of World Christianity—an Unfinished Agenda.” Dietrich Werner. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35, no. 2;
- *Three Books about the Church*. Wilhelm Loehe. Trans. and ed. James L. Schaaf. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969, p. 59;
- “Time for Reflection: High-Quality Online Education Requires Careful Thought and Ample Resources.” Jennifer Woodruff Tait. *In Trust*, 2010 www.intrust.org;
- “Who Makes a Pastor?” *Concordia Journal* 26 (2000);
- “Why Have Theological Schools?” Daniel Aleshire. *ATS Colloquy* (November/December 2004).

III. Information Gathered

The Synod’s 1989 convention Res. 3-05B, “To Adopt Recommendations of Lay Worker Study Committee Report as Amended,” resolved: “It is in the best interest of the Synod and an effective means of promoting the Gospel that the ministry of lay people be regarded as a way to multiply, enhance, and extend the ministry of the church.” The resolution noted that approximately 135 lay ministers were already serving in the Synod in ongoing Word and Sacrament ministries without the benefit of guidelines for their service. The resolution discussed “Forms of Lay Ministry” and “Nomenclature” and offered “Guidelines for Congregations regarding the Performance of Pastoral Functions When No Ordained Pastor Is Available,” specifically addressing preaching, leading worship services, administering Holy Communion, and publicly administering the Office of the Keys.

Res. 3-05B prompted a variety of responses from the conventions that followed. In 1992, Res. 3-08, “To Provide for Ordination of Certain Laymen Involved in Word and Sacrament Ministry” (*Proceedings*, p. 115), added a bylaw measure recommended by the Standing Committee for Pastoral Ministry allowing licensed lay ministers having more than 10 years’ experience in preaching and sacrament ministry to be ordained when approved by the Synod’s Colloquy Committee.

1995 Res. 3-07A, “To Establish the Procedure by Which Laymen Licensed to Perform Functions of the Pastoral Office Be Called and Ordained into the Ministerium of the LCMS” (*Proceedings*, pp. 120ff.), resolved that “any layman who is licensed to perform pastoral functions under the guidelines of said Res. 3-05B be required (if he wishes to continue preaching and leading in public worship)

to apply for admission into the pastoral ministry of the Synod” by means of a “common program of theological education” established by the seminaries. This was to happen within “a grace period of no longer than two years,” with district presidents being permitted to extend this grace period beyond two years with the consent of the Council of Presidents.

In 1998, late overture L5-64 “To Establish an Ordained Deaconate” (one of several overtures on the same subject) was submitted to the convention by the Board for Higher Education. It was to address that which was described in the resolution’s rationale section:

There is a growing number of congregations whose pastoral needs cannot be provided by full-time pastors. Frequently, this is due to financial constraints in rural and urban areas, but now an increasing number of immigrants need to be reached in their native language. It is not unusual for a congregation to have immigrants from places such as Sudan, India, and Asia, necessitating pastoral care in several languages. Our Synod needs to meet these challenges in rural and urban congregations as well as the rapidly growing opportunities among immigrant groups.

The overture provided a detailed plan for the institution of an ordained deacon program in the Synod. The convention instead adopted 1998 Res. 5-01 “To Continue Support of Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO)” (*Proceedings*, p. 127) which recognized the increasing number of special-need pastoral vacancies and “a need to provide off-site seminary education to meet these special needs.” It commended the DELTO program to the Synod as a means “to provide a reasonable educational process supervised by the two seminaries.” The 1998 convention also adopted Res. 5-09, “To Convene Task Force to Provide Pastoral Assistance Where Full-Time Ministry Cannot Be Maintained” (*Proceedings*, p. 138), which asked the Board for Higher Education “to convene a task force to create a church worker position that will respond to the urgent needs” that had been identified by a consultation group appointed by the President of the Synod. It also empowered the Synod’s Board of Directors “to authorize a provisional implementation of this church worker position within the next triennium.”

In response, the following convention (2001) adopted Res. 3-08B, “To Address Needs and Opportunities for Pastoral Ministry in Specialized Situations,” which thanked the task force for its work, authorized districts to continue training lay deacons, called for an oversight committee to revise the DELTO program to meet the needs of the church, and rescinded 1995 Res. 3-07A (which had required licensed laymen to complete a seminary program for ordination).

Following the 2001 convention, Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann, Executive Director of the Synod’s Board for Higher Education, offered “A Proposal to Address Needs for Pastoral Ministry in Specialized Situations.” In addition to sections on theological assumptions, educational presuppositions, objectives and desired outcomes, and discussion of issues associated with such a program, his proposal specifically called attention to the “Rationale” portion of the 2001 resolution which spoke of “a significant need for pastors to serve in a number of specialized ministry situations” such as:

- English as a second language (ESL), including deaf ministry
- Small/vacant congregations that are unable to afford/call a full-time pastor
- Mission opportunities that are in remote locations and special areas
- Multiple staff situations that are utilizing resident personnel.

The DELTO oversight committee concluded that the DELTO program would not be able to answer sufficiently the need for training additional pastors. Dr. Hempelmann’s “Proposal to Address Needs for Pastoral Ministry in Specialized Situations” provided the foundation for the discussions that ultimately led to 2007 Res. 5-01B, “To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program.”

Meanwhile, the 2004 convention adopted 2004 Res. 5-09, “To Affirm District Programs that Equip Laity for Ministry” (*Proceedings*,

p. 143). It noted that 19 districts had developed lay ministry education and training programs and recognized, affirmed, and encouraged such work by districts. It also instructed the Council of Presidents and the new Board for Pastoral Education to develop (with the guidance of seminary faculties) “a standardized core curriculum for district lay-training programs and coordinate a national listing of participants.”

2007 Res. 5-01B, which established the SMP program, also called for a study of “situations currently served by licensed lay deacons to determine whether there continues to be a genuine need for this program within the Synod and to present a report with recommendations to the 2010 convention of the Synod.” As a result, 2010 Res. 5-03A, “To Address Lay Deacons” (*Proceedings*, pp. 132ff.), proposed accepting the report and recommendations of the requested study, *i.e.*, that district deacon instructional programs be retained in the LCMS and that a series of recommendations be implemented following the 2013 Synod convention. The resolution also provided a plan through which deacons would be permitted to preach and administer the sacraments in certain cases, and ultimately be examined, called, and ordained within three years as “assisting pastors.” This resolution was not adopted but was referred back to the floor committee. It was not brought back to the floor of the convention for further consideration.

A. 2007 Res. 5-01B

2007 Resolutions 5-01B and 5-02 along with a videotaped record of the presentation of the resolution to the 2007 convention of the Synod have served as primary sources of information for the task force. They reveal the content and intentions of the SMP program as explained to and understood by the convention’s delegates at the time of the resolutions’ adoption. The following are excerpts from the resolution and from the floor committee’s presentation and responses to questions that relate to current discussions of issues associated with the SMP program.

Specific Ministry Pastor Concept:

- Res. 5-01B: “Historically, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its antecedents have attempted to meet [Word and Sacrament] needs by preparing men as quickly as possible to be called and ordained in order to meet the urgent mission needs of the church. Such men were prepared to catechize, preach, and provide pastoral care. Within the LCMS, the need for such a track to ordination was initially embodied in the seminary begun by F. C. D. Wyneken and Wilhelm Loehe in Fort Wayne, Indiana... The Specific Ministry Pastor program seeks to address the needs of the church by reinstating a multiple-track approach... [E]merging needs and economic pressure often make it impossible to call a pastor who has received a broad and thorough theological understanding to every congregation or mission station where, nevertheless, people need to hear the Gospel.”
- Committee 5: “[An] improvement on the DELTO program... designed to meet specific needs which in part are not being filled by traditional seminary graduates... speaking to the needs for pastoral ministry in specific contexts... doing so in a theologically responsible way... the next level of doing distance education... and in that regard will supersede DELTO... In short, the Specific Ministry Pastor program is an in-ministry program of pastoral education that leads to call and ordination within and for special ministry situations, and thus it meets specific needs for pastoral ministry that are not being met by traditional seminary students.”

Theological Integrity

- Res. 5-01B: “Amidst today’s mission challenges, including the persistent need to provide pastoral ministry in ways that go beyond the current residential models, we will do well to engage the best collaborative thinking and creativity that we can muster to provide missional pastoral leadership driven by the depth of theological integrity that

remains a hallmark of our church and its ministerium... This proposal is offered as a sincere and thoughtful attempt to address real-world needs with an urgency for bringing the Gospel to a dying world and to do so with theological integrity with respect to the doctrine of the ministry and our commitment to high standards of pastoral education and formation.” (p. 133)

- Committee 5: “Unlike other programs that have been designated specifically for ethnic membership, we are not setting any kind of lower standard for ethnic ministry. We are setting the same standard for everybody... In short, he is a specific ministry pastor, a called and ordained servant of the Word for one specific ministry area. He is a pastor ably prepared to serve his congregation faithfully, taught by the teachers who teach all our pastors.”

Specificity

- Res. 5-01B: “The mission focus ignited by the Ablaze! movement has generated the need to identify laymen already in place in local community to serve as church planters and missionaries... In addition to the original objective of the Distance Education Leading To Ordination (DELTO) Program to provide pastoral ministry where full-time ministry cannot be maintained, such specific ministries will include such categories as church planter, staff pastor, and others as needs arise... Specific ministry pastors are recognized as just that: pastors certified for calls into specific ministry contexts, who serve under the supervision not only of the district president but also of a designated general ministry pastor. As such, they are eligible for calls into a similar specific ministry context, where they continue under the supervision of a general ministry pastor... The needs for providing pastoral ministry in specific and specialized situations where a traditionally prepared seminary candidate or pastor is not available continue to multiply... Our Synod needs to find a way to provide for an increase in pastoral ministry to meet such needs of the church, especially in light of the mission challenges of today’s world... Our Synod has resolved to plant 2,000 new congregations by 2017, for which a net gain of 2,000 pastors will be needed.” (pp. 133, 135, 136)
- Committee 5: “In short, the Specific Ministry Pastor program is an in-ministry program of pastoral education that leads to call and ordination within and for special ministry situations, and thus it meets specific needs for pastoral ministry that are not being met by traditional seminary graduates... Because his theological foundation is educational and because his education is limited to a specific ministry context in which he is being formed, his service is restricted to this place and under supervision... [L]imited to a specific context, but within the boundaries of his specific ministry where he provides Word and Sacrament, he is a pastor... An example of this in-service preparation was demonstrated in the introduction video to Saturday evening’s worship with the Lutheran Church and the Liberians settling in Virginia.”

Specific Ministry Context

- Res. 5-01B: “[S]pecific ministry pastor’ will be the designation for those educated for a specific ministry context through distance education... by developing a program that combines a commitment to faithfulness to a Lutheran theological confession with a missionary perspective and that is tailored by the preparation of men for service in specific kinds of ministries... [T]his foundational core will be both contextualized and specialized within and for a specific ministry... [T]he student will participate in several residential and field seminars aimed at cultivating the requisite ministry skills for his specific ministry context...” (pp. 133, 134).
- Committee 5: “Because his theological foundation is educational and because his education is limited to a specific ministry context in which he is being formed, his service is restricted to this place and under supervision... In short, he is a specific ministry pastor, a called and ordained servant of the Word for one specific ministry area... As a specific ministry pastor, his ministry is restricted to that specific congregation, which would be represented at a district convention, but a delegate to a national convention represents several congregations from the circuit.”

Distance v. Residential Education

- Res. 5-01B: “[The SMP curriculum] will be based on the following principles:... 4. A combination of distance education and residential components (likely through short-term seminars and the option to take courses within the residential curriculum)... the past years have provided the church, in general, and the seminaries, in particular, with substantial experimentation and experience with distance education models, including the evaluation of both the advantages and disadvantages... the Synod is presented with an opportunity to build on such experience and to coordinate and consolidate programs and curriculum into a more cohesive and comprehensive curriculum design that engages the best practices of educational design and pedagogy, including much of the current course materials already proven and in use... [The SMP proposal seeks to] utilize the advances in educational technology that allow for responsible pastoral education and formation through distance-education models” (pp. 134, 136).
- Committee 5: “[The SMP program offers] in-service preparation, contextual and distance education, ordination to those called for Word and Sacrament ministry in congregations, and a more comprehensive approach that encompasses diverse roots... the next level of doing distance education [noting that ATS accreditation standards] requires a residential component.”

Alternate Routes

- Res. 5-01B: “A variety of programs and routes leading to pastoral service have arisen at both district and seminary levels... The DELTO Oversight Committee, after concluding its original assignment, was given the further assignment by the President of the Synod to ‘study the various routes leading to ordination currently available, to study which routes leading to ordination would be most helpful to the Synod in producing a sufficient number of able and effective pastors to provide leadership to Synod’s congregation in fulfilling the Great Commission... [T]he Synod would benefit from a more coherent and comprehensive approach to pastoral education and certification for ministry in specialized and specific contexts... [T]he past years have provided the church, in general, and the seminaries, in particular, with substantial experimentation and experience with distance education models... [T]he Synod is presented with an opportunity to build on such experience and to coordinate and consolidate programs and curriculum into a more cohesive and comprehensive curriculum design that engages the best practices of education design and pedagogy... [The Synod seeks to] develop a more coherent and comprehensive model for pastoral education by which various routes leading to certification, call, and ordination are coordinated and potentially interrelated...” (pp. 136–137)
- Committee 5: “Unlike other programs that have been designated specifically for ethnic membership, we are not setting any kind of lower standard for ethnic ministry. We are setting the same standard for everybody.”

Curriculum

- Res. 5-01B: “The student will take a core curriculum so as to acquire a foundational competency in Lutheran theology. This foundational core will be both contextualized and specialized within and for a specific ministry... The preordination curriculum will equip the student in such a way that the church has confidence that the student will preach the Gospel in its truth and purity and conduct his ministry in conformity with Lutheran doctrine and practice. In order to do this, the preordination curriculum will address such basic competencies as Catechism, interpretation of Scripture, God and Christ and the work of Christ, the Sacraments, introduction to the Book of Concord, the conduct of worship, and preaching. The post-ordination curriculum will address these topics in greater depth and detail and will include such topics as OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions... [The student] will participate in courses and seminars comparable to those offered to residential seminary students... Any way of providing for

pastoral ministry must be faithful to our Lutheran Confessions, faithful to our historic commitment to a well-educated and well-formed ministerium... responsible theological education that provides the church with well-educated pastors, who as missional leaders are faithful to Lutheran theology and practice;...” (pp. 134, 135, 136)

- Committee 5: “[Students’ training] will lead to basic pastoral competencies within a couple of years, enabling the candidate to take ordination vows with integrity, having been examined and certified by the faculty, and continuing to build on this foundational education... Unlike other programs that have been designated specifically for ethnic membership, we are not setting any kind of lower standard... We are setting the same standard for everybody.”

Continuing Education

- Res. 5-01B: “The church should provide the opportunity for a pastor who has been certified and ordained to serve in a specific kind of ministry subsequently to be prepared to serve the church more broadly through a combination of further academic preparation, accumulated pastoral experience, and examination... The specific curriculum will be determined and developed by the seminary faculties... based on the following principles:... 5. The potential applicability of coursework for academic credit towards an M.Div... Students who have completed the Specific Ministry Pastor Program may decide to remain in their rostered status as ‘specific ministry pastor’ for the remainder of their ministry, or they may choose to pursue a growth path that leads to change in roster status to ‘general ministry pastor.’ It is envisioned that most students will pursue the second path, either through an M.Div. route or nondegree certification... [The Synod seeks to] develop a more coherent and comprehensive model for pastoral education by which various routes leading to certification, call, and ordination are coordinated and potentially interrelated, so that, for example, a student in a nonresidential certificate route might be able to engage also in a residential degree program.” (pp. 134, 135, 136–137)

Licensed Lay Deacons

- Res. 5-01B: “Lutherans affirm that there is only one Office of the Holy Ministry, established by God for the public conduct of the ministry of Word and Sacrament... All those who serve Christ and the church in the Office of the Holy Ministry exercise *de iure divino* (by divine authority) the power to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, administer the Sacraments, and exercise church discipline. There is no distinction within the one office with respect to this power and authority... All those who regularly and publicly perform the functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry should do so as those called to and placed into that office because ‘[i]t is taught among us that nobody should publicly teacher or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call’ (AC XIV)... [The Synod seeks to] respect our commitment to the doctrine of church and ministry, especially in light of AC XIV;...” (pp. 133, 136)
- Res. 5-02: “1989 Res. 3-05B, ‘To Adopt Recommendations of Lay Worker Study Committee Report as Amended,’ which authorized lay men to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry in certain circumstances as licensed lay deacons, was never intended to serve as an alternate route into the pastoral office... Resolved, That the Board for Pastoral Education and the Council of Presidents be requested to study the situations currently served by licensed lay deacons to determine whether there continues to be a genuine need for this program within the Synod and to present a report with recommendations to the 2010 convention of the Synod.” (p. 138)
- Committee 5: “[The SMP program is] not meant to deal with this issue... [The SMP program and the licensed deacon program] are apples and oranges... SMP is about training pastors, not about the diaconate.”

B. Results of Task Force Research of White Paper

As noted above, the task force relied for much of its objective information on the March 15, 2012 White Paper prepared and

distributed by the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee (attached as *Addendum B*). The following is a summarization of those portions of the White Paper that the task force believes are of particular significance to this report.

Enrollment History: Numbers of Students (*Addendum B*, p. 55)

When the on-campus orientation of the first group of students (“cohort”) took place in the fall of 2008, Concordia Seminary (“St. Louis”) began its program with 29 new students, while Concordia Theological Seminary (“Fort Wayne”) began with 26. After adding 25 students in the fall of 2009, 24 in the fall of 2010, 19 in the fall of 2011, and a total of 34 new students in the spring quarters the latter three years, St. Louis had enrolled 131 SMP students. According to the White Paper, 20 students left the program during the four years, leaving 111 enrolled in the St. Louis program by early 2012. During the same period of time, Fort Wayne added 10 students to the original 26 in 2009, 8 more in 2010, and 7 more in 2011, for a grand total of 51 enrolled during the four years. Five students left the Fort Wayne program during the four years, leaving 46 enrolled by early 2012. In short, SMP enrollment at both seminaries after four years totaled 157 students, 25 having left the program (16.5%) during the course of those years.

Enrollment History: Comparison of Student Body Composition (*Addendum B*, p. 58)

A topic of current discussion is the comparative size of the SMP student enrollment and the residential student enrollment at the seminaries, and the consequences of those comparative enrollments for the Synod’s seminaries going forward. The White Paper provides helpful information.

How do SMP enrollment numbers relate to residential student enrollment numbers? In St. Louis in 2008, the 29 new SMP students and the 93 new residential amounted to a ratio of 1 SMP to 3.2 residential students. In 2009 that ratio dropped to 1 SMP to 3.5 residential. And in 2010 and 2011, the ratio was 1 to 2.9 and 1 to 4.1 respectively. At Fort Wayne, the 2008 enrollment of 26 SMP and 55 residential resulted in a 1 SMP to 2.1 residential ratio, followed by ratios of 1 to 6.2; 1 to 6; and 1 to 5.1 students. The new student enrollments of the two seminaries combined and averaged out over four years resulted in a ratio of 1 SMP student to roughly 4 residential students.

When SMP total enrollment numbers are compared to the total residential populations of the seminaries, St. Louis’ 2008 SMP enrollment (29) compared to residential (408) resulted in a ratio of 1 SMP to 14.1 residential; 2009 total SMP (49) and residential (376) resulted in 1 SMP student to 7.7 residential; 2010 SMP (87) and residential (326) resulted in 1 SMP student to 3.7 residential; and 2011 SMP (111) and residential (309) resulted in 1 SMP student to 2.8 residential.

Making the same comparisons with Fort Wayne total enrollment numbers, the 2008 SMP enrollment (26) compared to the total residential population (252) resulted in a ratio of 1 SMP to 9.7 residential students. In 2009, total SMP enrollment (32) compared to total residential enrollment (246) resulted in a ratio of 1 SMP to 7.7 residential students. 2010 SMP (40) and residential (219) resulted in 1 SMP to 5.5 residential students, while the 2011 SMP enrollment (46) compared to the residential student population (182) left a ratio of 1 SMP to 4 residential students.

When combining the numbers for both seminaries, the 2008 total SMP enrollment (55) compared to the total residential enrollment (660) resulted in a ratio of 1 SMP to 12 residential students; the 2009 total SMP enrollment (81) compared to the total residential enrollment (622) resulted in a ratio of 1 SMP to 7.7 residential students; the 2010 total SMP enrollment (127) compared to the total residential

enrollment (545) resulted in a 1SMP to 4.3 residential enrollment; and the 2011 SMP enrollment (157) compared to the residential enrollment (491) resulted in a ratio of 1 SMP to 3.1 residential students.

Enrollment History: Types of Service (*Addendum B*, p. 60)

A topic of current discussion is the specific categories of service intended to be addressed by the Specific Ministry Pastor Program. In the minds of many, the program was to take the place of and assume the intentions of the DELTO program, preparing pastors for hard-to-serve ministries not suited to calling full time, residentially trained men. Res. 5-01B, while granting that to be the case in part, placed emphasis on other specific ministries such as mission developers and planters, staff pastors, and the like.

Initially, attempts were made to categorize types of service, resulting in more than a dozen categories, some with only one student identified (White Paper, p. 18). A March 2012 effort to categorize students in more general categories has resulted in a general picture of the students participating in the SMP program and the service they anticipate providing in the future.

With 154 of 157 current participants responding, 94 students (61%) identified themselves as “staff pastor (or vicar)” in a multi-pastor congregation, working primarily internally (e.g., youth, music, education, evangelism, or their congregation’s satellite site); 17 students (11%) identified themselves as “staff pastor (or vicar)” in a multi-pastor congregation working primarily externally (e.g., mission developer, church planter, etc.). Of 154 participants, therefore, 111 (72%) consider their work to be that of a staff pastor of a multi-pastor congregation.

Of the remaining 43 participants (28%), 30 students identified themselves as “sole pastor (or vicar)” providing Word and Sacrament ministry in an established site that is economically challenged (e.g., few people, remote location, etc.), one that cannot support a “general pastor” (e.g., with an M.Div. degree or Alternate Route certification). The remaining 13 students (8%) identified themselves as “sole pastor (or vicar)” working as mission developer or church planter (not working from the context of a multi-pastor congregation).

These numbers and percentages change somewhat when the 154 respondents identified what they anticipated would be their future service. Now 82 students (53%) anticipated serving as a staff pastor working internally in a large congregation; 20 students (13%) anticipated serving as a staff pastor working externally in mission outreach; 37 students (24%) anticipated serving as a sole pastor in an economically challenged site; and 15 students (10%) anticipated working in mission outreach apart from the context of a multi-pastor congregation.

This study also obtained information regarding current and future employment circumstances. Of those responding, 72 students (47%) are employed in another paid position in addition to their SMP service, while 81 students (53%) are not employed otherwise than their SMP position of service. When asked what they anticipated in their future service, 50 students (32%) stated that they anticipate employment in another paid position in addition to their SMP service, while 104 (68%) anticipate full-time employment as an SMP pastor.

Licensed Deacon Program (*Addendum B*, p. 91)

In the minds of many, the introduction of the SMP program was expected to reduce the use of the licensed lay deacon program that had been introduced by the 1989 Synod convention. Eighteen months following the 2007 convention, a special task force sought to gain from the Synod’s 35 district presidents their initial reaction to the SMP program by conducting a survey. The survey also sought to determine the extent to which licensed lay deacons were being used. Three years later (February 2012), the survey was repeated to compare data

received. Recognizing the existence of external variables such as economic conditions, a comparison of the data received by both surveys provides information regarding the continued significant presence of the licensed deacon program in the Synod, with little impact provided by the SMP program during its early years.

The 2009 and 2012 surveys asked district presidents to report the number of licensed lay deacons serving in their districts in eight (8) categories. Their responses were the following:

- (1) Lay deacons functioning nearly or completely autonomously in providing preaching and sacrament ministry, with only occasional communication with a supervising pastor (2009: 60; 2012: 32)
- (2) Lay deacons functioning nearly or completely autonomously in providing preaching ministry (no sacraments), with only occasional communication with a supervising pastor (2009: 5; 2012: 7)
- (3) Lay deacons functioning under direct supervision and serving as the primary providers of preaching and sacrament ministry (2009: 81; 2012: 70)
- (4) Lay deacons functioning under direct supervision and serving as the primary providers of preaching (not sacraments) ministry (2009: 13; 2012: 12)
- (5) Lay deacons functioning under direct supervision and serving as part-time providers of preaching and sacrament ministry (2009: 90; 2012: 152)
- (6) Lay deacons functioning under direct supervision and serving as part-time providers of preaching (not sacraments) ministry (2009: 71; 2012: 35)
- (7) Lay deacons functioning under direct supervision and serving as the primary providers of non-preaching, non-sacramental care (e.g., Bible studies, devotions, visitation, youth ministry, etc.) (2009: 24; 2012: 35)
- (8) Lay deacons functioning under direct supervision and serving as part-time providers of non-preaching, non-sacramental care (e.g., Bible studies, devotions, liturgy, visitation, youth ministry, etc.) (2009: 196; 2012: 259)

According to these numbers, the three-year interval during which the SMP program was getting underway actually saw an increase in the total number of licensed deacons serving in the Synod (2009: 540; 2012: 602).

While the number of deacons functioning nearly or completely autonomously in providing preaching and sacrament ministry (number 1 above) declined by nearly 50 percent (2009: 60; 2012: 32), the number of deacons serving as part-time providers of preaching and sacrament ministry (number 5 above) increased significantly (2009: 90; 2012: 152). Of particular interest to this task force report is the number of lay deacons regularly providing preaching and sacrament ministry (numbers 1, 3, and 5 above), totaling 231 in 2009 and 252 in 2012.

C. Other Data

The White Paper produced by the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee contains much additional information regarding the SMP program, including detailed outlines of the SMP curricula developed by each seminary, types of students enrolled (including age, marital status, educational background), tuition costs, participants' opinions (student, mentor, pastoral supervisor, and district president) opinions regarding the SMP program, and more.

As a result of its own additional research, the SMP Task Force offers the following to help to complete the context in which the general SMP program is operated.

Other Routes into the Pastoral Ministry

Currently, eight routes to the ordained ministry are provided by the Synod's seminaries, seven of those detailed on the Synod's Internet Website as follows.

Two residential programs are offered by both seminaries: Master of Divinity and Alternate (Certificate) Route:

- (1) Master of Divinity (M.Div.) This program currently forms two-thirds of LCMS pastoral ministry students. It involves three years of on-campus study, plus a one-year vicarage (internship). Graduates receive an M.Div. degree and may proceed to additional graduate-level study. Ordinarily, a baccalaureate degree is required for admission.
- (2) Alternate Route This program is open to laymen and male ministers of religion—commissioned who meet specific eligibility requirements involving both age and length of service. It involves a shorter period of study than does the M.Div. program (approximately one year less) and does not utilize Hebrew in the study of the Old Testament. It does not result in the awarding of an academic degree, though some students in this program may also qualify for admission to the Master of Arts degree program.

Two contextual programs are also offered by both seminaries, the Specific Ministry Pastor program, which is the subject of this report, and the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology. While the seminaries may use different pedagogical approaches for distance education, both fall under the descriptions provided by the Synod on its Website:

- (3) Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program The SMP program is a distance-based, specialized program of theological education at both seminaries and is available to those who are involved in a ministry site where they will serve as vicars for the first two years of the program. After successful completion of the first two years and certification by the seminary faculty, students are ordained and complete two more years of instruction. Participants have the approval and support of their home church and the LCMS district within which they serve. Each SMP is supervised by an experienced LCMS pastor during and after his program of study and faces restrictions concerning service in the pastoral ministry.
- (4) Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) EIIT is a specialized online education program at both seminaries providing theological education and formation for effective pastoral leadership within immigrant-based churches. The program is created for men providing pastoral leadership from within an ethnic immigrant community that is associated with the LCMS. Participants have the approval and support of their home church and the LCMS district within which they serve. Each student is supervised by an experienced LCMS pastor during his program of study.

The St. Louis seminary offers four additional contextual programs:

- (5) Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS) The CHS is operated by Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and offers seminary level pastoral and deaconess formation in the Spanish language. Prior to entering the seminary level, students complete entrance or congregational level preparatory courses. At the seminary level, courses are delivered through short-term intensive courses given on campus or at extension-satellite sites. Some courses are taught online. The curriculum takes serious consideration of how confessional Lutheran theology is applied in various United States Hispanic/Latino communities. Students in the program serve a two-year concurrent vicarage or deaconess internship under the mentorship of local LCMS pastors. Eligible students can also apply for a M.A. through the Graduate School.
- (6) Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT) The DIT at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, provides an alternative route to ordination for deaf and hard-of-hearing LCMS members. The curriculum provides the necessary broad foundation for missionary pastoral students. The DIT seminary-level program uses online classes with sign language video clips and mentoring by a local LCMS pastor. Annual on-campus seminars also are required.
- (7) Ethnic/Multi-Cultural Pastor Certification Program (EPCP/MPCP) The EPCP/MPCP training programs are a partnership between Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia University Irvine (California), and are available through the Irvine campus. This four-year program of study (101 master's credit hours) combines an accredited M.A. degree with contextual vicarage, church-planting activities. It is offered for those seeking to work in ethnic specific or in cross-cultural specific contexts.

An eighth route to ordained ministry was initiated by the 1992 convention with the adoption of Res. 3-08, “To Provide for Ordination of Certain Laymen Involved in Word and Sacrament Ministry”:

- (8) Recommended by the Standing Committee for Pastoral Ministry, a bylaw measure was added allowing licensed lay ministers having more than 10 years’ experience in preaching and sacrament ministry to be ordained when approved by the Synod’s Colloquy Committee.

Cost of Online Education

In another area of its research, the task force learned that the notion that online distance education is less expensive for the institution and for the student is largely false, as was also supported by conversations with seminary staff involved in the program. An online article by Get Educated, Inc., states,

A 2009 college costs survey by WCET and the Campus Computing Project found that among colleges which offer the same courses online as on-campus about half charge more for online courses. Only 20% reported that they charge less for online courses. (2011 *GetEducated.com*)

LCMS seminaries are no exception, where in addition to tuition fees, students must also assume expenses for travel to the seminaries for seminars, all without financial assistance from the seminaries. Expense is also an issue on the seminary’s side of the matter. Greater time requirements for teaching online courses compared to classroom courses have prompted increases in faculty salaries and/or other remunerations and the contracting of the services of teachers outside the regular faculty roster.

In her “Time for Reflection” article on this subject, Jennifer Woodruff Tait acknowledges that “even in the world of undergraduate education, online education is hardly a cash cow... Theological schools, with a less developed technology infrastructure than most undergraduate colleges—and fewer technology personnel—must be wary of assumptions that online courses will help the school’s bottom line.” She goes on to say:

Successful distance education programs require careful planning and significant commitments of time and institutional resources. They also require serious faculty participation in the entire process of program approval, curriculum design, and individual course development. (A disturbing trend: some schools are disconnecting the creation of an online course from teaching that course, assuming that “anyone” can teach a course once a content expert has designed it.) In this process, faculty members need time for extensive pedagogical reflection, because a traditional course cannot simply be transferred to the Internet without significant changes to methods of presentation and course learning activities... If a school is not prepared to commit its resources, it should rethink whether it is ready to take on a distance-education program.

IV. What Others Have Written

Task force members spent considerable time reading resources thought to be helpful to their task, including resources suggested by seminary faculty members and others. The following are excerpts from a sampling of the books and articles listed earlier in the report that are relevant both to the report and to further consideration by the Synod as it continues to wrestle with how best to provide ministers for the Synod and how best to provide the best possible training under today’s circumstances within and without the Synod. The task force believes that three areas of discussion beg particular attention: (A) The importance of well-trained clergy; (B) contextual v. residential education; and (C) the role of the layman in answer to modern-day ministry needs.

A. About the Importance of Well-Trained Clergy

Throughout the Synod’s discussions of meeting the ministry needs of today’s church, the importance of well-educated and well-trained clergy has remained high on the list of prerequisites. As it set in

motion the SMP program, 2007 Res. 5-01B was no exception. In response to the “emerging needs and economic pressures [that] often make it impossible to call a pastor who has received a broad and thorough theological education,” the Synod in this resolution also resolved its commitment to upholding “the Lutheran understanding of the pastor as theologian and insist[ing] on as much education as possible for the good of the church.”

Our church fathers said it more bluntly. Luther, zeroing in on the importance of language training, stated, “And let us be sure of this: we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages” (*American Edition*, 45:360). Francis Pieper picked up on Luther’s comments:

This *usus instrumentalis* of reason as a tool to hear, apprehend, and ponder the words of Scripture includes also the observance of the laws of language (grammar) and the laws of human thinking (logic) as used in Scripture, for God has adopted the human tongue and the human manner of thinking. God has deigned, as Luther again and again reminds us, to “become incarnate” in Scripture (*Scriptura Sacra est Deus incarnatus*)... Luther again and again remarks, especially in his polemical writings, that everyone who blunders in grammar must necessarily also blunder in theology.” (*Christian Dogmatics I*, pp. 197–198)

C.F.W. Walther, in his essay “Duties of an Evangelical Synod,” states (with no intended reflection on today’s SMP students),

A Synod is not truly Lutheran if it picks up vagrants on the streets, so long as they can mouth a few pious phrases, inducts them into the Office of the Ministry, perhaps even gives them a license so they can mess around [hantieren] with congregations for awhile to see if they can prove themselves. This is horrible beyond description!... Therefore we want to solemnly vow: We will exercise every precaution in the acceptance of pastors, and not think, “If we grow a bit, then we have gained something.” It is better for the synod to remain small and stand correctly than to be large and have in its midst those who mess around [herumwirtschaften] and do not bring the bread of life. That results in damnable false teachers, and that is precisely why they must first be thoroughly tested, as 1 Timothy 3:9–10 says: Those who have a clear understanding of “the mystery of faith” should “be tested first; then let them serve... if they prove themselves blameless.” (quoted in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, pp. 238–239)

Daniel Aleshire says the same less bluntly but equally urgently in his article, “Why Have Theological Schools?”:

At this time, in this culture, for the church in North America, I think seminaries are not only needed, they are needed more than ever... We need scholars to guide us—not by casual opinion—but by rich tradition of ancient people and with a sacred imagination borne of the Spirit. This groaning world needs good theological scholarship to guide its dealings with the intractable conflicts and prejudices that bad religion engenders. The church needs scholarship to guide it through the tendency to assume that only the practical counts and that personal perceptions are sacred truths. The scholarship the church needs requires intellectual talent, books in libraries, and time to read them. The church needs theological schools that are houses of faithful scholarship... (“Why Have Theological Schools?”)

Theological schools are called to prepare leaders for religious vocation. This vocation requires persons who are faithful and knowledgeable, who understand the Christian story, who are gifted for ministry and tutored in its exercise, who understand human frailty and faithful responses to it, who understand the gospel’s vision of wholeness, and who can exercise leadership to increase righteousness and justice. This kind of learning requires disciplined study, critical reflection on experience, and education aimed at cultivating an understanding of responsible life in faith. (*Earthen Vessels*, p. 21)

The proclamation of the Gospel in the American “culture” referred to by Aleshire is reflected upon by Charles Arand: “The temptation will be to speak about God apart from Christ so as not to scandalize people from other religions. And when Christ is brought up, it will be in a way that does not identify Him as the definitive, normative, and final revelation of God” (*Witness and Worship in Pluralistic America*,

p. 16). David Adams writes of the challenge that today's preachers of the Gospel are facing:

If our proclamation of the person and works of Yahweh in Jesus Christ is an offense to our culture, then it is the *skandalon* that Jesus said it would be. If... it is intolerant to declare in the public square that Yahweh is the only true God, that His teaching is the only ground for morality, and that receiving His grace in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is our only way to be made right with God, then we shall have to bear the cross of being thought intolerant. God has gone to great extremes to reveal His name and the deeds associated with it so that we might know and worship Him properly. We cannot allow God to become anonymous. (*The Anonymous God*, pp. 39–40)

This is the culture into which the church today sends its mission developers and church planters. The American culture is becoming more and more hostile toward true Christianity. The church does not need insipid and superficial proclamation. Needed are preachers with the best and most extensive preparation that the church can provide. Preachers under attack need courage and boldness and confidence to keep proclaiming the Gospel under today's conditions. Only a bold preacher steeled in the voice of God, His Word, will preach with the prophetic voice of God in the face of stormy attacks.

But facing overt hostility is by no means the only important challenge today's Gospel preacher must face. The majority of preaching today, including some Lutheran preaching, has as its goal greater obedience—obedience to the law and the Great Commission—not faith in the Savior. A constant and life-long challenge for all proper preachers, therefore, is the proper distinction of Law and Gospel, especially in our day. Less or minimal training will only less or minimally prepare a preacher to preach nothing more or less than the Gospel itself, which alone creates, sustains, and expands the Church. Said Luther,

I am making such a point of all this to keep anyone from supposing that the doctrine of faith is an easy matter. It is indeed easy to talk about, but it is hard to grasp; and it is easily obscured and lost. Therefore let us with all diligence and humility devote ourselves to the study of Sacred Scripture and to serious prayer, lest we lose the truth of the Gospel... Whoever knows well how to distinguish the Gospel from the Law should give thanks to God and know that he is a real theologian. (*American Edition*, 26:115)

Recognizing its importance for new pastors, C.F.W. Walther devoted a lengthy series of seminary lectures to the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. The same urgency is echoed by our seminary professors today. Lutheran preachers must be steeped in good, sound Lutheran Law-Gospel theology in order that preaching does not turn into a “how to” approach to true and authentic spirituality.

In Lutheran theology the Gospel cannot be preached in such a way that the Gospel's real purpose is the production of good works. Good works are preaching's result. Justification remains its only purpose. The Gospel is a complete message itself. Good works result from the preaching of the Gospel, to be sure, but there can be no suggestion that the Gospel is to be preached if its ultimate purpose were to bring them about... The Gospel is not an opportunity for reinstating the religion of the law. (David Scaer, *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 49, p.

194)

The actual sequence of Third Article, Second Article, First Article. The Holy Spirit with the means of grace bestows the salvation gifts won for us by Christ. These gifts are received in faith. The life of faith is living begiftedly, and so on then through the First Article and all its *dona creata*.” (Normal Nagel, *Concordia Journal*, 18, p. 236)

Paul Jacobs, after tracking the context of theological education in the past 70 years, writes of another ingredient in the discussion of the training offered by theological institutions today: the background out of which current students come to seminary training.

Today many of the students in our theological institutions have matured in a postmodern society. Whether consciously or not, they speak the language of postmodernism. They know the values and customs of postmodernism. Their families have been affected by the ravages of

secularism and humanism endemic to a postmodern society. They are, in their hearts, a product of a postmodern society...

From this culture emerges the contemporary seminarian and the future of the clergy. They come out of the “culture wars” of society bruised and battered... Many are caught in the trap of pornography addiction. They come from broken homes and blended families. Many find themselves divorced. Homosexuality is viewed as merely another lifestyle and any sort of putative homophobia (or almost any kind of “intolerance”) is denounced as the worst kind of “sin”...

When these students graduate from our institutions, hopefully, they will be able to articulate our evangelical theology. They will have taken Old and New Testament survey courses. They will know some Greek and Hebrew and perhaps some Aramaic. They will know some church history. Even so, while we may be able to take the postmodern citizen out of his or her culture for the time of their enrollment, can we take the postmodernism out of the citizen?... We must promote in this new generation not a theological career, but a love of theology. (*American Theological Inquiry*, pp. 138–139)

The solution, again quoting Aleshire, is the “community of scholarship,” *i.e.*, a well-educated clergy:

At one time, the church needed communities of scholarship to copy sacred texts, to preserve them, and to pass them on; we don't need that kind of scholarship now... The church needs scholarship to guide it through the tendency to assume that only the practical counts and that personal perceptions are sacred truths...

The church needs leaders who have sat with scholars, asked them questions, and been challenged by their answers. It needs leaders who have developed capacities related to the cure of souls and the care of congregational communities. The church needs leaders who have read the solutions that faith has reasoned for old problems and the ability to discern their implications for new problems. It needs leaders who have learned to think with discipline, who have the wisdom that accrues from reflecting theologically on ministerial work, and who know the story of faith intimately. The church needs leaders who have been to school, learned their stuff, and who love the sacred [texts] they have learned.

B. About Contextual v. Residential Education

Such education takes time and immersion in a community, listening first to God over a period of time, thereby subjecting oneself to His Holy Spirit, listening more than speaking, learning to preach with fewer words, learning that preaching is not about oneself and personal life experiences. In James Bollhagen's words: “Here is the epitome of wisdom: listening, not speaking, and listening above all to God himself—to his Word and the promises with his sacraments” (*Ecclesiastes*, p. 190). Robert Kolb adds,

So also regarding their new creation the children learned that there is no such thing as an individual believer. Not only are the people of God always in community and conversation with God himself; they are also in conversation and community with others... Understanding the Bible requires a village and more.” (*Concordia Journal* 36, p. 334)

The temptation exists, for congregations and pastors, to isolate themselves from the larger community, to be shaped in their own image, which is believed to be the best. The healthiest ecclesiology is when the church is committed to training her ministerium with the maximal amount of exposure to the larger community. “The individualist can never quite understand that one can realize oneself and live in the deepest richness by being totally immersed in the fellowship of the Church” (Bo Giertz, *Christ's Church*, p. 72). A formational path for those training for the preaching office which has minimal contact with a constellation of mentors is dangerous for the church in the long run. The church must prepare its ministerium for the marathon of faith, which requires rigorous learning within the community. Again Aleshire, on this topic:

Leaders who are characterized by these qualities are not educated solely by the transmission of facts or training in practices, although both are part of it. They require educational settings with sustained, inte-

grated, formational efforts, and when theological schools do their work wisely and well, they provide exactly this kind of education. Theological schools provide a crucial resource to communities of faith by making possible the kind of learning their leaders most need... Seminary education is not about texts on the one hand and people on the other. Often, faculty members become the most important texts their students read. (*Earthen Vessels*, pp. 23, 32)

A three-year study (by reputed authorities on this subject) of the culture and formation of students enrolled in two theological schools of very different denominational backgrounds resulted in conclusions on this subject common to seminaries in general:

It is not just in the classrooms that students are socialized. The total experience of each school's culture teaches and reinforces the school's normative message as well as offering knowledge and skills needed for the practice of ministry... Although we have used the term "formation" to describe the influence of the school's culture on students, we do not believe that students become mere clones of the culture or of particular faculty members. Not only do the students encounter variations in the core message among faculty and other authority figures within the schools, but as we have shown, they are also encouraged according to the norm of free inquiry to think for themselves and develop, within limits, their own perspectives. (*Being There*, p. 265)

Formative education requires prolonged and intensive exposure to an educational institution. The clear lesson of our study is that the schools in which we conducted our research had significant formative effects on students who spent time in them and became engaged in school life. Students who were marginal to life in the school or who were not exposed to it for very long may have absorbed certain academic "contents," but they were likely to leave with their preexisting views, values, and patterns of acting unchanged... Part-time study, especially if accompanied by full-time work, may make it difficult for the student to focus on both formal learning and all un-programmed opportunities that school life provides. We also have doubts about "virtual" education. We are not opposed to technology; however, teaching and learning by computer and various video technologies cannot, we believe, duplicate the intense and various experiences available to a student who physically attends a school. In summary, few of the new forms and technologies seem to us to deliver the full benefits of actually being there, on location at school, in its buildings, with its various populations, for long enough periods of time to learn what the school has to teach: the ways of life and worldviews as well as information and technical skills. (*Being There*, pp. 274, 276)

Not everyone has doubts about "virtual" education, including many participants in the SMP program of the Synod. In their *Christianity Today* article, "Absent in Body," Stephen and Mary Lowe believe online learning can do the same as residential education, and sometimes even better:

With opportunities for online learning growing by leaps and bounds, many people are now able to take advantage of Christian higher education without having to leave their ministry, family, or work. While course quality may be on par with traditional on-campus learning, questions exist regarding the ability for significant spiritual formation away from a campus community... [But] Social ecologies are not limited to physical face-to-face encounters. Online communities offer another kind of social interaction that can be as influential in promoting human development as physical communities... When studying the reciprocal relationship between the Apostle Paul and the churches he founded, there is a similar dynamic at work. While Paul ministered to churches in person, a great deal of his ministry was carried out while physically separated from his congregations. He reduced this physical distance through a mediated form of communication: the epistle...

A similar dynamic is at work in online Christian education. An ecological perspective allows us to appreciate the fact that humans can influence one another across space and time in much the same way as when physically present... The cohort format provides a context that fosters a strong learning community. Students build significant relationships and share life together in these learning communities... [T]he big question facing online education is whether spiritual formation can truly

take place online. The research on social presence and learning communities indicates that it can. A student's ability to conceptualize learning in their own setting may be more transformative than traditional forms of education.

The Lowes' research suggests that students have more interaction with a professor in an online course than in most traditional face-to-face courses, and that most students would argue they experience more authentic company in their online classes than in traditional courses. In their words: "Students repeatedly remarked that they learned more about God, themselves, and others in the online seminary course they completed. The importance of peer relationships in an online community cannot be underestimated. With respect to spiritual formation, the role of the community has tremendous influence—it's how students nurture one another toward greater faith maturity."

In her "Time for Reflection" article, Jennifer Woodruff Tait agrees, reporting on a Wabash Center online seminary education conference, noted that "participants agreed that online education as a whole provides more opportunity to engage students individually." But she also noted that "individual encounters don't happen accidentally—both students and teachers have to be committed to making the interactions work." But seminary student formation must include more than online exposure to professors. She also reported from the conference:

[T]he group created a collection of ways to encourage spiritual formation online: online prayer forums and Scripture readings, live streaming of chapel services, and Twittering prayer requests. They also discussed ways to cultivate a less authoritarian faculty presence in the online classroom—more vulnerable to student questioning and less controlling of results. But underlying these specific tips were deeper questions: In what ways is online education providing the spiritual formation that prepares students for their ministries?... [T]his is the sort of question that online faculty might be hungry to discuss. And it is the kind of question that educators need to grapple with—not one that can be handed off to a team of software designers working in isolation from questions of pedagogy.

C. About The Role of the Layman in Answer to Modern Day Ministry Needs

As noted by Francis Pieper in his *Christian Dogmatics*, "Scripture distinguishes sharply between the spiritual priesthood and the public ministry" (Vol. III, p. 440). Any Lutheran discussion of the Office of the Holy Ministry reflects this sharp distinction and includes reference to the Augsburg Confession, as in the CTCR document "The Ministry in Its Relation to the Christian Church":

The Augsburg Confession states: "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments" (AC, V). Concerning the call to the Ministry, the same Confession states: "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call" (AC, XIV).

This distinction is also sharp in C.F.W. Walther's letter to Jacob Aall Ottesen (*Concordia Journal* 18, p. 167) where he distinguishes between emergency situations ("Who would deny that there could be cases of this kind?") and regular public teaching of the people in a pastor's stead and publicly leading them in prayer. Regarding the latter, Walther's words:

This is so diametrically opposed to the doctrine of the Office in Scripture (1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 6:4; Titus 1:5), to Article 14 of the Augsburg Confession, to all witnesses of pure doctrine, and to the constant practice in our church, that one cannot fathom how one who is otherwise fairly conversant with God's Word and the orthodox church can be in uncertainty for a moment. To base such a matter on the spiritual priesthood of Christians is nonsense, for if that were the case, no has reason to wait for the calling of a pastor. Even less can the matter depend on

a special call, for the church cannot make a call according to its whim, but can give only that which God has established and which He alone recognizes (by this alone is a servant of God made, not through a human contract for a few hours or days). That the matter also cannot be based upon the *emergency situation* is quite clear.

This has not stopped Christian denominations from authorizing laymen to perform pastoral functions in certain circumstances. In 1997 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for example, created a “commissioned lay pastor” (CLP) position “to permit elders trained and approved by the presbytery to carry out all the functions of clergy for the length of their commission in a particular ministry” (“Ready to Lead?” *Christian Century*, July 13, 2010, p. 28). In her article, Barbara Wheeler writes of a situation in her denomination not unlike that of the LCMS:

We were not alone. In a region that was losing population, and businesses and leadership as well, our pastor’s impending departure was a loss for the whole area.

There are tens of thousands of mainline Protestant congregations like Bethel Peniel, congregations that have a significant ministry but are unable to pay the minimum salaries that denominations mandate for a full-time professional leader. The congregations can be found in cities, towns and rural areas. Studies conducted in the middle of this decade by the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership indicate that more than half of all mainline Protestant congregations have 100 or fewer members.

After the 1997 decision to create a “commissioned lay pastor” position, the program took its course: “Over the past 15 years, the development of the CLPs has taken a very different course from the one its proponents forecast. Use of CLPs is not limited to a few special settings but is widespread.” This is not to say, says Wheeler, that these lay ministers have no part to play:

The original purpose for which the commissioned lay pastorate was devised—providing leaders for groups of new immigrants—is still pressing. They can also serve very widely in the church. Paraprofessionals play increasingly important parts in other sectors, and they can in this one too.

Paraprofessional ministers can help mainline denominations whose financial resources are now at a low ebb do more with less. They can work in tandem with clergy, filling on a part-time basis a variety of roles in administrative, social service, and pastoral care ministries that paid professional staff would occupy in a sizeable congregation.

To do so, says Wheeler, will require improved education (than what the Presbyterian Church is offering) and an effective mainline denomination presence:

Mainline religion, often accused of irrelevance these days, may have diminished influence at the centers of power. Out on the margins, however, in places like Granville, it makes a decisive difference, and the vision, depth of understanding, and personal maturity that well-educated pastors bring to their work are a pivotal part of the mainline contribution.

V. What Participants Have Said

The Specific Ministry Pastor Task Force went to great lengths to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the SMP program by interviewing members of the faculty and staff of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, a wide variety of district presidents, SMP mentors, and SMP students. All involved in this program are to be commended for the high quality of work being done in service to the Lord and His Church. Recounted below are strengths of the SMP program as identified by those interviewed and a summary of the strengths of the SMP Task Force based on its research.

A. Strengths of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program...

... As Identified by Faculty and Staff of Seminaries

- The faculty and staffs of both seminaries have recognized many strengths of the SMP program.
- Generally speaking, they have been impressed by the high quality of students enrolled, their work, and by the students’ motivation to prove themselves for the noble task of pastoral ministry.
- The SMP students have also formed good relationships with each other and have grown into a close and caring community through their ongoing interaction with each other online.
- In addition, some of the successes of the SMP program have led to a review of how the residential seminary program could be improved.

... As Identified by District Presidents

- The SMP program addresses the concerns some people had with the previous DELTO program. It is an innovative and appropriate response to the drastic clergy shortage that the LCMS will experience in a few years. It also addresses the dilemma faced by those who are qualified to serve as pastors but who, for a variety of reasons, are not able to move to the seminary.
- The SMP program allows SMP students to be trained by our seminary professors and mentored by experienced parish pastors. It allows them to gain practical experience by serving a congregation while working through the SMP curriculum. Without the SMP program, these men would be denied the opportunity to serve the Lord and His people as pastors.
- The SMP program also allows us the opportunity to train a new generation of pastors who come from various ethnic backgrounds.
- An additional strength of the SMP program is the mentor process. An active and engaged mentor helps the candidate understand the pastoral ministry from a practical perspective while making sure that the candidate receives the emotional and spiritual support needed as he makes his way through his SMP studies. It also holds the SMP student accountable.
- The SMP program rises from contextual needs, two in particular. The first is how to bring sound Word and Sacrament ministry to congregations that no longer can afford a full-time pastor. Licensed lay deacons are serving in a number of these congregations. The second is how to launch new Word and Sacrament ministries, either from a given congregation or planting from scratch.
- The faculties have done an incredible job of building curricula to make this work. They have come at this task with fresh insights and huge ministry hearts. Their spirit as the church’s servants stands out. It permeates the program. You can’t manufacture that servant spirit and that pastoral heart. It is all over the place and it has been driven, at least in part, by the fact that the professors are equipping men already in ministry. The professors that have this pastoral “habitus” seem to thrive in classes filled with motivated pastors—whether that is D.Min, STM, or PhD level courses.
- The students, having ministry experience and coming to the theological task from that place, help shape the dynamic of the classroom and therefore, the structure of the course.

... As Identified by SMP Mentors

- SMP students are mature with a strong desire to learn. SMP students are dedicated to serving the Lord and His church. Mentors believe that there is a benefit to SMP students being instructed while at the same time serving in a ministry setting.
- Another benefit to the SMP student is being able to pursue pastoral ministry without having to move his entire family to a new location.
- Close partnerships have developed between mentors and their SMP students. In addition, mentors cited the positives of the SMP cohort relationships where students find encouragement from each other. They also found SMP students have forged a close relationship with seminary professors and staff who have also been a great source of encouragement.

- The option of SMP students to pursue a M.Div. is seen as a great strength of the SMP program.

... As Identified by SMP Students

- Students have found the SMP program to be challenging and are pleased with the program and what they have learned. The order of the classes is logical and sequential. One course seems to build on the previous and prepares the students for the next course. The courses grow progressively deeper.
- The professors have been responsive and helpful. Students are impressed with the knowledge of the professors and the depth of their understanding. On-campus intensives have helped create relationships between students, professors, and support staff.
- In some SMP students' educational experience, this program is seen to be one of the most challenging. It is certainly not "the easy way out" to become a pastor. The material has been challenging, the professors have encouraged students to dig deeper, and the time commitment has been significant.
- An unexpected strength for many students is the closeness and the camaraderie they have experienced within their cohort. Classmates have not only been supportive in the coursework, but they keep in steady contact, pray for one another, encourage one another, and offer resources and support for ministry. Some have travelled significant distances to attend the ordinations of others or to visit classmates.
- SMP students report this long-distance program has allowed them to enter the pastoral ministry. With families, many would not been able to pursue pastoral ministry otherwise.
- The technology used in the SMP program has been a strength in that it allows for a flexible study schedule, online learning, and a variety of other learning opportunities. It has also allowed students to learn alongside classmates from all over the country... to learn from them and understand ministry from a more "global" perspective. There is excellent interaction with peers in discussions of class assignments and a full classroom experience via online technology. The discussions are enhanced by the sharing of real life experiences in current ministry settings.
- The two years of vicarage experience is seen by SMP students as wonderful asset to this program. Much has been learned under the tutelage of mentors.
- The SMP program indirectly has lit fires in the hearts of others for service to Christ and the church. SMP students have been impressed with the number of classmates who have either been part of new missions, new campuses, or have been instrumental in starting new ministries in their congregations. This seems to be a wonderful means to help our Synod and church be on the cutting edge toward growth, reaching out, and reaching the lost.

... As Summarized by the SMP Task Force

The Specific Ministry Pastor Program provides its students with some theological formation, but contextualization is the Specific Ministry Pastor Program's greatest strength since the student is immersed in the work of pastoral ministry. Direct contact with the professor of a particular class, regular contact with a mentor, and student cohort relationship development are all blessings to this program. The student is also able to remain in the context in which he learns to be a pastor so there is less cost to the student in this program compared to the residential seminary program, at least at this point. The Specific Ministry Pastor Program consists mainly of more mature and experienced students and is able to provide Word and Sacrament ministry to remote areas and ethnic ministries that would have a difficult time providing funding for a full-time pastor position.

B. Concerns Regarding the Specific Ministry Pastor Program...

As mentioned above, the task force discussed the SMP program with a fair sampling of faculty, district presidents, mentors, and

students involved in the program and took copious notes of those conversations, including their opinions regarding concerns associated with the program.

... As Identified by Faculty and Staff of Seminaries

- Teaching SMP students takes more time than a traditional class and there is a concern that SMP students are getting more attention than residential students. However, some say it is not enough. While there is theological formation of SMP students online, there are those who believe that it is only enough to learn about our doctrine but not enough to be shaped and formed by it to the extent that one will be able to defend the Christian faith in the midst of the challenges of a fallen world.
- Some professors are not seeing a change in students that being immersed in theology seeks to bring about. These students need time away from their home context to focus on theology because they lack theological knowledge. SMP students are missing out on the formation that takes place in face-to-face meetings with fellow students over coffee, in the dining hall, and in residence halls.
- There are also professors who believe that one needs to take a student out of his own context in order to teach him properly. For example, Jesus said, "Follow Me." The disciples left others behind. The Lord extracted His disciples from their home context for three years. There is, at the very least, a need to get SMP students to the seminary more often.
- It was stated that this program, with its lower academic requirements, will only work for one generation. In other words, it will weaken the Office of the Pastoral Ministry. SMP is considered by some to be unable to sustain our confession as a confessional church. If we lose our confession, we lose the Lutheran Church.
- The SMP program was an unfunded mandate to the seminaries. In addition, it costs a lot to offer the SMP program due to the extra time it takes to teach and the money needed to offer courses online.
- Professors have not been trained in distance learning. Such training is needed but costly.
- There is little communication on campus about the SMP program, and it is rarely discussed at faculty meetings. When it is discussed, it is the source of some contention for some. Additional part-time faculty, including parish pastors, have been hired after seminary professors have initially provided the courses.
- Costs are even higher to the seminaries due to the fact that each seminary has its own SMP program.
- An inconsistency exists for admission to the SMP program and the residential program. This is due to the fact that the seminary is not the only agency screening students.
- A remark was made that the seminaries thought that the SMP program would stop the practice of licensing, but it has not. The SMP program was also presented as being specific, as the name indicates, but it is open. In fact, there is very little specific about it.
- Frustration was expressed that the largest percentage of specific ministry pastors in the field are currently apprentices to pastors of large congregations seeking to bypass seminary formation.
- There is also a belief among some that pragmatism is ruling this program, i.e. that education is incidental to doing ministry and that the SMP model is built on the foundation of non-Lutheran denominations. The philosophy of the SMP program is field context education, which is different and not as academically rigorous as seminary education.

... As Identified by District Presidents

- There is a need to enhance communication with the District President by the SMP student and the seminary as the student progresses through the SMP program. The mentor also needs to be held accountable for his work to make sure that he is providing the assistance and oversight which is needed by the SMP student.
- There are questions about when a SMP student can receive a call and concerns about whether SMP candidates are properly prepared. The

SMP program is less than half the training of the M.Div. program. The SMP program provides an easy avenue into the pastoral ministry for those who may not be up to the task. There needs to be better guidelines regarding what kind of candidates will be accepted into the SMP program.

- The way that SMP is currently structured, pastors of larger congregations are using SMP as a way to provide pastoral service to God's people instead of calling pastors from the field or traditional route candidates. Many of these pastors are using the SMP program as a way of bypassing seminary education and taking on the work of the formation of pastors for the church at large. This is not what the SMP resolution was or is about.
- The SMP program is also too dependent on the mentor. Is the mentor engaged in the process? Does the mentor have his own agenda? There needs to be better training for mentors and better ways to hold mentors accountable. In addition, typically there is only one mentor. At the seminary a student is blessed with several pastoral mentors. Whether liked or disliked, all impact the student in one way or another. The residential program has more sets of pastoral eyes on the student. SMP has primarily one, and that is as strong as the mentor makes it.
- When it comes to placing an SMP pastor on a call list or allowing a congregation to consider a SMP pastor, there are questions regarding the criteria for moving laterally. For example, if a SMP pastor is trained and slotted for urban ministry, could he be called by a suburban congregation or a rural congregation? District presidents have answered that question in different ways.
- Another concern is that SMP candidates are not necessarily firmly grounded in our Lutheran Confessions. Until recently, a SMP candidate could be ordained and take his oath of office to uphold the Lutheran Confessions without ever having even read the Confessions. What message does that send to the ministerium? What message does that send to the SMP candidates? What message does that send to the church at large? Are our Confessions only part of our heritage (so much ink on a page), or are they part of our life-blood, part of our identity as Lutheran Christians? Without our Lutheran Confessions as a check, our theology and practice will suffer. The SMP program is vulnerable here.
- Online classes take twice as long to develop. Therefore, while the cost may be less for SMP students, for the seminaries it's more.
- There is not enough face-to-face time with colleagues in the SMP program. A strength of the residential seminary is the face time students have with each other, where (hopefully) they strengthen each other, push each other, and bless each other as they talk in person. That is a huge part of theological formation, just as is ministry experience.
- Formation requires three essential elements: (1) cognitive input (academic reading/lecture, Bible study, etc); (2) in-ministry experience; and (3) reflection on the emergence of the first two. It is that reflection piece, done in community, that is the clear strength of residential . The SMP program does not match that reflection piece of theological formation.
- Men in the SMP program usually have three, maybe four huge (full-time) commitments that they have to manage simultaneously: employment, family, study, and ministry. The SMP student has to be extremely disciplined to meet his responsibilities. The pressure to succeed in all four areas may be overwhelming for these men.
- There is no daily worship. Granted, not everyone takes advantage of the daily chapel at seminary. However, in a Christian community, the opportunity to develop spiritual habits needed for the rigors of ministry is more likely at the seminary than by oneself. That would be an issue that the mentor pastor must regularly address with his student.
- The SMP student does not have the ability to use the original languages or at least have facility in using the many tools and exegetical helps that are built on the original languages.

...As Identified by SMP Mentors

- The SMP program lacks a line of authority by which decisions are made. Decisions are made at congregation, district, and seminary levels

which, at times, are based on different standards. Communication between mentors, seminary, and the district is often lacking.

- There is tremendous pressure on SMP students who have families, a full-time job, and responsibilities at the church while trying to keep up with their class work. Managing time is an issue for SMP students because of their responsibilities at home, work, class, and in regard to their studies.
- While learning in active ministry provides immediate application for what is learned, there is not always enough time for reflection and discussion by the SMP student.

...As Identified by SMP Students

- During the course of this program, some glitches have arisen. The most glaring glitch encountered has been some of the evaluation tools used. They are designed for traditional students, and, as a result, are not well-designed for SMP students who have often been in their parish for years. One example of this is the vicarage evaluation instrument/inventory. Either the tool must be redesigned or the results interpreted independently from data gathered from traditional vicars. Another glitch is the development of the program. Some members of a cohort are near the beginning of the program and are not as far along in their understanding as others. This fact has made for some uncomfortable situations.
- Going through the program pretty much non-stop for 16 or 17 straight quarters without a summer break has been taxing on some SMP students. As time has gone on, it has become more and more difficult to keep up the pace, especially as the demands of the day-to-day pastoral ministry have grown. Determining an appropriate balance as husband, father, manager, vicar, community leader, and student has been difficult for some.
- There has also been a reduction of personal time in Scripture reported by some students due to current reading and writing demands of the SMP program. Class workload expectations have been more around 12-20 hours per week rather than the targeted 8.
- Technology is at times a weakness because it isn't always dependable. Computer crashes, internet service, and other technological issues have occasionally caused delays or problems. The seminary, in the midst of these technological issues, has done a phenomenal job of keeping things running smoothly and has been there to address such issues in a timely and competent manner.
- Some professors did not interact on-line with students, or only on occasion.

...As Summarized by the Task Force

The Specific Ministry Pastor Program provideThis is s far less theological formation than the seminary residential program. While contextualization is its greatest strength given on-the-job training, it is also its greatest weakness since specific Ministry Pastors are limited to one particular context. SMP students have limited exposure to a variety of professors and face very real pressures of managing at the same time family, work, studies, and ministry in the parish. A SMP student is not taken out of the context where he resides. There is little or no benefit from the seminary context, either for him or his family. The SMP program is far less academically demanding compared to the residential seminary program. Given pressures of time, there is little time for theological reflection, and the SMP student misses out on the formative blessing of daily worship. There are fewer eyes on the student and his progress in the SMP program, and there is no constellation of mentors, just one. Finally, a major weakness of the SMP program is the failure to require learning of the original languages.

C. Suggestions for Improvement...

Whether faculty and staff, district presidents, mentors, or students, all without exception had suggestions to offer for improvements to the existing SMP program.

...As Offered By Faculty and Staff of Seminaries

- A need for faculty members specializing in distance learning was identified that would supplement the seminary faculty for this type of teaching. Distance education costs more than residential if it is done well, and, if the seminaries are going to do this, then they need to do it well.
- It was suggested that focus should be placed on well-defined paths to ministry and making sure to properly weed out students who should not be in the program. Work with faculty members so that they continue to get better at distance teaching. Train faculty in online pedagogy and recognize the discipline needed to be successful with online classes. Make learning more interactive, i.e. study and then come back and discuss.
- Raise the profile and commitment of SMP among the faculty.
- Give a clear path for SMP students to achieve their M.Div. and go on to general ministry. There should be a way for SMP students to receive credit toward a M.Div. degree. It was acknowledged that many of these suggested improvements for the SMP program will also improve residential teaching.
- Legitimate uses of a SMP pastor were identified by some professors as being ethnic outreach and providing pastors to areas that cannot afford a full-time pastor. There needs to be a way to make SMP truly specific. This could be done through bylaw changes through a floor committee.
- The fact that SMP students are being looked down upon by brother pastors in the church as not being good pastors needs to be addressed so that all are walking together as brothers in Christ. The issue of two classes of pastors is problematic.

... As Offered by District Presidents

- Provide safeguards to the SMP program so that it is not simply an easy route into the pastoral ministry. Make sure that SMP students are well equipped and well educated to deal with the multi-faceted ministries that are part of being a pastor in a congregation today.
- Provide some level of training to SMP students for use of the original languages in Bible study and preaching.
- Put more emphasis on the mission field contexts in which these men serve. The program recognizes the mission field reality of our world and attempts to address it. Because of the pervasiveness and complexities of today's mission challenges, we need to be even more deliberate in forming the missionary heart and mind.
- Support the seminaries in their attempts to develop a program that is non-residential and that draws from the great strengths of this Synod's theological education experiences. In addition, find ways to address those who pit those going through the M. Div. route against those going through the SMP route to pastoral ministry.

...as Offered by Mentors

- Provide better identification and coordination of responsibilities between the SMP mentor, district, and the seminary.
- Provide positive endorsement of the SMP program by LCMS leaders and pastors.

... as Offered by SMP Students

- The concept of "specific" in the program has been somewhat of a misnomer thus far. So far, students have all pretty much been in the exact same course of study with no real differences allowing for "specific" ministry.
- As students continue in the program, the ministry in which a student is called may morph and change. Allowance should be made for a student to change his "specific" ministry if the situation dictates such a change.
- There needs to be an answer to whether or not this "specific" ministry affects how or where an SMP pastor can serve in the future. If the educational path of all the students is essentially identical, is it necessary

for a "specific" ministry to be identified? Would a common track be just as beneficial? If so, would a name change be advisable?

- Those having gone through several ongoing educational opportunities and starting and/or completing a couple of advanced degrees have found this program to be well thought out with a nice beginning design. Students understand the growing pains and are pleased with both the ability of the seminary to adapt and to deal with those growing pains. The program needs to continue to adapt as it goes forward.
- Have a break during the summer to allow time to rest, relax, and refuel.

... as Summarized by the Task Force

In order to do distance education well, supplementing seminary faculties with faculty members who specialize in distance learning while also working with involved current faculty members to improve distance teaching skills will be helpful. It will also be helpful to raise the profile of and the level of commitment to the SMP program by the entire faculty, since improvements to the SMP program will also improve residential program teaching. Work also needs to be done to provide a clear path for SMP students to achieve M.Div. degrees.

Work needs to be done to make the SMP program truly specific in its nature and content, with particular attention given to ethnic outreach and hard-to-serve ministries. Attention should also be given to address what currently results in two classes of pastors on the roster of the Synod.

Better communication with district presidents and greater accountability of mentors for providing assistance and oversight will be helpful in the proper preparation of students. Improved guidelines for the application and acceptance process will also be helpful, not only creating more uniformity across the Synod but also helping to avoid abuse of the program by those who would otherwise attend the seminary residential program.

Continued care should be taken to make certain that SMP students are firmly grounded in confessional Lutheranism, willing and able to defend the faith, and properly educated to carry out the work of the pastoral ministry. Some level of original biblical language training should be added to the existing SMP program. Attention will also need to be given to developing guidelines to regulate the calling and lateral movement of SMP pastors.

Given the workload being borne by SMP students, working in opportunities for a break from studies would be helpful to the program.

VI. Recommendations

As tasked by the President of the Synod, the task force herewith offers a list of recommendations to make the existing program better.

1. Retain the SMP Program

Special circumstances (e.g. small parishes which cannot afford a pastor) exist. Flexibility is vital as the church fulfills her vocational calling to preach the Gospel to everyone everywhere. While the church cannot maintain her theological integrity, fidelity, and courage in these bewitching times unless she has an overall well-trained and doctrinally steeped ministerium, special circumstances warrant less-trained pastors so the means of grace can be delivered by a called and ordained pastor. Therefore the task force recommends the retention of the SMP program for special circumstances.

2. Narrow the Specificity of the SMP Program

According to Res. 5-01B of the 2007 convention, the SMP program is to address the needs of congregations and/or mission settings which cannot support a full-time pastor or missionary. Additionally, other categories included "church planter, staff pastor, and others as needs arise."

The breadth, rigor, and depth of theological training by residential seminaries cannot be equaled. For larger congregations who need staff pastors and for engagement of the mission field through church plants, residential training is the first and best way for the benefit of the whole church. The SMP program must not become the mainstay for theological training in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Therefore, the task force recommends limiting the use of the SMP program for men who will serve small congregations who are not able to support a full-time pastor and for ethnic ministries, and not using it for the planting of churches or for staff pastors.

3. Conduct a Study of the Alternate Routes to the Pastoral Ministry

Presently, there are eight routes to ordained ministry:

- a. Residential
 1. Master of Divinity
 2. Certificate Route
- b. Distance routes:
 3. Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS)
 4. Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT)
 5. Specific Ministry Pastor Program (SMP)
 6. Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT)
 7. Cross-Cultural Ministry Center (CMC)
 8. Colloquy of a Ten-year Licensed Deacon

Therefore for the sake of clarity and simplicity, the non-Master of Divinity routes could be reduced. The task force recommends a study of the non-Master of Divinity routes to the Pastoral Office.

4. Add Greek to the Curriculum

For the sake of the congregations that will be served by SMP pastors, as well as the lost, original language skills will equip the pastor for clear and concise proclamation and application of Law and Gospel. Therefore, the task force recommends Greek as a prerequisite for or as a basic requirement of the SMP program.

5. Maintain a Level of Enrollment that Protects Residential Seminary Formation

Residential seminaries may not be able to do everything, but they are the best and most formative places for the essential learning that is necessary for preparation for the Pastoral Office. They provide hybrid formational centers that combine classroom, chapel, and off-site training in congregational settings by a constellation of mentors, faculty, and pastors. Men who are to preach with the prophetic voice of Christ's Word need time and training to develop a beginning and continuing *habitus* for theological reflection and contextual engagement. They need to learn to read and practice not only the sacred text but also how others read, learn, and apply it as well. Theology is ever practical, for it has as its purpose the application of Christ to the sinner. Robert Preus (*Preaching to Young Theologians*, pp. 65–66) writes:

Our theology is always practical, practical for many reasons, but chiefly because its goal is practical. Its goal is the Christian life, the life hidden with Christ in God, the life of faith and hope and joy in our Lord, the life of obedience and love. We study and work and speak that we might have direction for this life, comfort for our faith, power and insight for our calling. And our final goal is life eternal. What could be more practical than that?

The Church must continue to train her men primarily the residential way. Thinking like a Lutheran pastor takes a long time, a lifetime; it takes a village and more to shape a faithful ministerium for the sake of the Triune God's mission.¹ Therefore, the task force recommends maintaining a SMP seminary enrollment at a level that does

not threaten residential seminary formation as the primary route into the Office of the Pastoral Ministry.²

6. Continue to Provide Appropriate Paths to Certification as a General Pastor

SMP students need the opportunity to increase their theological skills for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel. Advancement through the rigors and joys of additional studies which lead to the certification as a general pastor will not only be of benefit to them but the whole Church. Therefore, the task force recommends that the seminaries continue to provide appropriate paths to certification as a general pastor.

VII. The Best Way Forward: A More Acceptable Outcome

As the task force went about its business, it was clear the SMP program requires adjustment, not only for clarity on its specificity (*i.e.*, a narrower scope of work for its graduates), but also for a careful maintenance of its enrollment in light of the seminaries' enrollments in residential seminary training. The above recommendations begin to address this, all for the sake of a faithful ministerium for God's use. But the task force has come to believe that there is a need for one final recommendation:

7. Conduct a Feasibility Study for an Ordained Diaconate

There is always more than enough work to do as God exercises His lordship to redeem and save everyone everywhere. Currently, laymen (licensed deacons) who are not in the Office of the Holy Ministry are conducting Word and Sacrament ministry, contrary to our public doctrine (AC XIV). They should follow the churchly order of *rite vocatus*: examination, certification, call, and ordination. The large majority of the SMP student body as staff pastors reveals another pressing need of the church as well. Could an ordained diaconate be of help to the church at this present time, for both situations? Should they be placed within the Pastoral Office but with distinctions and limitations made by human authority (*de iure humano*)? Perhaps they could preach and baptize but not consecrate the elements. How might this be of help or hindrance to the church at this present time? Theological engagement and study are needed.

For engagement of the mission field, the first and best option is a well-trained pastor.

Distinctions within the Office are by human authority (*de iure humano*) while the Pastoral Office is by divine authority (*de iure divino*). Certainty is most crucial for the Church—not only for those who are called as they do His speaking but also for those who hear as they receive His Word. The divine call remains a necessity for those who are sent by Him to exercise the Office of the Keys (AC XIV, XXVIII).

For these reasons, the task force recommends a feasibility study for an ordained diaconate.

Conclusion

The church lives in and for Him, as He leads her to live and exist for the world. His call of the church also invites and privileges her to join the cooperative work of fidelity to doctrine and its distribution to anyone who has ears to hear, the whole earth. According to His instruction, He has so ordered faithful men to fill and exercise the Office of the Keys on His behalf and that of the church. The church can do no other, as she marvels at the sheer generosity of the Father revealed by the Spirit in the preaching about His Son.

This is clear: The Lord is always in motion toward the lost,³ leading the way, bringing His church along as His privileged coworker in mission. Christ Himself extends His gracious Lordship through the church as He calls preachers to herald His one and alone saving

Gospel.⁴ Integrity and credibility of her pastors are most important, for the proclamation of His Word without adulteration, dilution, or boundary is of divine requirement. Pastors “play God,” that is, by their faithful repetition of His Word, God kills and makes alive.⁵ The conversation then of the faithful formation of the men preparing for the Pastoral Office by God through His church is no small matter.

A severe threat to the faithful formation of the church’s ministerium is a compromised ecclesiology, whereby everyone does his own thing. As the church is never the mere addition of individuals, congregations, circuits, and districts but a totality of one,⁶ so she is in her work—one work—for the faithful formation of some men to be preachers of His cross. Her catholicity—or lack thereof—is put on display for all to see in everything she does.

According to the Lord’s assessment, the fields are ever ripe for harvest. Therefore, the church gladly goes forward in the confidence of the Holy Spirit until He ushers in the Final Day.

It is the prayer of the task force that this document will benefit the church as she engages in lively conversation regarding the faithful formation of her pastors as applied to the SMP program.

Raymond Hartwig, *Chairman*
Timothy Mech, *Secretary*
Randall Golter

Endnotes

1. “Strong pastors make strong Christian families, and strong Christian families make strong pastors. What is good for the family is good for the church. Out of the fertile ground of the family arise budding pastors. What can a church do to provide ministerial development and training for these ‘early bloomers’? It is the God-given responsibility of the church to make them into pastors.” (“Who Makes a Pastor? Concordia Journal 26 (2000), p. 291)

2. The task force extensively discussed the possibility of placing a certain percentage restriction of each year’s entering class, e.g. Ten percent, but decided against such a recommendation. begin to address this, all for the sake of a faithful ministerium for God’s use. But the task force has come to believe that there is a need for one final recommendation:

3. Wilhelm Loehe writes: “For mission is nothing but the one church of God in motion, the actualization of the one universal, catholic church. Wherever mission enters in, the barriers which separate nation from nation fall down. Wherever it comes it brings together what previously was far off and widely separated...Mission is the life of the catholic church. Where it stops, blood and breath stop; where it dies, the love which unites heaven and earth also dies. The catholic church and mission—these two no one can separate without killing both, and that is impossible.” Wilhelm Lohe, *Three Books about the Church*, trans. and ed. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969) p. 59. Reprinted by permission of Augsburg Fortress Press, Concordia Seminary Press, Fort Wayne, IN, 1989).

4. “The early Church did not understand mission as merely human action done in response to the good things God had done. Mission was perceived christologically—as God acting for the salvation of fallen mankind, but God acting only in union with mankind. The early Church understood mission to be the very expression of the Lordship of Christ in the Holy Spirit.” William C. Weinrich, “Evangelism in the Early Church,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 45 (April 1981), p. 62.

5. “If it is God’s Word that accomplishes the death and resurrection of the elect, the Word must be proclaimed so that it can do in the *here and now* the killing and the resurrection, the electing, which God has determined. It means that the biggest challenge for pastors is to play God, to kill and raise people ahead of time, to make them Israel, God’s chosen people, in the present time. Through the promise of God’s Word, pastors are to resurrect God’s chosen ones out of the deadness of their sin. They bring about the death and resurrection of God’s children.” Timothy Saleska, “Pastors Who Play God,” *Concordia Journal* 31 (2005) 24. The Confessions state: “Christ orders him to

feed the flock, that is, to preach the Word or govern the church by the Word,” (Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope. *Book of Concord*, 30).

6. See Bo Giertz: “The Church, too, appears as a totality, not a sum of individuals. She is one body, and Christ is the head, the will, the source of life, and the power of all growth,” p. 22. See also pp. 70-73.

ADDENDUM A

To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program

RESOLUTION 5-01B

Overtures 5-01–10 (CW, pp. 205–216)

Background

Amidst today’s mission challenges, including the persistent need to provide pastoral ministry in ways that go beyond the current residential models, we will do well to engage the best collaborative thinking and creativity that we can muster to provide missional pastoral leadership driven by the depth of theological integrity that remains a hallmark of our church and its ministerium. The mission focus ignited by the *Ablaze!* movement has generated the need to identify laymen already in place in a local community to serve as church planters and missionaries. This work will certainly entail Word and Sacrament ministry. Historically, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its antecedents have attempted to meet such needs by preparing men as quickly as possible to be called and ordained in order to meet the urgent mission needs of the church. Such men were prepared to catechize, preach, and provide pastoral care. Within the LCMS, the need for such a track to ordination was initially embodied in the seminary begun by F. C. D. Wyneken and Wilhelm Löhe in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

However, developments in ministerial formation since World War II have effectively eliminated this track altogether. Ministers of religion—ordained will have two designations. “General ministry pastor” will serve as the designation for pastors graduated from a current approved theological education program (e.g., M.Div., Certificate, DELTO), and “specific ministry pastor” will be the designation for those educated for a specific ministry context through distance education. The Specific Ministry Pastor Program seeks to address the needs of the church by reinstating a multiple-track approach and by developing a program that combines a commitment to faithfulness to a Lutheran theological confession with a missionary perspective and that is tailored to the preparation of men for service in specific kinds of ministries.

Such an effort must attempt in some measure to uphold two significant considerations in the service of our Lord’s mission and Great Commission. On the one hand, we are committed to upholding the Lutheran understanding of the pastor as theologian and insist on as much education as possible for the good of the church. On the other hand, emerging needs and economic pressures often make it impossible to call a pastor who has received a broad and thorough theological education to every congregation or mission station where, nevertheless, people need to hear the Gospel. This proposal is offered as a sincere and thoughtful attempt to address real-world needs with an urgency for bringing the Gospel to a dying world and to do so with theological integrity with respect to both the doctrine of the ministry and our commitment to high standards of pastoral education and formation.

Theological Foundations Guiding the Proposal

1. All those who regularly and publicly perform the functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry should do so as those called to and placed into that office. “It is taught among us that nobody should publicly

teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call” (AC XIV). As it is true that means of grace, the Gospel and the Sacraments, are the rightful possession of all believers in Christ as members of the priesthood of all believers, only the one Office of the Holy Ministry is entrusted with the public exercise of these means. As such, we affirm that only those who are rightly and publicly called and ordained should publicly exercise the functions which are entrusted to this ministry.

2. Lutherans affirm that there is only one Office of the Holy Ministry, established by God for the public conduct of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. However, the church may recognize certain distinctions within that one Office of the Holy Ministry and establish degrees of supervision without undermining the unity of the office.
 - All those who serve Christ and the church in the Office of the Holy Ministry exercise *de iure divino* (by divine authority) the power to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, administer the Sacraments, and exercise church discipline. There is no distinction within the one office with respect to *this* power and authority.
 - Nevertheless, all ministers serve under supervision. In ancient times, the practice of making certain distinctions within the one Office of the Holy Ministry *de iure humano* (by human authority) was established so that those ministers with broader and deeper theological understanding should be able to provide doctrinal supervision for less experienced, or less well-prepared, ministers. These distinctions were made to ensure that the Gospel was rightly preached and taught, and to preserve the unity of the church.
 - By the time of the Reformation, the common way of talking about such distinctions within the Office of the Holy Ministry was to speak of the differentiation between the power (or authority) associated with the Office of the Holy Ministry and the jurisdiction (or scope of the administration) of the office.
3. The church may establish, by human authority, distinctions in jurisdiction and in categories of service of its pastors so long as these distinctions do not compromise the authority of the office, undermine the Gospel, or burden the consciences of Christians by confusing human regulations with divine commands.
4. Ordination vows may be taken prior to the conclusion of a complete course of study provided that the ordained has received a preparation sufficient to preach and teach the Gospel rightly, administer the Sacraments correctly, and take his vows with integrity.
5. The church should provide the opportunity for a pastor who has been certified and ordained to serve in a specific kind of ministry subsequently to be prepared to serve the church more broadly through a combination of further academic preparation, accumulated pastoral experience, and examination.

Overview of the “Specific Ministry Pastor” Program

The student will take a *core curriculum* so as to acquire a *foundational competency* in Lutheran theology for pastoral ministry. This foundational core will be both contextualized and specialized within and for a specific ministry. In addition to the original objective of the Distance Education Leading To Ordination (DELTO) Program to provide pastoral ministry where full-time ministry cannot be maintained, such specific ministries will include such categories as church planter, staff pastor, and others as needs arise. The specific curriculum will be determined and developed by the seminary faculties, in collaboration with those from the field who represent the specific ministerial contexts at district and congregation levels. It will be based on the following principles:

1. Curricular goals based on outcome competencies appropriate to the stages of the program
2. The contextual nature of this educational model, which includes experiential learning within a mission context
3. The engagement of supervisors/mentors by the seminary in consultation with the district president as a critical element of the distance education model

4. A combination of distance education and residential components (likely through short-term seminars and the option to take courses within the residential curriculum)
5. The potential applicability of coursework for academic credit towards an M.Div.
6. A time frame for completion of approximately 4–5 years

The Specific Ministry Pastor Program will be divided into a preordination curriculum and a post-ordination curriculum. The preordination curriculum will equip the student in such a way that the church has confidence that the student will preach the Gospel in its truth and purity and conduct his ministry in conformity with Lutheran doctrine and practice. In order to do this, the preordination curriculum will address such basic competencies as *Catechism, interpretation of Scripture, God and Christ and the work of Christ, the Sacraments, introduction to the Book of Concord, the conduct of worship, and preaching.*

The post-ordination curriculum will address these topics in greater depth and detail and will include such topics as OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions.

In addition, the student will participate in several residential and field seminars aimed at cultivating the requisite ministry skills for his specific ministry context (e.g., church planters, staff pastors, and evangelists).

- Possible residential seminars might include *pastoral formation, issues in pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation.*
- Possible field seminars might include *basic mission planter training, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training.*

The Specific Ministry Pastor Program will utilize selected mentors in the preparation of a man for pastoral ministry with an emphasis on the area of spiritual formation.

Step 1: Preparation for and Admission to the Program

The identification of an applicant will be carried out by the congregation and district through a comprehensive screening process.

For entry into the program, a student will need to show that he possesses the requisite social skills and passion for theology and mission, as well as demonstrating the specific skills and competence needed to be successful in a distance education program. For entry into the program, a student will need to pass the Entry Level Competency Exams (ELCEs) in the areas of OT, NT, and Catechism/Christian Doctrine. Preparation for the ELCEs may be accomplished by taking the corresponding district-level courses, Concordia University System or seminary-offered courses. In addition, other courses within a district’s lay training program may be helpful, such as courses on evangelizing and catechizing. All students will need to demonstrate competency to engage the program in the English language and in public speaking.

Based upon completion of the above requirements and with recommendations from congregation and district, the student’s application will be presented to the admissions committee of the seminary for action. As part of the application process, each student, sponsoring congregation, and district will sign a covenant of commitment to complete the entire specific ministry pastor curriculum, including all coursework and seminars following examination and ordination.

Step 2: Preordination Curriculum

Upon entrance into the Specific Ministry Pastor Program, the student will be assigned as a vicar in a specific locality but normally will not be authorized to administer the Sacraments. He will preach sermons prepared in collaboration with and approved by his supervisor. At this point, he will participate in courses and seminars comparable

to those offered to residential seminary students designed to prepare him in the following areas:

- *Catechism, hermeneutical principles, God and Christ, work of Christ, the Sacraments, worship, the Book of Concord, and preaching*
- *Possible residential seminars: intro to pastoral formation; issues in pastoral ministry*
- *Possible field seminars: basic mission planter training, etc.*

Step 3: Certification/Call/Ordination

After demonstrating competence in the preordination areas, the student must apply for an examination hearing by the seminary in order to be certified for call and ordination. Each student will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The examination hearing shall include a review of the student's portfolio, vicarage reports, an interview by the faculty, and recommendations by the district president and circuit counselor.

After certification, call, and ordination according to the usual order, the student is placed on the pastoral roster of the Synod as a "specific ministry pastor." He now may preach and administer the Sacraments under supervision in a specific locality.

Step 4: Post-Call and Ordination Curriculum

Upon call and ordination, the student shall complete the remainder of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program. The following areas are intended to continue development of the foundational competencies necessary for serving as a specific ministry pastor:

- *OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions*
- *Residential seminars, possibly including pastoral formation, issues in pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation*
- *Field seminars, possibly including basic mission planter training, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training*

Refusal to complete the Specific Ministry Pastor Program would result in the pastor's removal from the Synod roster, at which point he is not eligible for a call.

Step 5: Completion of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program

Upon completion of the program, the candidate is examined by a committee of faculty, laity, and district representatives in order to be recognized as eligible for calls elsewhere within his rostered status. Apart from the usual need for continuing education, he is not required to take any further prescribed course of studies (but see below).

Specific ministry pastors are recognized as just that: pastors certified for calls into specific ministry contexts, who serve under the supervision not only of the district president but also of a designated general ministry pastor. As such, they are eligible for calls into a similar specific ministry context, where they continue under the supervision of a general ministry pastor.

Because their theological education is formed within the context of their specific ministry and does not represent the breadth and depth of theology and ecclesiology that forms a basis for pastoral oversight beyond the local level, they may not be placed into ecclesiastical roles of exercising pastoral oversight outside the location of their specific call (i.e., in the church-at-large), such as

- a. holding elected or appointed office at the district or Synod level that is assigned by the Bylaws to "a pastor" or "an ordained minister" (though they will serve in all other capacities, especially representing the ministerial contexts in which they serve);
- b. serving as circuit counselors;

- c. serving as a voting delegate to a national Synod convention (but they may serve as an advisory delegate at national conventions and as a pastoral delegate at district conventions); and
- d. supervising vicars.

Step 6: Continued Service and Status

Students who have completed the Specific Ministry Pastor Program may decide to remain in their rostered status as "specific ministry pastor" for the remainder of their ministry, or they may choose to pursue a growth path that leads to a change in roster status to "general ministry pastor." It is envisioned that most students will pursue the second path, either through an M.Div. route or nondegree certification. Thus, they have three options:

1. They may remain rostered as a specific ministry pastor.
2. They may enroll in an M.Div. program. It is anticipated that coursework done for the Specific Ministry Pastor Program may become applicable to an M.Div., determined by equivalencies.
3. They may continue their theological education and pastoral formation, reaching a level appropriate to general ministry pastor without a full M.Div. (cf. current "alternate route") and then complete an interview with an examining board in order to have their rostered status changed to "general ministry pastor."

Resolution

WHEREAS, The DELTO Oversight Committee was formed by the 2001 convention and given the task "to revise DELTO"; and

WHEREAS, This oversight committee concluded that original assignment, and a revised DELTO Program was deployed by the two seminaries in the fall of 2004; and

WHEREAS, The original and ongoing intent of DELTO was to "provide ordained pastoral service to congregations that cannot support a full-time pastor, ordained pastoral service to contexts where English is not spoken, ordained missionary personnel where finances and/or conditions do not permit calling a full-time missionary" (BHE document, "What Is DELTO?" Sept. 2000); and

WHEREAS, The needs for providing pastoral ministry in specific and specialized situations where a traditionally prepared seminary candidate or pastor is not available continue to multiply; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod needs to find a way to provide for an increase in pastoral ministry to meet such needs of the church, especially in light of the mission challenges of today's world; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod has resolved to plant 2,000 new congregations by 2017, for which a net gain of 2,000 pastors will be needed; and

WHEREAS, Any way of providing for pastoral ministry must be faithful to our Lutheran Confessions, faithful to our historic commitment to a well-educated and well-formed ministerium, faithful to our historic commitment to provide pastors in both academic and practical tracks, and faithful to our historic commitment to provide pastoral ministry and leadership at the cutting edges of the mission fields, wherever they might be; and

WHEREAS, All those who regularly and publicly perform the functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry should do so as those called to and placed into that office because "[i]t is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call" (AC XIV); and

WHEREAS, A variety of programs and routes leading to pastoral service have arisen at both district and seminary levels; and

WHEREAS, The DELTO Oversight Committee, after concluding its original assignment, was given the further assignment by the President of the Synod to "study the various routes leading to ordination currently available, to study which routes leading to ordination would be most helpful to the Synod in producing a sufficient number

of able and effective pastors to provide leadership to Synod's congregations in fulfilling the Great Commission"; and

WHEREAS, In carrying out this further task, it was apparent that

- a. the existing focus of DELTO, even as it was redesigned and redeployed, would not be sufficient to meet these needs;
- b. the Synod would benefit from a more coherent and comprehensive approach to pastoral preparation and certification for ministry in specialized and specific contexts;
- c. the past years have provided the church, in general, and the seminaries, in particular, with substantial experimentation and experience with distance education models, including the evaluation of both the advantages and disadvantages; and
- d. the Synod is presented with an opportunity to build on such experience and to coordinate and consolidate programs and curriculum into a more cohesive and comprehensive curriculum design that engages the best practices of educational design and pedagogy, including much of the current course materials already proven and in use; and

WHEREAS, The process of conversation and collaboration over the past six years has brought together representatives of the needs of the field with the entities of the Synod to whom leadership for pastoral education and certification is entrusted, and in so doing provided a helpful model for continuing such collaborative work; and

WHEREAS, Both seminaries have provided leadership in this process and worked together on written documents affirming the need for a new category within the one office of the pastoral ministry and in affirming an educational process that will lead to certification and ordination for such pastoral ministry, utilizing both traditional residential components along with new distance education models; and

WHEREAS, The DELTO Oversight Committee in seeking to fulfill its further task has

- a. worked closely with both seminaries in honing a proposal for a category of specific ministry pastor and an education and formation program that will lead to certification and ordination for such pastoral ministry; and has
- b. worked closely also with many other constituencies throughout the church in developing this proposal, including the Board for Pastoral Education, the Council of Presidents, district and Synod mission leaders, and pastors in the field; and

WHEREAS, The great strengths of this proposal bring together several issues that have concerned our Synod for many years as it seeks to

- a. find a way to meet the existing and expanding needs for pastoral ministry, especially in the variety of contexts of mission and ministry in today's church;
- b. respect our commitment to the doctrine of church and ministry, especially in light of AC XIV;
- c. honor our commitment to responsible theological education that provides the church with well-educated pastors, who as missional leaders are faithful to Lutheran theology and practice;
- d. retain our commitment to the importance, need, and great strengths of residential pastoral education at both the certificate and M.Div. level, along with a commitment to the continuing education of all clergy;
- e. restore our past creativity in recognizing the importance, need, and great strengths of alternative models of pastoral education leading to ordination, including a commitment to continuing education;
- f. utilize the advances in educational technology that allow for responsible pastoral education and formation through distance-education models; and
- g. develop a more coherent and comprehensive model for pastoral education by which various routes leading to certification, call, and ordination are coordinated and potentially interrelated, so that, for example, a student in a nonresidential certificate route might be able to engage also in a residential degree program; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor Program has the support of the Board for Pastoral Education, the faculties of both seminaries, and the Council of Presidents; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor Program has been reviewed by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and was found to be consistent with Scripture and the Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Constitutional Matters has issued opinions 07-2499 and 07-2500 that no changes to Synod's Constitution are required should this resolution be adopted; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Program be adopted in principle and the seminaries, Board for Pastoral Education, and Council of Presidents be authorized to implement it; And be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw sections 2.13 and 2.14 of the *Handbook* of the Synod be amended accordingly, as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

(A) Change the title of Bylaw section 2.13 to read as follows:

2.13 Restricting, Suspending, and Expelling Congregations or Individuals from Membership Status and Limitations

(B) Incorporate current Bylaws 2.13.1 and 2.13.2 into Bylaw 2.14.1 as follows:

- Current Bylaw 2.13.1 becomes Bylaw 2.14.1
- Current Bylaw 2.13.2 becomes Bylaw 2.14.1 (a)
- Current Bylaw 2.14.1 becomes Bylaw 2.14.1 (b)

The early paragraphs of Bylaw section 2.14 therefore to read as follows:

2.14 Expulsion of Congregations or Individuals from Membership in the Synod

Preamble

~~2.13.1~~

2.14.1 Termination of membership in the Synod is a serious matter involving both the doctrine and life of those to whom it has been granted. Such action should only be taken as a final step when it is clear that those who are being terminated after previous futile admonition have acted contrary to the confession laid down in Article II or the conditions of membership laid down in Article VI or have persisted in offensive conduct (Constitution, Art. XIII 1). For this reason the Synod establishes procedures for such action including the identification of those who are responsible for ecclesiastical supervision of its members. Such supervision includes not only suspension or termination of membership but also advice, counsel, encouragement, and, when necessary, admonition regarding teaching and/or practice. Furthermore, the procedures that may lead to termination of membership also provide for the protection of members by including provisions for challenging the decisions of ecclesiastical supervisors in these matters as well as provisions for restoration of membership that has been suspended or terminated.

General

~~2.13.2~~ (a) Although the Constitution (see Art. VI 3 and Art. XII 7-8) deals with the "life" of ordained and commissioned ministers of the Synod and provides for dealing with "ungodly life" of ordained and commissioned ministers, this does not suggest that the Synod, including any district of the Synod, has the duty or even an opportunity to observe the activities in the life of an individual member of the Synod or has the means or authority to regulate, restrict, or control those activities. The only remedy available to the Synod in response to improper activities in the life of such a member of the Synod is, as is true with respect to violations of other conditions of membership or is otherwise appropriate under the Constitution or these Bylaws, and following the procedures set forth in these Bylaws, to take such action as may lead to termination of that membership and the attendant rights and privileges.

~~2.14.1~~ (b) The action to commence expulsion of a congregation or individual from membership in the Synod is the sole responsibility of the district president who has the responsibility for ecclesiastical supervision of such member. This Bylaw section 2.14, among others,

provides the procedures to carry out Article XIII of the Constitution, "Expulsion from the Synod." However, it does not provide the procedure for the expulsion of the district presidents and the officers of the Synod (Bylaw section 2.15), the President of the Synod (Bylaw section 2.16), or individual members in cases involving sexual misconduct or criminal behavior (Bylaw section 2.17).

(C) Add a new section at the beginning of Bylaw section 2.13 to define a "specific ministry pastor" and the limitations on membership privileges and responsibilities that pertain, as follows:

Specific Ministry Pastor Status and Limitations

2.13.1 A "specific ministry pastor" is a minister of religion—ordained who has completed the requirements for service as a specific ministry context for which he has been trained and may not be offered or accept a call for ministry for which he has not been certified as determined by his district president. He shall serve under the supervision of his district president and another pastor who is not a specific ministry pastor.

(a) Because he is under supervision of another pastor and because a specific ministry pastor's theological education has been formed in part by and for a specific ministry context, he may not be placed or called into ecclesiastical roles that exercise pastoral oversight outside the location of his call.

(b) A specific ministry pastor is not eligible to

(1) serve as a voting delegate to a national convention of the Synod—but may serve as an advisory delegate to national conventions and as a pastoral delegate to district conventions;

(2) hold any elected or appointed office on the district or national Synod level that is assigned by the Bylaws of the Synod to "a pastor" or "an ordained minister" (although specific ministry pastors may serve in all other capacities, especially representing the ministerial contexts in which they serve);

(3) supervise vicars; or

(4) serve as a circuit counselor.

(c) The ministers of religion—ordained records maintained by district presidents as well as the official membership roster of the Synod shall distinguish between specific ministry pastors and other pastors.

(D) Change the titles and bylaw numbering of subsequent paragraphs of Bylaw section 2.13 to accommodate the introduction of the "specific ministry pastor status and limitations" paragraphs, as follows:

Restricted Status and Limitations

~~2.13.3~~

2.13.2 An individual member of the Synod may be placed...

Removal of Restricted Status and Limitations

~~2.13.4~~

2.13.3 An individual member of the Synod who is placed...

Suspended Status and Limitations

~~2.13.5~~

2.13.4 When formal proceedings have been commenced...

(E) Change Bylaw 3.1.3.1 to read as follows:

3.1.3.1 Each district shall select one advisory delegate for every 60 advisory ordained ministers and specific ministry pastors, and one advisory delegate for every 60 commissioned ministers on the roster of the Synod. Fractional groupings shall be disregarded except that each district shall be entitled to at least one advisory delegate in each category.

And be it further

Resolved, That the DELTO Oversight Committee be renamed the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee; and be it further

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee be placed under the supervision of the Board for Pastoral Education; and be it further

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee develop comprehensive guidelines that are consistent with the theological foundations, educational expectations, rostering process, training of mentors and supervising pastors, and membership limitations intended for this Specific Ministry Pastor Program; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee submit a progress report to the Synod at least nine months prior to the 2010 convention.

Action: Adopted (8)

(Discussion of this proposed action began during Session 3, when the assembly received background information for Res. 5-01A and received answers during a Q & A session with the committee. The committee announced that the introductory information preceding the actual resolution was supplied only to inform the convention's decision. The Q & A session continued during Session 5 until Res. 5-01B was introduced by the committee and discussion continued for the remainder of the committee's allotted time. During Session 8, the committee called attention to several changes, inserting "*certification*," before the words "*call and ordination*" in the second paragraph under step 3 of the introductory information; inserting "*or 'an ordained minister'*" after "*a pastor*" in paragraph a. of step 5 of the introductory information; and inserting the words "*or 'an ordained minister'*" after "*a pastor*" in paragraph (b) (2) of proposed Bylaw 2.13.1. A lengthy amendment was proposed for the introductory materials accompanying the resolution, which the chair ruled a substitute motion and which was not accepted for consideration by the convention. An amendment to delete the words "others responsible for the *program*" in the first resolve and replace them with "*Board for Pastoral Education and Council of Presidents*" was agreed to by the committee. An amendment was introduced to delete all of Step 6 after the word "*Program*" and to replace it with "*will be expected, whenever possible, to pursue the path to become a 'general ministry pastor.'*" *To accomplish this:*"—also deleting the next line, "*1. They may remain rostered as a specific ministry pastor.*" An amendment to the amendment was then introduced to replace the word "*expected*" in the amendment with "*encouraged.*" After further debate, the amendment to the amendment was adopted, but the amended amendment failed to be adopted. As discussion returned to the original resolution, a motion was introduced to add a final resolve: "*Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee submit a progress report to the Synod at least nine months prior to the 2010 convention.*" After this change was agreed to by the committee, Res. 5-01B was adopted as changed [Yes: 908; No: 287].)

To Address Licensed Lay Deacons**RESOLUTION 5-02**Overtures 5-11–12 (*CW*, pp. 216–217)

WHEREAS, 1989 Res. 3-05B, “To Adopt Recommendations of Lay Worker Study Committee Report as Amended,” which authorized lay men to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry in certain circumstances as licensed lay deacons, was never intended to serve as an alternate route into the pastoral office; and

WHEREAS, The need for such licensed lay deacons may still be present in those relatively rare and unusual situations where no ordained pastor is available, “lest God’s people be deprived of the opportunity for corporate worship and the celebration of the Sacraments” (*Convention Proceedings*, 1989, p. 112); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board for Pastoral Education and the Council of Presidents be requested to study the situations currently served by licensed lay deacons to determine whether there continues to be a genuine need for this program within the Synod and to present a report with recommendations to the 2010 convention of the Synod.

Action: Adopted (9)

(After the committee chairman reported that Committees 3 and 5 had harmonized their nearly identical resolutions according to the text of Res. 5-02, the resolution was introduced for consideration. A substitute motion was offered: “Resolved, *That all laymen licensed by synodical or district programs to conduct word and sacrament ministry be enrolled in the specific ministry pastor program by August 1, 2009, or such licensure shall be rescinded.*” The assembly voted not to consider the substitute resolution, and discussion continued until a motion was introduced to amend the resolution by replacing the second and third paragraphs with the following: “WHEREAS, The need for such licensed lay deacons continues to be crucial and necessary, ‘lest God’s people be deprived of the opportunity for corporate worship and the celebration of the Sacraments’ (*Convention Proceedings, 1989, p. 112*); therefore be it Resolved, *That the Board for Pastoral Education and the Council of Presidents be requested to study the situations currently served by licensed lay deacons, and to present that report with recommendations at the 2010 convention of the Synod.*” The chair ruled this to be a substitute resolution, and the assembly voted not to consider it. An amendment was introduced to add the following words to the resolve following the word “*Synod*”: “*and additionally, to study this program as it relates to Augustana XIV.*” The motion to amend failed, leaving Res. 5-02 without amendment. An amendment was proposed to add a resolve paragraph before the existing resolve paragraph as follows: “Resolved, *That the Board for Pastoral Education be encouraged to develop financial incentives for licensed lay deacons to enroll in the Specific Ministry Pastor Program (SMPP); and be it further.*” This proposed amendment also failed, and the resolution was adopted as presented by the committee [Yes: 948; No: 202].)

ADDENDUM B (Specific Ministry Pastor [SMP] Final Report)**The Specific Ministry Pastor Program****A White Paper****Presented to****The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

by

The Specific Ministry Pastor Committee

of

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**March 15, 2012****Introduction**

The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Committee of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is pleased to provide this *White Paper* to serve as an accurate source of data concerning the SMP program. In doing so, the SMP Committee intends to offer a service to the LCMS as discussions concerning the SMP program take place throughout the Synod. As a *White Paper*, this document is designed to provide data in an objective manner without forming conclusions or suggesting reactions that the reader should have to the data presented.

While seeking to provide data that is meaningful and helpful in addressing SMP-related topics being discussed in the Synod, the SMP Committee acknowledges that it cannot anticipate every question or issue that may be raised. Yet, the SMP Committee is pleased to respond to requests for additional data not provided in this document, assuming those requests are realistic given the limited staff and budget resources available. Any such requests should be directed to the chair of the committee.

Background Information

The 2007 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) passed Resolution 5-01B, “To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program,” (see Appendix 1) by a vote of 908 in favor to 287 opposed (76% in favor). The resolution stipulated: “That the Specific Ministry Pastor [SMP] Program be adopted in principle and the seminaries, Board for Pastoral Education, and Council of Presidents be authorized to implement it.” The Convention adopted the SMP program in principle because the specifics of the program, including admission policies and procedures, curriculum, and many other details were non-existent at the time the Convention met. These items would be developed during the months following the Convention with a goal of having the first SMP students enrolled in the fall of 2008.

Res. 5-01B also contained a reporting mandate: “That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee submit a progress report to the Synod at least nine months prior to the 2010 convention.” This mandate was added to the original resolution through an amendment offered from the floor of the Convention. It is in compliance with this reporting mandate, contained in Res. 5-01B, that the SMP Committee provided a report to the church (via the Web site of the former LCMS Board for Pastoral Education) in October 2009.

SMP Committee Meetings and Members

Following the 2007 LCMS Convention, the SMP Committee met five times: September 12 and December 12 of 2007, February 15, 2008, and February 20 and September 18–19 of 2009. The Committee is comprised of the following members:

SMP Committee in September 2007:

- 1) Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann, LCMS Board for Pastoral Education (chair)
- 2) Dr. Andrew Bartelt, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- 3) Dr. Lawrence Rast, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- 4) Dr. Douglas Rutt, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- 5) Dr. David Wollenburg, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- 6) Dr. Robert Newton, President, California-Nevada-Hawaii District
- 7) Dr. Warren Schumacher, President, Northwest District
- 8) Dr. Gerhard Michael, President, Florida-Georgia District
- 9) Dr. Samuel Nafzger, LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations
- 10) Rev. Roosevelt Gray, Mission Director, Urban/Cross Cultural and Campus Ministries, Michigan District
- 11) Rev. John Messmann, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Fort Worth, TX

Following the retirement of Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann as executive director of the Board for Pastoral Education in September 2007 and the 2009 LCMS district conventions, the following members were serving on the LCMS SMP Committee by September of 2009:

SMP Committee in September 2009:

- 1) Dr. Glen Thomas, LCMS Board for Pastoral Education, chair, replaced Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann in November 2007.
- 2) Dr. Andrew Bartelt, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- 3) Rev. Anthony Cook, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, added September 2009
- 4) Dr. Lawrence Rast, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- 5) Dr. Douglas Rutt, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- 6) Dr. David Wollenburg, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- 7) Dr. Robert Newton, President, California-Nevada-Hawaii District
- 8) Rev. David Maier, President, Michigan District, replaced Dr. Warren Schumacher in September 2009.
- 9) Rev. Dan Gilbert, president, Northern Illinois District, replaced Dr. Gerhard Michael in September 2009.
- 10) Dr. Samuel Nafzger, LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations
- 11) Rev. Roosevelt Gray, Mission Director, Urban/Cross Cultural and Campus Ministries, Michigan District
- 12) Rev. John Messmann, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Fort Worth, TX

The current SMP Committee consists of:

- 1) Dr. Glen Thomas, LCMS executive director of pastoral education
- 2) Dr. Andrew Bartelt, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- 3) Rev. Anthony Cook, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- 4) Dr. Charles Gieschen (replaced Dr. Lawrence Rast), Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- 5) Rev. William Johnson (replaced Dr. Douglas Rutt), Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- 6) Dr. David Wollenburg, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- 7) Dr. Robert Newton, President, California-Nevada-Hawaii District
- 8) Rev. David Maier, President, Michigan District
- 9) Rev. Dan Gilbert, President, Northern Illinois District
- 10) Rev. Roosevelt Gray, Mission Director, Urban/Cross Cultural and Campus Ministries, Michigan District
- 11) Rev. John Messmann, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Fort Worth, TX

Rather than in-person meetings, the SMP Committee began conducting phone conferences in order to save funds while still serving the Synod. The SMP committee holds approximately four phone conferences each year in order to conduct its business.

Program Development

Following the adoption of the SMP program in principle at the 2007 LCMS Convention, the SMP Committee's immediate attention was dedicated to developing common policies, procedures, and documents that both seminaries could utilize Synod-wide. These policies and documents were crafted by sub-groups of the SMP Committee and agreed-upon by all parties involved. They include *Admission Criteria*, *Admission Sequence*, *Application for Admission*, *Pastor Supervisor Responsibilities*, *Covenant Agreement*, and *Congregational Instructions for Vicarage Application*. The final document developed, the *Application for Admission*, was posted on March 31, 2008. These documents were posted electronically on the Web sites of both seminaries and of the former LCMS Board for Pastoral Education. Today, they may be viewed or downloaded at www.csl.edu/admissions/academics/altr/specific-ministry-pastor-smp-pastor/ or www.ctsfw.edu/Page.aspx?pid=541.

In terms of developing the courses themselves, there were initial discussions in the SMP Committee exploring the possibility of having identical SMP courses at both seminaries. In the end, it was determined that while both seminaries would operate with total transparency in course development, even allowing one another to access electronic course development files on one another's servers, creating identical courses jointly would actually be more labor-intensive than each seminary developing its own courses. This, together with the looming time constraints inherent in wanting to have the first cohorts of students enrolled in fall quarter 2008, led to each seminary developing its own courses, but doing so in what might be called a loose collaboration with one another.

In the months during which meetings of the SMP Committee were not taking place, the SMP Working Groups from the two seminaries were engaged in monthly teleconferences convened by the SMP Committee chairman. Many issues, both theoretical and practical, were discussed during these teleconferences. These teleconferences also served to keep lines of communication between the two seminaries open during critical times of SMP program development.

Curricula Development

As noted above, each seminary developed its own courses for the SMP program. Yet, these courses were designed to facilitate the development of previously-defined educational outcomes in SMP students. The outcomes were developed on both seminary campuses in consultation and collaboration with the church at large. Three "Listening Posts" (LPs) were held on the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis campus, the third one also involving representatives from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. These LPs convened parish pastors and church leaders to discuss the desired outcomes they felt most appropriate to be encouraged in seminary formation. Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, also utilized a meeting with LCMS district presidents in order to discuss desired outcomes in seminary graduates. Both seminaries have observed that the process of developing SMP educational outcomes has benefited residential education in causing similar insightful thinking to inform the outcomes of ministerial formation in general on the seminary campuses, whether distance education or residential in nature.

SMP Curricula

It is helpful to recall that each SMP student serves as a vicar for the first two years of his enrollment in the SMP program. Following successful completion of his second year of vicarage and course work, the SMP student may be certified by the seminary faculty as eligible to receive a call to serve as an SMP. Following call and ordination, the SMP has two additional years of course work remaining in order to complete the SMP formation program.

The following is a description of the curricula developed and employed by the seminaries in forming SMPs for service in the LCMS, including a listing and brief description of the courses.

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

Primary Assumptions:

1. SMP consists of two phases, two years occurring before ordination and two years after ordination.
2. The courses are structured to transfer into our M.Div program if the student should desire to do so.
3. Courses are ten weeks long with a two week break in between.
4. Four course sessions will be held per year of study, with one course being a residential intensive. The first residential seminar will be an extended seminar lasting two weeks or seven full days at the CTS campus.
5. The focus of the program is Christological, pastoral, and missional.
6. The student will emerge with a sensitivity to the cultural context in which they minister.
7. The program will at all points immerse the students in the world of Scripture, including both isagogical material but emphasizing the text itself.
8. The curriculum is integrated, each course being designed by a cross-departmental team of faculty members.
9. There will be sufficient doctrinal input by the end of course #8 so that the student will be able to take his ordination vows in clear conscience.

Observations about the Curriculum

1. The curriculum includes five Biblical courses, grounding the student in the Biblical narrative, especially the life of Christ:
 - a. Two courses in the Gospels, focusing on life in Christ
 - b. Two courses in the Old Testament, focusing on Christology in the OT and its missiological implications
 - c. One course in Paul's epistles, focusing on Paul's Christology and Missiology
2. The curriculum includes five systematic courses:
 - a. Two courses in Lutheran Confessions, focusing on the Lutheran dogmatic tradition
 - b. A course on Baptism and another on the Lord's Supper, focusing on how theology and missiology are realized in the pastoral acts
 - c. A course on the Holy Trinity, focusing on Christ, sent by the Father, who justifies the sinner and who is incorporated into the body of Christ by the Spirit for mission
3. The curriculum includes five pastoral courses:
 - a. Three courses that involve the student in the pastoral acts of leading worship, preaching, and teaching
 - b. Two courses that focus on the integration of pastoral theology and missions
4. The curriculum includes one historical course on the Church and how its history has shaped the Lutheran Church from a missiological perspective

Pre-ordination Courses

1. Confessing Christ in Today's World

As the first course in the SMP curriculum, the student learns how the pastor brings people into communion with Jesus Christ. The mission of the Triune God, how God transmitted his mission to humanity in many diverse ways, is a persistent theme in the Old and New Testaments. This course will lay out biblical and theological principles for pursuing the task of bringing the Gospel to the world in varying contexts, especially emerging mission challenges and opportunities for parishes and their pastors.

Exploring the work of pastors through the centuries as stewards of the mysteries of God and physicians of the soul, the student learns how the center of the mission of the Church is Christ with his gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation, and how Christ cares for souls through the

pastor in teaching the faith, pastoral counsel, individual confession and absolution, prayer and blessing for the unique circumstances of contemporary Christians.

2. Pastoral and Missional Theology in Luke and Acts

The Church is founded on Jesus Christ, so the study of the centrality of Jesus Christ in the revelation of God in the Gospel of Luke and the significance of the mission of the apostles in the Book of Acts is a foundational course for the entire theological curriculum of SMP. Significant teachings from Luke-Acts such as the Nature of the Scriptures, Interpretation of the Old Testament, the Identity of Christ, the Kingdom of God, the Trinity and Baptism, the Apostolic Mission and Ministry, the Return of Christ, the Lord's Supper, Jesus' Death as Atonement and the Resurrection will be examined.

This course will closely examine the teaching and preaching of Jesus in the Gospel, the sermons of the apostles in Acts, the sacramental theology in Luke-Acts, and the missional and diakonal ministry of the early Christians. Since Luke is the only Gospel with a companion work describing the life of the Church, themes unique to Luke will be emphasized. A number of pastoral models from Luke-Acts will be analyzed in view of pastoral care today. Faithful interpretation of the Gospel of Luke for preaching and teaching will be modeled in lectures and mentored in exegetical groups.

3. The Lutheran Confessions: Introduction and Overview*

The study of the *Book of Concord* will examine the Augsburg Confession and its Apology, the Small and Large Catechisms, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, and the Formula of Concord. Emphasis will be on the basic teachings and issues which define the theology of the Lutheran Church in its historic context and in today's world.

**Students will read the entire Book of Concord during the first two years.*

4. Preaching the Faith

The identity of the pastor is defined by his proclamation of Word of God, the living voice of Jesus. This course engages the student in the basic principles of sermon construction and writing. Special attention is given to missional sermons from the Gospels in the context of the lectionary and liturgy of the day.

5. Heaven on Earth: The Worship of Lutherans Today

The pastor serves his people with the gifts that come from Christ's presence. This course introduces the student to the theology and practice of Lutheran liturgy. This course will acquaint the student with the biblical and confessional foundations of the Lutheran liturgy, the structure and components of the Divine Service and the daily office in Lutheran Service Book, and provide him with opportunity to develop skills as a servant of the liturgy. Time will be spent in helping the student plan creative worship with special attention to the central motifs of the Christian calendar and the Church's hymnody. Attention will be given to the history and theology of the Church year and Christian hymnody from biblical times, as well as the great treasury of contemporary hymnody.

6. The Books of Moses—The Beginning and the New Beginning

After an introduction to the first five books of the Old Testament, major portions of Genesis will be studied because of its foundational role in all theology and the mission of the Church. Creation, Marriage, the Fall into Sin, the Promise of Salvation, the Presence of the Son with the Patriarchs, and other biblical themes in Genesis will be examined. Commentaries, sermons, liturgies and hymnody from the history of the Church that deals with Genesis will also be considered.

Portions of Exodus through Deuteronomy will be studied because of their foundational role for the history of Israel and all theology. The Exodus, the Law, the Presence of the Son, the Tabernacle, Worship, Sacrifices, Purity, Forgiveness and other biblical themes in Exodus–Deuteronomy will be examined. Commentaries, sermons, liturgies and hymnody from the history of the Church that addresses Exodus through Deuteronomy will also be considered. Integration of the narratives of Genesis through Deuteronomy and teachings in the missional life of the Church today will be accented.

7. Baptism: Life in Christ

Baptism is the constituting sacrament of the Church's life that joins us to Christ and his endless life as well as to Christians of every

time and place. Using the Scriptures, historic baptismal liturgies, and sermons and teachings on baptism, this course uses the Church's own ways of speaking and ways of baptismal administration as paradigms for theological thinking and pastoral practice. This course will examine the radical and essential nature and role of baptism in the mission of the Church. The course encourages thoughtful and vigorous Christ-centered missions built on an integrated and lively implementation of thorough teaching of the faith that leads to or flows from Baptism in the Lutheran expression of the catechumenate.

8. Teaching the Faith

The pastor hands down the faith to people of all ages and circumstances through his teaching. This course will examine the biblical and confessional foundations for teaching the faith in the Lutheran congregation and seek to assist students in acquiring skills and developing practices that are consistent with these foundations. Special attention will be given to the content and pattern of teaching reflected in the catechism of Martin Luther.

Post-ordination Courses

1. The Holy Trinity: The Mission of God in Today's World

This course centers in the work of the Holy Trinity in creation, redemption, and sanctification. It will include a study of Creation and anthropology, the nature of theology, the Word of God as a Trinitarian event centering in Christ, the person of Christ as the incarnate God-Man, His offices and states, the salvation accomplished by Him and its distribution to man in justification, His resurrection and His return as foundation for eschatology, the Church as the body of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of Word and Sacraments. The student will be able to articulate the relationships with the persons of the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, and the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ.

2. The Person of Jesus in John's Gospel

As a continuation of the focus on the centrality of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ begun in Gospel of Luke and Book of Acts, major portions of the Gospel of John and the First Epistle of John will be studied. Special attention will be given to teaching that is unique to John and from the Synoptic Gospels, such as the Pre-existence and Incarnation of the Son, Christ as the Lamb of God, the Father-Son Relationship, the Divine Name of Jesus, the "I Am" Sayings, the Holy Spirit/Paraclete, the Sacraments and the Office of the Keys. This will serve as the capstone course in the formation of faithful preaching and teaching of the Gospels for the life of the Church.

3. The Lutheran Confessions in Today's World

Teaching the Lutheran Confessions today requires an emphasis on the rich heritage of mature Lutheran theology in its historical context and its application to our contemporary world. This course will show the connection between the Confessions and catechesis, providing an appreciation of Luther's contribution to the *Book of Concord*. It will also examine a selection of themes in the Lutheran Confessions such as predestination, Christology, justification by faith, Church and ministry, infant baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Church and state.

4. The Epistles of Paul—Planting the Gentile Mission

After an introduction to the life of the Apostle Paul, major portions of the Galatians and Romans will be studied. Important central teachings from Paul's other Epistles will also be examined, such as the Person and Work of Christ, Justification by Faith, the Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the End Times, and Pastoral Ministry. The importance of the Apostle Paul's teaching for the life and mission of the Church will be highlighted, especially the issues involved with the planting of the Gentile mission throughout the Roman world.

5. Ministry and Mission in Today's Pluralistic Context

This course is designed to help the students understand and address the challenges of ministering in a context of religious and world-view pluralism. It deals with the roots of the current multiplicity of religious views and world religions becoming increasingly predominant in the western world; the implications of ethnic, cultural and linguistic plurality; and the rise of universalism in the post-modern mind. The student will learn ways of presenting and defending the faith "with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15).

6. The Prophets—Christ and His Mission Foretold

After an introduction to Old Testament prophetic literature, portions of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel will be studied with attention to how these prophets bear witness of the Messiah and His kingdom. The relationship of this prophetic literature to Christ and the Church as expressed in the New Testament will be highlighted. Commentaries, sermons, liturgies and hymnody from the history of the Church that engage these prophets will also be considered. Integration of prophetic literature into the life and mission of the Church today will be accented.

7. The Lord's Supper: Life in Christ Nourished and Sustained

As the sacrament through which the life of the Church is sustained, the Lord's Supper centers on Christ's presence among his people with the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Using the Scriptures, liturgies and sermons from the Church's history, this course uses the Church's own ways of speaking and administering the sacrament of the altar as paradigms for theological thinking and pastoral practice.

8. The Church in Missiological Perspective

Beginning with a description of the Church in the 21st century, especially from the perspective of trends and challenges for world-wide missions, this course looks for historical connections with contemporary Christianity from the Reformation to the present day. Students will learn about the Reformation origins of major Protestant denominations as well as of modern Roman Catholicism, but also will consider the impact on the mission of the Church from broad historical developments like pietism, liberalism, and ecumenism. Special attention will be paid to the modern missions movement that has seen the planting of Christianity around the globe and what this has meant for the Church in America as well as abroad.

Pre-ordination residential seminars:

1. Confessing Christ in Today's World; Bibliography and Technology
2. Heaven on Earth: The Worship of Lutherans Today

Pre-ordination field seminars (possibly conducted in cooperation with CSL):

1. Practical seminar related to the ministry and mission of the participants
 2. Practical seminar related to the ministry and mission of the participants
- *See list of modules for suggestions

Post-ordination residential seminars:

1. The Holy Trinity: The Mission of God in Today's World
2. Ministry and Mission in Today's Pluralistic Context

Post-ordination field seminars (possibly conducted in cooperation with CSL):

1. Practical seminar related to the ministry and mission of the participants
 2. Practical seminar related to the ministry and mission of the participants
- *See list of modules for suggestions

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

The SMP program curriculum developed by Concordia Seminary, St. Louis is the result of many hours of consultation with the church at large (the field) and discussions within the faculty. The curriculum development team led by Dr. Charles Arand began by identifying some broad design principles to be followed as each course is written. The faculty also developed a comprehensive listing of 15 desired Pastoral Formation Outcomes which guide the development of each course.

The Narrative That Sets Forth the Vision:

The SMP Curriculum (16 courses/four years) begins and ends with courses dealing with the pastoral ministry as a ministry of speaking the Gospel ("Intro to Pastoral Ministry" and "Pastor as Theologian and Leader"). In between these bookends, the courses are organized around a narrative that integrates and binds the curriculum together. The pastor speaks the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the context of the grand narrative of God's activity in human history.

Pre-Ordination

Given that a pastor is called by the church (1) to speak the Gospel, we have to ask (2) what is the master story of the Gospel that the Christian church has proclaimed everywhere and at all times; and (3) what are the key episodes and themes of that story? (4) What distinctions and themes do Lutherans find vital for the telling of Jesus' story to others so that it is in fact the Gospel? (5) Having explored the story, we now explore the questions, "How does the story of the Gospel become my story?" and (6) "How do we encounter this story in worship?" (7) With the Gospel having become ours, "How do we bring this story to others through preaching?" and, (8) "how do we teach the story of the Gospel to those who have little acquaintance with Christianity?" Finally, (9) how do we confess the Gospel before the world until Christ returns?

[*Certification, Call, and Ordination may now take place in the SMP program.*]

Post-Ordination

Here we return to the master story of the Gospel but consider its instantiation in the particularities of the biblical texts and history. Thus we begin by (10) exploring the role and use of the Scriptures for speaking the Gospel. Then we explore how the Gospel narrative is told and lived out in (11) the Old Testament and (12) the New Testament as well as (13) how the Reformation recovered the Scriptural Gospel for a new generation. Then we turn to the questions about how we include others in that story today through (14) the task of preaching and (15) by means of the church as the means and goal of the *missio dei* within (16) the midst of the world. SMP curriculum concludes where it began, with the (17) pastor as theologian and leader. This course also provides the transition to the second part of the curriculum leading to a Certificate/M. Div.

SMP Program Curriculum**1. SMP101 Introduction to Pastoral Ministry**

An introduction to the theology and practice of the pastoral ministry as a ministry in which the pastor is called to speak the Gospel. This course will explore issues related to the foundation of the pastoral office, the nature of the pastoral ministry, and the pastor's relationship to the priesthood of the baptized.

2. SMP102 The Master Narrative

In speaking the Gospel, the pastor confesses the work of Jesus Christ as central to God's involvement with the world (from creation to consummation). This course will explore how in worship and in the world, the master narrative of the Gospel re-stories our individual and corporate lives and shapes how we live.

3. SMP103 Creedal Themes

The Gospel as summarized in the creed has a number of theological subplots that interlock with one another and whose meanings (doctrines) are indispensable for the master story. This course will explore how the Scriptures teach and how the church confesses the doctrinal truths that form the Creedal Story.

4. SMP104 Lutheran Distinctions

The grand narrative of the Gospel has focused thus far upon the presence and work of God within created history. It will now highlight the anthropological dimensions of that story and will explore how the Reformation brought those dimensions out by making distinctions between law and Gospel, the two kinds of righteousness, the two kingdoms, etc. in order to confess the Gospel in its day.

5. SMP105 Means of Grace God's dramatic involvement within the world from creation to consummation centered in Christ also involves us. In a certain sense, the master story of the Gospel re-stories our lives by incorporating us into the mission and work of Jesus Christ. This course will explore how God's story of redemption becomes our story through the visible and spoken words of baptism, absolution and the Lord's Supper.

6. SMP106 Preaching I

People who have become part of God's story of redemption are called upon to tell that story to others as they have opportunity. Pastors are called to proclaim that word publicly on behalf of the congregation.

This course will explore how the pastor moves from the study and interpretation of the word of God (1/3) to the construction of sermons and the proclamation of the Gospel (2/3).

7. SMP107 Teaching the Faith

Because the story of God's dramatic redemption of the world takes a minute to hear but requires a lifetime to live, pastors are called not only to proclaim the Gospel but also to lead people into an ever deepening understanding and appreciation of that inexhaustible story. This course will explore the nature and task of teaching the faith from cradle to grave. Special emphasis will be given to the task of catechesis and the teaching of Luther's Catechisms.

8. SMP108 Introduction to Worship

The story we proclaim and teach becomes "incarnated" through its reenactment in the church year and the liturgy. Together pastor and people re-live the story as God comes to them corporately in worship and the means of grace. This course will explore the theology and practice of worship in the context of the local congregation.

9. SMP109 Lutheran Confession of Faith

The task of telling and confessing the dramatic story of God's mission within the world continues until Christ returns. The pastor confesses that story against all errors that seek to distort it. This course will explore how the confessions of the church, the roadmap to the heart of Scripture, inform the pastoral task of dealing with errors that distort the master story of the Gospel.

10. SMP110 Scripture and Faith

The master story of the Gospel is instantiated within the Biblical accounts and told by them in various ways. As one who proclaims the Gospel, the pastor uses these Biblical accounts as the source and norm for preaching and teaching. This course will explore the nature of the Scriptures, how the canon was collected, and the purpose and use of the Scriptures within the Christian life.

11. SMP111 Old Testament Theology

God's dramatic involvement in the world begins with the mission of God in creation and the commission that He gave to his human creatures to care for it. Because they failed, God re-enters his creation to redeem and restore it. This course will explore the theology of the Gospel story as told in the Old Testament.

12. SMP112 New Testament Theology

God's mission to save the world culminates in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of his Son. With the creation of the New Israel on Pentecost, the church took the story of the Gospel to the far reaches of their world. This course will explore the theology of the New Testament with special emphasis on the themes that emerge as the New Testament writers tell the master story.

13. SMP113 Lutheran Reformation

The Reformation was a recovery of the Biblical story that resulted in a concomitant preaching revival. This course will demonstrate how the creedal and biblical narrative was at times hidden or lost in the centuries preceding the Reformation, how it was recovered by Martin Luther and the Reformation, and how it is proclaimed today.

14. SMP114 Preaching II

With a more thorough grounding in the nature of the Scriptures as well as the theology of the Old and New Testaments, the pastor recognizes a number of interpretative questions and challenges to the proclamation of the richness of the biblical Gospel. This course will deal in more depth than course #6 did with the issue of hermeneutics (2/3) as it applies to preaching the text (1/3).

15. SMP115 The Church

Within the grand narrative of the Gospel, the church appears as both the means and the goal of the mission of God. It is the means by which the mission of God is furthered in the world today and the goal of the mission of God in the new creation. This course will examine how Americans hear and filter the Biblical Gospel, and will explore ways in which the church can tell the story in today's cultural context.

The church has taken the master narrative of the Gospel into other cultures and it has found it necessary to translate that story. In the living

out that story, it has found ways that are faithful to the Scriptures which take into account the challenges of culture.

16. SMP116 Pastor as Leader and Theologian

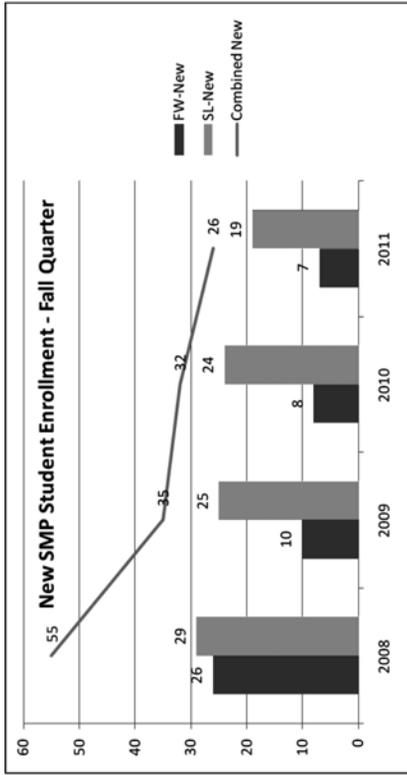
This initial portion of the curriculum ends where it began—with the pastor who is called to tell the master story of the Gospel. Here we begin to look at how the pastor exercises leadership in the church as a theologian of the church. This course will explore the ongoing challenges of theology within the church today and will introduce the student to the distinctive methodologies of the various theological (exegetic, historic and systematic) disciplines.

At this writing, no student has had sufficient time to complete all of the SMP courses. Since the first students enrolled in September 2008, the first students will not be completely through the entire course regimen until the winter quarter of 2012–2013. Current discussions in the SMP Committee include plans by both seminaries to conduct their own assessment exercises immediately following the completion of the entire program by SMP students and supervising pastors. This evaluation will be utilized in the ongoing review process of the program and its effectiveness.

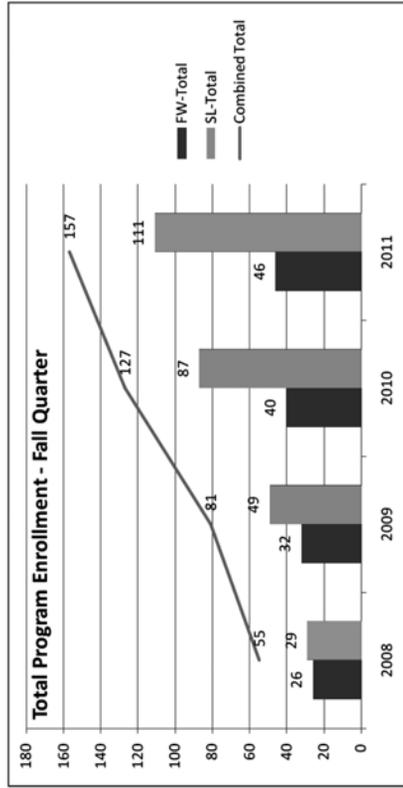
Enrollment History: Numbers of Students

The fall of 2008 witnessed the on-campus orientation for the first cohorts of SMP students at both seminaries. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, began with 29 new SMP students and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, began with 26 new SMP students. The table and graph below contain the enrollment data at the two seminaries through the fall of 2011.

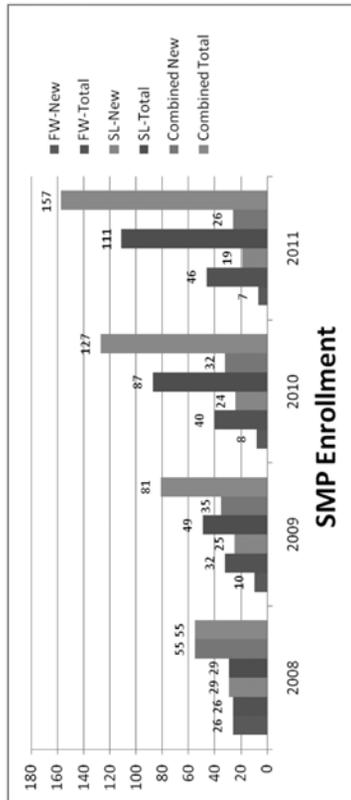
It should be noted that while both seminaries enrolled new cohorts of SMP students in the fall quarter of each year, Concordia Seminary also enrolled new cohorts of 12, 12, and 10 new SMP students in the spring quarters of 2010, 2011, and 2012 respectively. While these students are not included in the numbers of “new” students in the fall quarters listed below, they are captured in the numbers of “total” students listed each year below.



The following graph depicts the trend in total SMP student enrollment in the fall quarter of each academic year. This data would include the three cohorts of new SMP students who began in 2010, 2011, and 2012 (see above).



SMP Enrollment	Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne		Concordia Seminary, St. Louis		Both Seminaries Combined	
	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total
2008	26	26	29	29	55	55
2009	10	32	25	49	35	81
2010	8	40	24	87	32	127
2011	7	46	19	111	26	157



The following graph depicts the trend in new SMP student enrollment in the fall quarter of each academic year. Once again, the three cohorts of new SMP students who began in 2010, 2011, and 2012 (see above) are not included in this new student data.

A comparison of the number of new SMP students to the number of new residential, ordination track students in the fall quarter of each year is provided by the data below.

Student Type/Year (Fall Quarter)	2008	2009	2010	2011
FW New SMP	26	10	8	7
FW New Residential (M.Div./Alt. Rte.)	55	62	48	36
FW Ratio of New Residential Students to New SMP Students	2.1:1	6.2:1	6.0:1	5.1:1
STL New SMP	29	25	24	19
STL New Residential (M.Div./Alt. Rte.)	93	87	69	78
STL Ratio of New Residential Students to New SMP Students	3.2:1	3.5:1	2.9:1	4.1:1
Total New SMP	55	35	32	26
Total New Residential (M.Div./Alt. Rte.)	148	149	117	114
Combined Ratio of New Residential Students to New SMP Students	2.7:1	4.3:1	3.7:1	4.4:1

A comparison of the number of total SMP students to the number of total residential, ordination track students is provided by the data below.

Student Type/Year (Fall Quarter)	2008	2009	2010	2011
FW Total SMP	26	32	40	46
FW Total Residential (M.Div./Alt. Rte.)	252	246	219	182
FW Ratio of Total Residential Students to Total SMP Students	9.7:1	7.7:1	5.5:1	4.0:1

STL Total SMP	29	49	87	111
STL Total Residential (M.Div./Alt. Rte.)	408	376	326	309
STL Ratio of Total Residential Students to Total SMP Students	14.1:1	7.7:1	3.7:1	2.8:1
Total SMP (combined seminaries)	55	81	127	157
Total Residential (M.Div./Alt. Rte.) (combined seminaries)	660	622	545	491
Combined Ratio of Total Residential Students to Total SMP Students	12.0:1	7.7:1	4.3:1	3.1:1

A comparison of total SMP student enrollment at the seminaries versus total General Pastor ordination track enrollment, including all programs leading to ordination as a General Pastor in the LCMS (residential (M.Div. and Alt. Rte.) and distance (EHT, CHS, Deaf Inst., DELTO, Cr. Cultural Min. (Irvine)) is provided by the data below:

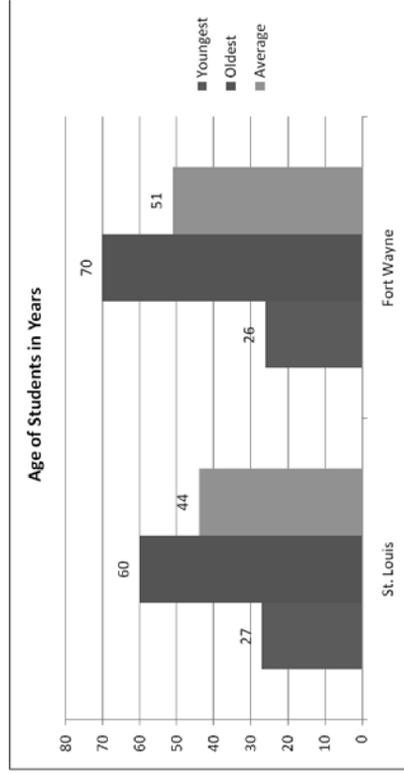
Student Type/Year (Fall Quarter)	2008	2009	2010	2011
FW Total SMP	26	32	40	46
FW Total General Pastor Ordination Track (All Programs) for LCMS service	262	257	224	185
FW Ratio of Total General Pastor Ordination Track (All Programs) Students to Total SMP Students	10.0:1	8.0:1	5.6:1	4.0:1
STL Total SMP	29	49	87	111
STL Total General Pastor Ordination Track (All Programs) for LCMS service	555	497	416	398
STL Ratio of Total General Pastor Ordination Track (All Programs)				

Enrollment History: Types of Students

Each year, the seminaries provided data for their cohorts of new SMP students to the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education. These data were utilized to form a more complete picture of the types of students enrolling in the SMP program. The following characteristics are some of those that were reported.

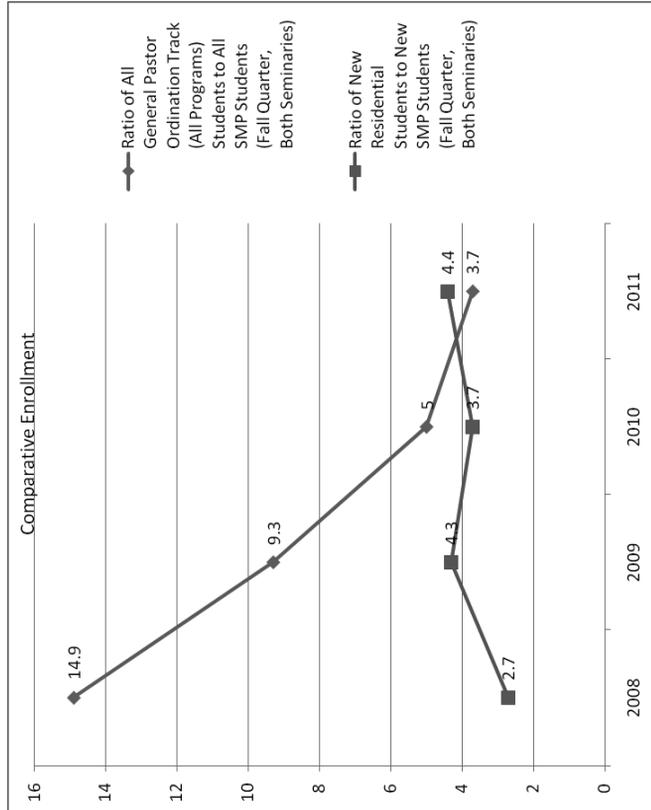
Age in Years	Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne			Concordia Seminary, St. Louis		
	Youngest	Oldest	Average	Youngest	Oldest	Average
Fall of Year						
2008	28	67	48	27	68	46
2009	32	70	56	23	64	48
2010	43	59	52	33	72	48
2011	26	70	51	27	60	44

The graph below depicts the data contained in the table above for the fall quarter of 2011.



By way of comparison, the average age of incoming residential Master of Divinity program students at the LCMS seminaries for the fall quarter of 2011 is: St. Louis – 26.2 years, with 92% being 35 years old or younger; Fort Wayne – 30.5 years, with 78% being 35 years old or under.

Students to Total SMP Students	19.1:1	10.1:1	4.8:1	3.6:1
Total SMP (combined seminaries)	55	81	127	157
Total General Pastor Ordination Track (All Programs) for LCMS service (combined seminaries)	817	754	640	583
Combined Ratio of Total General Pastor Ordination Track (All Programs) Students to Total SMP Students	14.9:1	9.3:1	5.0:1	3.7:1



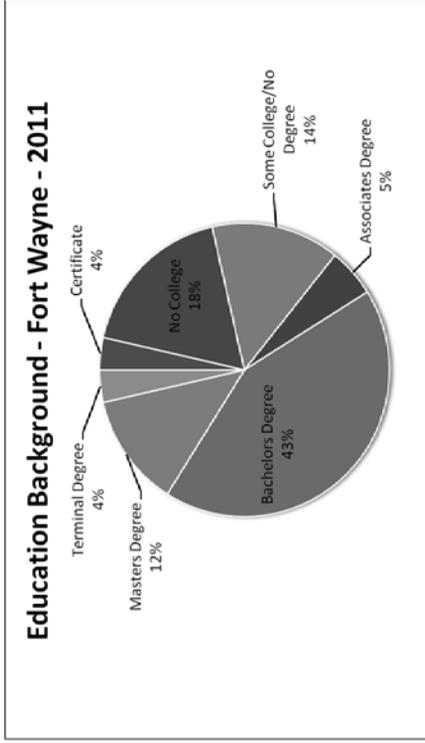
The following table contains data depicting the marital status of incoming SMP students in the fall quarters of the years listed at both LCMS seminaries.

Marital Status	Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne				Concordia Seminary, St. Louis			
	Never Married	Married	Divorced and Single	Divorced and Remarried	Never Married	Married	Divorced and Single	Divorced and Remarried
2008	1	18	0	6	1	25	0	3
2009	0	9	1	3	1	21	1	1
2010	1	6	0	2	0	21	0	3
2011	2	6	0	1	1	14	0	4

The following two tables and accompanying graphs contain data depicting the education background of the incoming cohorts of SMP students in the fall quarters of the years listed at both LCMS seminaries.

Education Background	Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne							
	Certificate	No College	Some College/No Degree	Associates Degree	Bachelors Degree	Masters Degree	Terminal Degree	
2008	2	4	2	2	10	4	1	
2009	0	3	1	1	6	2	0	
2010	0	3	2	0	4	0	0	
2011	0	0	3	0	4	1	1	

Fall quarter 2011 data from the table above are depicted in chart form below.



Education Background	Concordia Seminary, St. Louis							
	Certificate	No College	Some College/No Degree	Associates Degree	Bachelors Degree	Masters Degree	Terminal Degree	
2008	0	1	4	0	13	9	2	
2009	0	4	2	2	15	1	0	
2010	0	2	1	3	8	9	1	
2011	0	0	5	0	11	3	0	

Fall quarter 2011 data from the table above are depicted in chart form below.

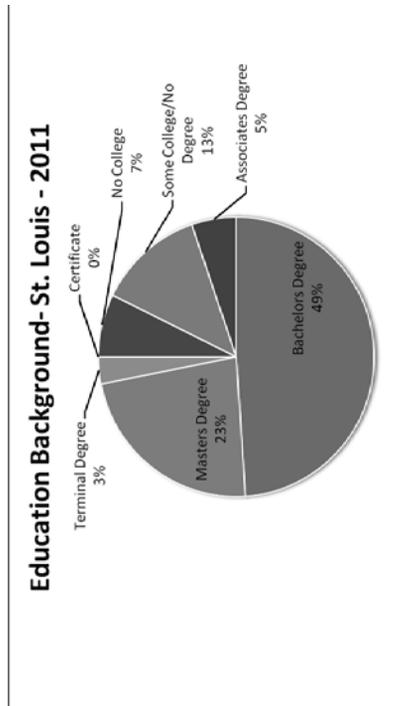
Sole pastor (or vicar) working as mission developer or church planter (not working from the context of a multi-pastor church)	13	8
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2) Please indicate which of the following descriptions most accurately reflects your future service:		
	Number	% of Total
Staff pastor (or vicar) in a multi-pastor church working primarily internally (e.g., youth, music, education, evangelism, or a satellite site of the congregation, etc.)	82	53
Staff pastor (or vicar) in a multi-pastor church working primarily externally (e.g., mission developer, church planter, etc.)	20	13
Sole pastor (or vicar) providing Word and Sacrament ministry in an established site that is economically challenged (e.g., few people, remote location, etc.) and cannot support a "general pastor" (e.g., with M.Div. degree or Alt. Rte. certification)	37	24
Sole pastor (or vicar) working as mission developer or church planter (not working from the context of a multi-pastor church)	15	10

3) Please indicate which of the following descriptions most accurately reflects your current service:		
	Number	% of Total
Bi-vocational (working in a paid position in another setting in addition to my SMP service)	72	47
SMP-exclusively (not in a paid position in another setting in addition to SMP service)	81	53

4) Please indicate which of the following descriptions most accurately reflects your future service:		
	Number	% of Total
Bi-vocational (working in a paid position in another setting in addition to my SMP service)	50	32
SMP-exclusively (not in a paid position in another setting in addition to SMP service)	104	68

Student Cost



Enrollment History: Types of Service

Initial attempts to categorize the types of service being rendered by SMP students resulted in more than a dozen categories, some with only one student identified. While the details of each student's service is unique, an attempt was made in March 2012 through the survey below to categorize students in more general categories, both in terms of their types of service and in terms of the full-time or part-time nature of their service. While such an effort admittedly fails to recognize many unique aspects to each student's service, it does result in providing a helpful overall understanding of the types of service offered by the students, as well as the service they anticipate providing in the future.

The tables below contain the data received with 154 of the current 157 SMP students responding:

1) Please indicate which of the following descriptions most accurately reflects your current service:		
	Number	% of Total
Staff pastor (or vicar) in a multi-pastor church working primarily internally (e.g., youth, music, education, evangelism, or a satellite site of the congregation, etc.)	94	61
Staff pastor (or vicar) in a multi-pastor church working primarily externally (e.g., mission developer, church planter, etc.)	17	11
Sole pastor (or vicar) providing Word and Sacrament ministry in an established site that is economically challenged (e.g., few people, remote location, etc.) and cannot support a "general pastor" (e.g., with M.Div. degree or Alt. Rte. certification)	30	20

2. The printed information clearly explained the admission process.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1
Disagree	5	7	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	7	4	3
Agree	46	37	53
Strongly Agree	8	19	13

3. My district president seemed to be sufficiently informed on SMP.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	1	1
Disagree	7	7	5
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	9	7	7
Agree	28	29	26
Strongly Agree	21	23	34

4. The schedule for course offerings throughout the year is reasonable.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1
Disagree	6	2	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	6	5	9
Agree	48	44	67
Strongly Agree	6	16	20

5. The process of registering for courses was burdensome.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1
Disagree	6	2	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	6	5	9
Agree	48	44	67
Strongly Agree	6	16	20

The 2011-2012 Academic Catalogs of both seminaries contain the following information concerning tuition costs associated with SMP Courses:

- St. Louis - \$1,845/course (the same tuition rate (\$615/quarter hour) assessed for residential M.Div. courses).
- Fort Wayne - \$1,560/course (the same tuition rate (\$520/quarter hour) assessed for residential M.Div. courses).

During the first two years of the program, as the SMP student serves as a vicar, he is also assessed the annual vicarage fee (\$579) which is charged all vicars. This vicarage fee is paid over two years and as is the case with the resident programs, many congregations cover the cost for their vicar.

The seminaries do not offer institutional financial assistance to SMP students.

While SMP students do not pay room and board fees and do not bear the costs of relocation to the seminary campus, they do travel to their seminary campus once/year. Students are responsible for these transportation costs.

Perceptions of the Program:

In the fall of each year since 2009, the LCMS office of pastoral education conducted a survey of SMP students, their supervising pastors and LCMS district presidents who have SMP students in order to assess the reactions they were having to the SMP program. While some minor changes were made by necessity in the survey instrument over the course of the past three years, the content of the instrument has remained substantially consistent. As such, it provides results that express the perceptions of those who are most intimately involved with the program. The survey data are collected online and the identities of those providing the survey responses are protected.

The following data (both seminaries combined) have been collected over the past three years through this survey instrument.

SMP Student Results:

*Student and mentor responses are combined for 2009. No distinction was made between students and mentors in the first year of the survey.

1. The process of demonstrating entry-level competence was easily understood.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	1	1
Disagree	6	3	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	9	2	5
Agree	45	42	49
Strongly Agree	6	19	16

Strongly Disagree	12	33	55
Disagree	42	29	37
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	11	3	5
Agree	1	2	2
Strongly Agree	0	0	1

Response	6. The tuition cost for the courses is appropriate.		
	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	2	2	2
Disagree	6	12	11
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	19	17	44
Agree	35	32	43
Strongly Agree	4	4	0

Response	7. The initial on-campus orientation to SMP is helpful.		
	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	3	0	3
Disagree	6	5	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	4	2
Agree	32	23	34
Strongly Agree	21	35	32

Response	8. The syllabi for courses accurately described the course content.		
	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	4	1	5

Neither Disagree Nor Agree	9	6	4
Agree	45	40	66
Strongly Agree	8	20	25

Response	9. The syllabi for the courses explained student performance expectations.		
	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	1	0
Disagree	11	5	7
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	13	7	8
Agree	37	41	59
Strongly Agree	5	13	26

Response	10. The technological means used to deliver course material worked well.		
	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	2	1	2
Disagree	4	9	9
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	12	9	9
Agree	38	39	64
Strongly Agree	10	9	16

Response	11. The amount of overall work expected during the courses is appropriate.		
	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Disagree	15	10	12
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	15	8	16
Agree	33	47	66

Strongly Agree	2	2	6
12. The amount of reading expected during the courses is appropriate.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Disagree	4	3	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	9	15	19
Agree	50	47	74
Strongly Agree	2	2	5

13. The amount of work to be submitted during the courses is appropriate.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Disagree	7	5	4
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	12	11	17
Agree	45	49	73
Strongly Agree	1	2	6

14. The grading of student work during the courses is fair.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	2	0	2
Disagree	2	3	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	14	12	11
Agree	43	40	59
Strongly Agree	5	12	26

15. The amount of communication between the professor and the student is

sufficient.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3
Disagree	15	10	13
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	16	12	11
Agree	29	31	63
Strongly Agree	5	12	10

16. The professors demonstrate a personal interest in the student.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	1	2
Disagree	6	2	4
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	16	14	16
Agree	31	34	46
Strongly Agree	13	16	32

17. The professors are sufficiently knowledgeable in the subject areas they taught.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	0	1	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	1	0
Agree	24	16	22
Strongly Agree	39	49	76

18. The amount of feedback provided by the professors to the students is appropriate.

Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	2	1	5
Disagree	11	12	10
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	18	10	15
Agree	30	38	50
Strongly Agree	5	6	20

19. The feedback provided by the professors to the students is timely.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	4	5	1
Disagree	13	7	16
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	21	16	17
Agree	26	37	44
Strongly Agree	2	2	22

20. The preparation of the supervising pastor for his responsibilities is sufficient.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	2	2	5
Disagree	8	5	8
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	13	8	10
Agree	36	32	53
Strongly Agree	7	20	24

21. The amount of interaction between the student and the supervising pastor is sufficient.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	1	1
Disagree	3	3	5
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	3	8
Agree	43	30	51
Strongly Agree	16	30	35

Strongly Disagree	0	1	1
Disagree	3	3	5
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	3	8
Agree	43	30	51
Strongly Agree	16	30	35

22. The practical application of course material to the pastoral ministry context is emphasized sufficiently.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	3	2
Disagree	5	5	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	7	3	20
Agree	42	33	47
Strongly Agree	11	23	28

23. The course work is beneficial in forming the student for pastoral ministry in his context.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	2	1	0
Disagree	4	2	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	4	3
Agree	41	32	49
Strongly Agree	15	28	46

24. The vicarage experience is beneficial in forming the student for pastoral ministry in his context.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	1	1
Disagree	3	3	5
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	3	8
Agree	43	30	51
Strongly Agree	16	30	35

Neither Disagree Nor Agree	15	15	16
Agree	1	1	8
Strongly Agree	1	1	2

28. I feel "connected" to the seminary providing the SMP instruction.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	3	0	2
Disagree	16	5	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	14	7	11
Agree	28	35	56
Strongly Agree	5	20	28

29. Thus far, I have a positive overall reaction to the SMP program.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	2	1	0
Disagree	3	2	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	1	5
Agree	30	24	29
Strongly Agree	27	39	64

30. I would recommend enrolling in the SMP program to someone contemplating it.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	1	2
Disagree	3	2	4
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	2	6
Agree	34	16	33

Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	3	0	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	2	3	4
Agree	28	19	39
Strongly Agree	33	45	55

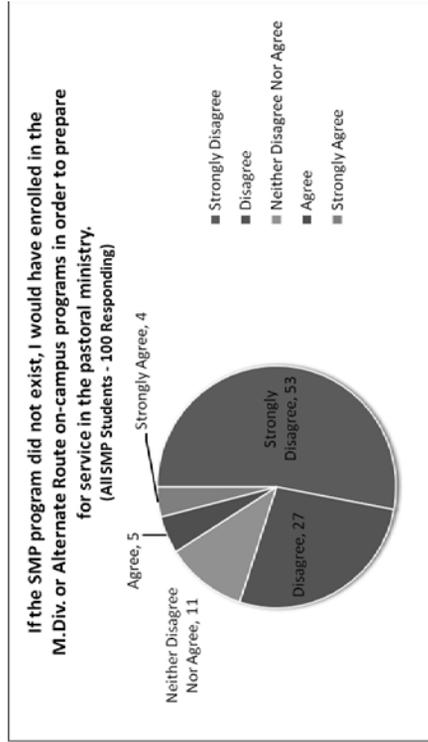
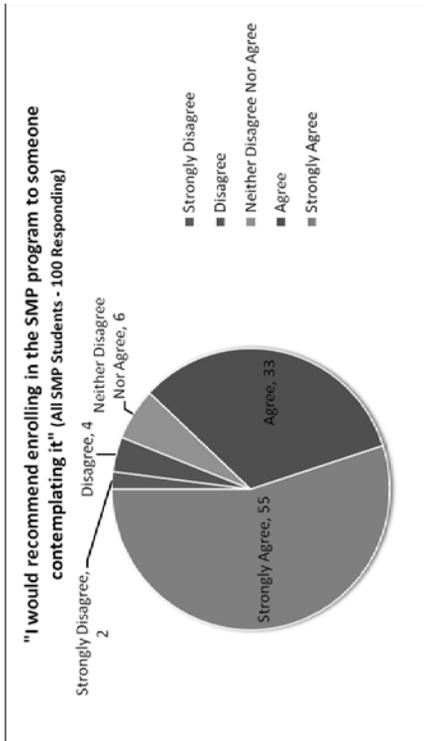
25. The interaction with other students in the cohort group is sufficient.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	8	2	6
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	17	11	8
Agree	36	35	58
Strongly Agree	5	19	28

26. The quantity of knowledge gained as a result of the course work is significant.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Disagree	2	3	0
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	5	2	0
Agree	42	29	54
Strongly Agree	16	33	46

27. The expectations of students in the SMP program are unrealistically high.			
Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	10	9	21
Disagree	39	41	53

Strongly Agree	26	46	55
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The graph below depicts the answer to this question provided by the 100 SMP students who responded to the annual survey in the fall quarter of 2011.



Supervising Pastor Survey Results

Student and mentor responses are combined for 2009.

Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	1
Disagree	10	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	15
Agree	29	34
Strongly Agree	3	10

1. The process of demonstrating entry-level competence was easily understood.

Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	1
Disagree	7	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	8	14

2. The printed information clearly explained the admission process.

Response	2009*	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	N/A	N/A	53
Disagree	N/A	N/A	27
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	N/A	N/A	11
Agree	N/A	N/A	5
Strongly Agree	N/A	N/A	4

31. If the SMP program did not exist, I would have enrolled in the M.Div. or Alternate Route on-campus programs in order to prepare for service in the pastoral ministry.

The table below depicts the responses to this survey statement provided by the 100 SMP students who responded to the survey in the fall of 2011.

Agree	30	37
Strongly Agree	2	8

3. My district president seemed to be sufficiently informed on SMP.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	5	6
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	5	2
Agree	24	33
Strongly Agree	13	21

4. The schedule for course offerings throughout the year is reasonable.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	0
Disagree	3	5
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	6
Agree	31	59
Strongly Agree	8	11

5. The process of registering for courses was burdensome.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	6
Disagree	23	22
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	21	46
Agree	2	7
Strongly Agree	0	0

6. The tuition cost for the courses is appropriate.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	5
Disagree	10	9
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	12	25
Agree	24	40
Strongly Agree	1	2

7. The initial on-campus orientation to SMP is helpful.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	4
Disagree	2	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	10
Agree	24	29
Strongly Agree	17	16

8. The syllabi for courses accurately described the course content.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	1	7
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	12	21
Agree	32	47
Strongly Agree	2	6

9. The syllabi for the courses explained student performance expectations.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Disagree	5	8
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	12	24
Agree	28	46
Strongly Agree	2	3

10. The technological means used to deliver course material worked well.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	2
Disagree	5	8
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	7	19
Agree	31	43
Strongly Agree	3	9

11. The amount of overall work expected during the courses is appropriate.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	3
Disagree	6	11
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	6	13
Agree	31	47
Strongly Agree	3	7

12. The amount of reading expected during the courses is appropriate.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	2
Disagree	3	8

Neither Disagree Nor Agree	8	12
Agree	33	52
Strongly Agree	3	7

13. The amount of work to be submitted during the courses is appropriate.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	2
Disagree	4	9
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	6	13
Agree	33	51
Strongly Agree	3	6

14. The grading of student work during the courses is fair.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	1
Disagree	4	6
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	12	23
Agree	30	48
Strongly Agree	1	3

15. The amount of communication between the professor and the student is sufficient.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	6
Disagree	8	9
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	12	19
Agree	26	42

Strongly Agree	0	5
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16. The professors demonstrate a personal interest in the student.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	3
Disagree	3	7
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	15	33
Agree	22	29
Strongly Agree	7	9

17. The professors are sufficiently knowledgeable in the subject areas they taught.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	1
Disagree	0	1
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	6
Agree	28	44
Strongly Agree	15	29

18. The amount of feedback provided by the professors to the students is appropriate.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	5
Disagree	8	10
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	11	24
Agree	28	38
Strongly Agree	0	4

19. The feedback provided by the professors to the students is timely.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	6
Disagree	8	11
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	12	28
Agree	26	34
Strongly Agree	0	2

20. The preparation of the supervising pastor for his responsibilities is sufficient.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	4
Disagree	5	9
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	8	9
Agree	30	54
Strongly Agree	3	4

21. The amount of interaction between the student and the supervising pastor is sufficient.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	3	2
Disagree	1	11
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	2	1
Agree	32	48
Strongly Agree	9	19

22. The practical application of course material to the pastoral ministry context is emphasized sufficiently.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	4
Disagree	5	10
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	11
Agree	27	44
Strongly Agree	10	12

23. The course work is beneficial in forming the student for pastoral ministry in his context.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	4
Disagree	2	10
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	7
Agree	30	43
Strongly Agree	11	17

24. The vicarage experience is beneficial in forming the student for pastoral ministry in his context.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	3
Disagree	1	1
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	4	5
Agree	21	41
Strongly Agree	20	31

25. The interaction with other students in the cohort group is sufficient.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	4	6

26. The quantity of knowledge gained as a result of the course work is significant.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	3	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	17	28
Agree	27	45
Strongly Agree	0	5

27. The expectations of students in the SMP program are unrealistically high.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	2	3
Disagree	1	1
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	5	7
Agree	35	57
Strongly Agree	4	13

28. I feel "connected" to the seminary providing the SMP instruction.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	9	4
Disagree	29	51
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	7	16
Agree	2	8
Strongly Agree	0	2

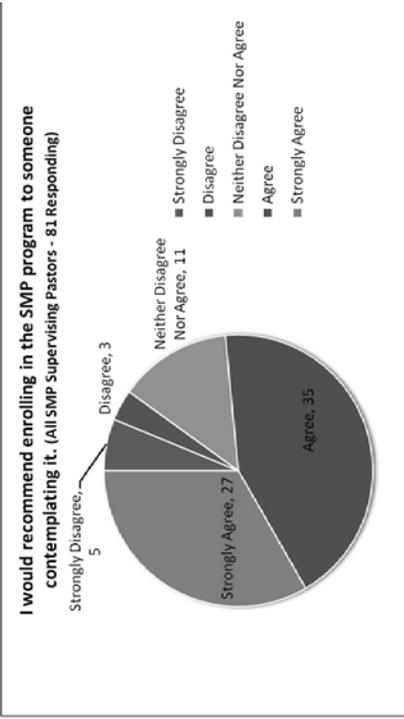
29. The interaction with other students in the cohort group is sufficient.		
Response	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	4	6

Disagree	6	16
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	14	16
Agree	22	38
Strongly Agree	1	5

Response	2010		2011	
	29. Thus far, I have a positive overall reaction to the SMP program.			
Strongly Disagree	3	4		
Disagree	2	10		
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	4		
Agree	25	37		
Strongly Agree	14	26		

Response	2010		2011	
	30. I would recommend enrolling in the SMP program to someone contemplating it.			
Strongly Disagree	3	5		
Disagree	1	3		
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	11		
Agree	24	35		
Strongly Agree	16	27		

The table below depicts the responses to this survey statement by the 81 supervising pastors who responded in the fall of 2011.



District President Survey Results (only district presidents who have students enrolled in SMP)

Response	2009			2010			2011		
	1. The process of demonstrating entry-level competence was easily understood.								
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	0	0
Agree	8	8	10	10	10	12	10	12	12
Strongly Agree	2	2	0	0	0	6	0	0	6

Response	2009			2010			2011		
	2. The printed information clearly explained the admission process.								
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Disagree	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	1	1	2	2	0	0	2	0	0
Agree	8	8	10	10	11	11	10	11	11

Strongly Agree	4	0	6
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3. I am sufficiently informed on SMP.			
Response	2009	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	0	2	1
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	2	1	1
Agree	5	7	8
Strongly Agree	7	3	9

4. The schedule for course offerings throughout the year is reasonable.			
Response	2009	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	0	1	1
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	0	1	2
Agree	13	10	13
Strongly Agree	1	1	3

5. The SMP program is meeting the needs for which it was designed.			
Response	2009	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	0	1	2
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	2	6	2
Agree	6	2	6
Strongly Agree	6	4	9

6. The tuition cost for the courses is appropriate.			
Response	2009	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	2	0
Disagree	2	3	4
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	3	3	7
Agree	7	5	8
Strongly Agree	2	0	0

7. The expectations of students in the SMP program are unrealistically high.			
Response	2009	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	1	2	2
Disagree	5	8	14
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	6	3	3
Agree	1	0	0
Strongly Agree	1	0	0

8. Thus far, I have a positive overall reaction to the SMP program.			
Response	2009	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	0	1	3
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	1	2	1
Agree	7	6	7
Strongly Agree	6	4	8

9. I would recommend enrolling in the SMP program to someone contemplating it.			
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In February of 2012, the executive director of pastoral education (formerly the executive director of Synod's Board for Pastoral Education) posed to the SMP Committee the possibility of repeating the February 2009 survey of the Synod's Council of Presidents in order to compare the data in 2012, precisely three years from the 2009 survey. The executive director's e-mail message to district presidents accompanying the 2012 survey included the following qualification concerning any attempt to draw conclusions concerning the relationship between licensed lay deacon data and the SMP program:

I realize that no direct cause-effect conclusions can be established concerning the relationship between the SMP program and licensed lay deacons based strictly upon the comparison of data from the two surveys. Many other contextual variables, not the least of which is the economic downturn that has occurred in recent years, are involved. That said, the comparison should be interesting and your comments, now offered after more than three years of SMP program operation, are highly valued.

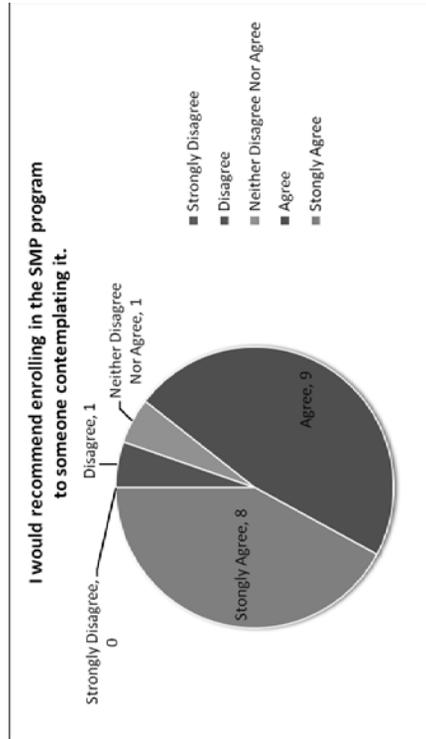
With the above qualification noted, the data below describe the responses received from district presidents in 2009 and 2012:

Please respond by providing the number of licensed laydeacons in your district who are:

Category	Number in Your District (2009)	Number in Your District (2012)
Functioning nearly or completely autonomously in providing preaching and sacrament ministry, with only occasional communication with a supervising pastor;	60	32
Functioning nearly or completely autonomously in providing preaching ministry (no sacraments), with only occasional communication with a supervising pastor;	5	7
Functioning under direct supervision, and serving as the primary provider of preaching and sacrament ministry;	81	70
Functioning under direct supervision, and serving as the primary provider of preaching (not sacraments) ministry;	13	12
Functioning under direct supervision, and serving as a part-time provider of preaching and sacrament ministry;	90	152
Functioning under direct supervision, and serving as a part-time provider of preaching (not sacraments);	71	35
Functioning under direct supervision, and serving as the primary provider of non-preaching, non-sacramental care (e.g., Bible studies, devotions, visitation, youth ministry, etc.)	24	35
Functioning under direct supervision, and serving as a part-time provider of non-preaching, non-sacramental care (e.g., Bible studies, devotions, liturgy, visitation, youth ministry, etc.)	196	259
TOTAL	540	602

Response	2009	2010	2011
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	1
Neither Disagree Nor Agree	1	2	1
Agree	6	6	9
Strongly Agree	7	5	8

The data depicted in the table above for the fall of 2011 is depicted in the chart below.



Other Phenomena:

In February 2009, the then executive director of Synod's Board for Pastoral Education was chairing a task force mandated by 2007 LCMS Convention Resolution 5-02 (To Address Lay Deacons). A part of this task force's work was to gain an accurate understanding of how many districts were utilizing licensed lay deacons and in what specific ways they were being utilized. Since it was expected that the SMP program would have an impact upon the utilization of licensed lay deacons, the task force also desired to gain from district presidents an initial reaction to the SMP program after approximately 18 months of its operation. In order to gain this information, the executive director secured the appropriate permissions and conducted a survey of the LCMS Council of Presidents (see below).

In addition to gaining data on the numbers of deacons involved in the particular categories above, please assist us by answering the following questions:

<p>1) Are there situations in your district that are not currently being served by lay deacons, but could be served by lay deacons if they were available? If so, how many?</p>	<p>February 2009 Results</p>	<p>February 2012 Results</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 districts responded "Yes." • 7 districts responded "No." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 districts responded "Yes" • 14 districts responded "No" • 4 districts - no response or unclear

<p>2) Are there situations in your district that are not currently being served by lay deacons, but will likely be served by lay deacons in the future? If so, how many?</p>	<p>February 2009 Results</p>	<p>February 2012 Results</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 district responded "Yes." • 7 districts responded "No." • 2 districts responded "Possibly." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 districts responded "Yes" • 12 districts responded "No" • 8 districts – no response or unclear

<p>3) In your estimation, is the SMP program meeting the need(s) for which it was designed? If not, why not?</p>	<p>February 2009 Results</p>	<p>February 2012 Results</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 districts responded "Yes." • 1 district responded "No." • 1 district responded "Don't Know." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 districts responded "Yes" • 3 districts responded "No" • 10 districts – no response or unclear

Appendix 1

To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program

RESOLUTION 5-01B

Overtures 5-01-10 (CW, pp. 205-216)

Background

Amidst today's mission challenges, including the persistent need to provide pastoral ministry in ways that go beyond the current residential models, we will do well to engage the best collaborative thinking and creativity that we can muster to provide missional pastoral leadership driven by the depth of theological integrity that remains a hallmark of our church and its ministerium. The mission focus ignited by the *Ablaze!* movement has generated the need to identify laymen already in place in a local community to serve as church planters and missionaries. This work will certainly entail Word and Sacrament ministry. Historically, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its antecedents have attempted to meet such needs by preparing men as quickly as possible to be called and ordained in order to meet the urgent mission needs of the church. Such men were prepared to catechize, preach, and provide pastoral care. Within the LCMS, the need for such a track to ordination was initially embodied in the seminary begun by F. C. D. Wyneken and Wilhelm Löhe in Fort Wayne, Indiana. However, developments in ministerial formation since World War II have effectively eliminated this track altogether.

Ministers of religion—ordained will have two designations. “General ministry pastor” will serve as the designation for pastors graduated from a current approved theological education program (e.g., M.Div., Certificate, DELTO), and “specific ministry pastor” will be the designation for those educated for a specific ministry context through distance education.

The Specific Ministry Pastor Program seeks to address the needs of the church by reinstating a multiple-track approach and by developing a program that combines a commitment to faithfulness to a Lutheran theological confession with a missionary perspective and that is tailored to the preparation of men for service in specific kinds of ministries.

Such an effort must attempt in some measure to uphold two significant considerations in the service of our Lord's mission and Great Commission. On the one hand, we are committed to upholding the Lutheran understanding of the pastor as theologian and insist on as much education as possible for the good of the church. On the other hand, emerging needs and economic pressures often make it impossible to call a pastor who has received a broad and thorough theological education to every congregation or mission station where, nevertheless, people need to hear the Gospel.

This proposal is offered as a sincere and thoughtful attempt to address real-world needs with an urgency for bringing the Gospel to a dying world and to do so with theological integrity with respect to both the doctrine of the ministry and our commitment to high standards of pastoral education and formation.

Theological Foundations Guiding the Proposal

1. All those who regularly and publicly perform the functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry should do so as those called to and placed into that office. “It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call” (AC XIV). As it is true that means of grace, the Gospel and the Sacraments, are the rightful possession of all believers in Christ as members of the priesthood of all believers, only the one Office of the Holy Ministry is entrusted with the public exercise of these means. As such, we affirm that only those who are rightly and

publicly called and ordained should publicly exercise the functions which are entrusted to this ministry.

2. Lutherans affirm that there is only one Office of the Holy Ministry, established by God for the public conduct of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. However, the church may recognize certain distinctions within that one Office of the Holy Ministry and establish degrees of supervision without undermining the unity of the office.
 - a. All those who serve Christ and the church in the Office of the Holy Ministry exercise *de iure divino* (by divine authority) the power to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, administer the Sacraments, and exercise church discipline. There is no distinction within the one office with respect to *this* power and authority.
 - b. Nevertheless, all ministers serve under supervision. In ancient times, the practice of making certain distinctions within the one Office of the Holy Ministry *de iure humano* (by human authority) was established so that those ministers with broader and deeper theological understanding should be able to provide doctrinal supervision for less experienced, or less well-prepared, ministers. These distinctions were made to ensure that the Gospel was rightly preached and taught, and to preserve the unity of the church.
 - c. By the time of the Reformation, the common way of talking about such distinctions within the Office of the Holy Ministry was to speak of the differentiation between the power (or authority) associated with the Office of the Holy Ministry and the jurisdiction (or scope of the administration) of the office.
3. The church may establish, by human authority, distinctions in jurisdiction and in categories of service of its pastors so long as these distinctions do not compromise the authority of the office, undermine the Gospel, or burden the consciences of Christians by confusing human regulations with divine commands.
4. Ordination vows may be taken prior to the conclusion of a complete course of study provided that the ordained has received a preparation sufficient to preach and teach the Gospel rightly, administer the Sacraments correctly, and take his vows with integrity.
5. The church should provide the opportunity for a pastor who has been certified and ordained to serve in a specific kind of ministry subsequently to be prepared to serve the church more broadly through a combination of further academic preparation, accumulated pastoral experience, and examination.

Overview of the “Specific Ministry Pastor” Program

The student will take a core curriculum so as to acquire a *foundational competency* in Lutheran theology for pastoral ministry. This foundational core will be both contextualized and specialized within and for a specific ministry.

In addition to the original objective of the Distance Education Leading To Ordination (DELTO) Program to provide pastoral ministry where full-time ministry cannot be maintained, such specific ministries will include such categories as church planter, staff pastor, and others as needs arise.

The specific curriculum will be determined and developed by the seminary faculties, in collaboration with those from the field who represent the specific ministerial contexts at district and congregation levels. It will be based on the following principles:

1. Curricular goals based on outcome competencies appropriate to the stages of the program
2. The contextual nature of this educational model, which includes experiential learning within a mission context
3. The engagement of supervisors/mentors by the seminary in consultation with the district president as a critical element of the distance education model
4. A combination of distance education and residential components (likely through short-term seminars and the option to take courses within the residential curriculum)

5. The potential applicability of coursework for academic credit towards an M.Div.
6. A time frame for completion of approximately 4–5 years

The Specific Ministry Pastor Program will be divided into a pre-ordination curriculum and a post-ordination curriculum.

The preordination curriculum will equip the student in such a way that the church has confidence that the student will preach the Gospel in its truth and purity and conduct his ministry in conformity with Lutheran doctrine and practice. In order to do this, the preordination curriculum will address such basic competencies as *Catechism, interpretation of Scripture, God and Christ and the work of Christ, the Sacraments, introduction to the Book of Concord, the conduct of worship, and preaching.*

The post-ordination curriculum will address these topics *in greater depth and detail and will include such topics as OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions.*

In addition, the student will participate in several residential and field seminars aimed at cultivating the requisite ministry skills for his specific ministry context (e.g., church planters, staff pastors, and evangelists).

- Possible residential seminars might include pastoral formation, issues in *pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation.*
- Possible field seminars might include *basic mission planter training, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training.*

The Specific Ministry Pastor Program will utilize selected mentors in the preparation of a man for pastoral ministry with an emphasis on the area of spiritual formation.

Step 1: Preparation for and Admission to the Program

The identification of an applicant will be carried out by the congregation and district through a comprehensive screening process.

For entry into the program, a student will need to show that he possesses the requisite social skills and passion for theology and mission, as well as demonstrating the specific skills and competence needed to be successful in a distance education program.

For entry into the program, a student will need to pass the Entry Level Competency Exams (ELCEs) in the areas of OT, NT, and Catechism/Christian Doctrine. Preparation for the ELCEs may be accomplished by taking the corresponding district-level courses, Concordia University System or seminary-offered courses. In addition, other courses within a district's lay training program may be helpful, such as courses on evangelizing and catechizing.

All students will need to demonstrate competency to engage the program in the English language and in public speaking. Based upon completion of the above requirements and with recommendations from congregation and district, the student's application will be presented to the admissions committee of the seminary for action. As part of the application process, each student, sponsoring congregation, and district will sign a covenant of commitment to complete the entire specific ministry pastor curriculum, including all coursework and seminars following examination and ordination.

Step 2: Preordination Curriculum

Upon entrance into the Specific Ministry Pastor Program, the student will be assigned as a vicar in a specific locality but normally will not be authorized to administer the Sacraments. He will preach sermons prepared in collaboration with and approved by his supervisor. At this point, he will participate in courses and seminars comparable to those offered to residential seminary students designed to prepare him in the following areas:

- *Catechism, hermeneutical principles, God and Christ, work of Christ, the Sacraments, worship, the Book of Concord, and preaching*
- *Possible residential seminars: intro to pastoral formation; issues in pastoral ministry*
- *Possible field seminars: basic mission planter training, etc.*

Step 3: Certification/Call/Ordination

After demonstrating competence in the preordination areas, the student must apply for an examination hearing by the seminary in order to be certified for call and ordination.

Each student will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The examination hearing shall include a review of the student's portfolio, vicarage reports, an interview by the faculty, and recommendations by the district president and circuit counselor.

After certification, call, and ordination according to the usual order, the student is placed on the pastoral roster of the Synod as a "specific ministry pastor." He now may preach and administer the Sacraments under supervision in a specific locality.

Step 4: Post-Call and Ordination Curriculum

Upon call and ordination, the student shall complete the remainder of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program. The following areas are intended to continue development of the foundational competencies necessary for serving as a specific ministry pastor:

- *OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions*
- *Residential seminars, possibly including pastoral formation, issues in pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation*
- *Field seminars, possibly including basic mission planter training, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training*

Refusal to complete the Specific Ministry Pastor Program would result in the pastor's removal from the Synod roster, at which point he is not eligible for a call.

Step 5: Completion of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program

Upon completion of the program, the candidate is examined by a committee of faculty, laity, and district representatives in order to be recognized as eligible for calls elsewhere within his rostered status. Apart from the usual need for continuing education, he is not required to take any further prescribed course of studies (but see below).

Specific ministry pastors are recognized as just that: pastors certified for calls into specific ministry contexts, who serve under the supervision not only of the district president but also of a designated general ministry pastor. As such, they are eligible for calls into a similar specific ministry context, where they continue under the supervision of a general ministry pastor.

Because their theological education is formed within the context of their specific ministry and does not represent the breadth and depth of theology and ecclesiology that forms a basis for pastoral oversight beyond the local level, they may not be placed into ecclesiastical roles of exercising pastoral oversight outside the location of their specific call (i.e., in the church-at-large), such as

- a. holding elected or appointed office at the district or Synod level that is assigned by the Bylaws to "a pastor" or "an ordained minister" (though they will serve in all other capacities, especially representing the ministerial contexts in which they serve);
- b. serving as circuit counselors;
- c. serving as a voting delegate to a national Synod convention (but they may serve as an advisory delegate at national conventions and as a pastoral delegate at district conventions); and
- d. supervising vicars.

Step 6: Continued Service and Status

Students who have completed the Specific Ministry Pastor Program may decide to remain in their rostered status as “specific ministry pastor” for the remainder of their ministry, or they may choose to pursue a growth path that leads to a change in roster status to “general ministry pastor.”

It is envisioned that most students will pursue the second path, either through an M.Div. route or nondegree certification.

Thus, they have three options:

1. They may remain rostered as a specific ministry pastor.
2. They may enroll in an M.Div. program. It is anticipated that coursework done for the Specific Ministry Pastor Program may become applicable to an M.Div., determined by equivalencies.
3. They may continue their theological education and pastoral formation, reaching a level appropriate to general ministry pastor without a full M.Div. (cf. current “alternate route”) and then complete an interview with an examining board in order to have their rostered status changed to “general ministry pastor.”

Resolution

WHEREAS, The DELTO Oversight Committee was formed by the 2001 convention and given the task “to revise DELTO”; and

WHEREAS, This oversight committee concluded that original assignment, and a revised DELTO Program was deployed by the two seminaries in the fall of 2004; and

WHEREAS, The original and ongoing intent of DELTO was to “provide ordained pastoral service to congregations that cannot support a full-time pastor, ordained pastoral service to contexts where English is not spoken, ordained missionary personnel where finances and/or conditions do not permit calling a full-time missionary” (BHE document, “What Is DELTO?” Sept. 2000); and

WHEREAS, The needs for providing pastoral ministry in specific and specialized situations where a traditionally prepared seminary candidate or pastor is not available continue to multiply; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod needs to find a way to provide for an increase in pastoral ministry to meet such needs of the church, especially in light of the mission challenges of today’s world; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod has resolved to plant 2,000 new congregations by 2017, for which a net gain of 2,000 pastors will be needed; and

WHEREAS, Any way of providing for pastoral ministry must be faithful to our Lutheran Confessions, faithful to our historic commitment to a well-educated and wellformed ministerium, faithful to our historic commitment to provide pastors in both academic and practical tracks, and faithful to our historic commitment to

edges of the mission fields, wherever they might be; and

WHEREAS, All those who regularly and publicly perform the functions of the Office of the Holy Ministry should do so as those called to and placed into that office because “[i]t is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call” (AC XIV); and

WHEREAS, A variety of programs and routes leading to pastoral service have arisen at both district and seminary levels; and

WHEREAS, The DELTO Oversight Committee, after concluding its original assignment, was given the further assignment by the President of the Synod to “study the various routes leading to ordination currently available, to study which routes leading to ordination would be most helpful to the Synod in producing a sufficient number of able and effective pastors to provide leadership to Synod’s congregations in fulfilling the Great Commission”; and

WHEREAS, In carrying out this further task, it was apparent that

- a. the existing focus of DELTO, even as it was redesigned and re-deployed, would not be sufficient to meet these needs;

- b. the Synod would benefit from a more coherent and comprehensive approach to pastoral preparation and certification for ministry in specialized and specific contexts;
- c. the past years have provided the church, in general, and the seminaries, in particular, with substantial experimentation and experience with distance education models, including the evaluation of both the advantages and disadvantages; and
- d. the Synod is presented with an opportunity to build on such experience and to coordinate and consolidate programs and curriculum into a more cohesive and comprehensive curriculum design that engages the best practices of educational design and pedagogy, including much of the current course materials already proven and in use; and

WHEREAS, The process of conversation and collaboration over the past six years has brought together representatives of the needs of the field with the entities of the Synod to whom leadership for pastoral education and certification is entrusted, and in so doing provided a helpful model for continuing such collaborative work; and

WHEREAS, Both seminaries have provided leadership in this process and worked together on written documents affirming the need for a new category within the one office of the pastoral ministry and in affirming an educational process that will lead to certification and ordination for such pastoral ministry, utilizing both traditional residential components along with new distance education models; and

WHEREAS, The DELTO Oversight Committee in seeking to fulfill its further task has

- a. worked closely with both seminaries in honing a proposal for a category of specific ministry pastor and an education and formation program that will lead to certification and ordination for such pastoral ministry; and has
- b. worked closely also with many other constituencies throughout the church in developing this proposal, including the Board for Pastoral Education, the Council of Presidents, district and Synod mission leaders, and pastors in the field; and

WHEREAS, The great strengths of this proposal bring together several issues that have concerned our Synod for many years as it seeks to

- a. find a way to meet the existing and expanding needs for pastoral ministry, especially in the variety of contexts of mission and ministry in today’s church;
- b. respect our commitment to the doctrine of church and ministry, especially in light of AC XIV;
- c. honor our commitment to responsible theological education that provides the church with well-educated pastors, who as missional leaders are faithful to Lutheran theology and practice;
- d. retain our commitment to the importance, need, and great strengths of residential pastoral education at both the certificate and M.Div. level, along with a commitment to the continuing education of all clergy;
- e. restore our past creativity in recognizing the importance, need, and great strengths of alternative models of pastoral education leading to ordination, including a commitment to continuing education;
- f. utilize the advances in educational technology that allow for responsible pastoral education and formation through distance-education models; and
- g. develop a more coherent and comprehensive model for certification, call, and ordination are coordinated and potentially interrelated, so that, for example, a student in a nonresidential certificate route might be able to engage also in a residential degree program; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor Program has the support of the Board for Pastoral Education, the faculties of both seminaries, and the Council of Presidents; and

WHEREAS, The Specific Ministry Pastor Program has been reviewed by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and was found to be consistent with Scripture and the Confessions; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Constitutional Matters has issued opinions 07-2499 and 07-2500 that no changes to Synod's Constitution are required should this resolution be adopted; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Program be adopted in principle and the seminaries, Board for Pastoral Education, and Council of Presidents be authorized to implement it; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw sections 2.13 and 2.14 of the Handbook of the Synod be amended accordingly, as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

(A) Change the title of Bylaw section 2.13 to read as follows:

2.13 Restricting, Suspending, and Expelling Congregations or Individuals from Membership Membership Status and Limitations

(B) Incorporate current Bylaws 2.13.1 and 2.13.2 into Bylaw 2.14.1 as follows:

- Current Bylaw 2.13.1 becomes Bylaw 2.14.1
- Current Bylaw 2.13.2 becomes Bylaw 2.14.1 (a)
- Current Bylaw 2.14.1 becomes Bylaw 2.14.1 (b)

The early paragraphs of Bylaw section 2.14 therefore to read as follows:

2.14 Expulsion of Congregations or Individuals from Membership in the Synod

Preamble

2.13.1

2.14.1 Termination of membership in the Synod is a serious matter involving both the doctrine and life of those to whom it has been granted. Such action should only be taken as a final step when it is clear that those who are being terminated after previous futile admonition have acted contrary to the confession laid down in Article II or the conditions of membership laid down in Article VI or have persisted in offensive conduct (Constitution, Art. XIII 1). For this reason the Synod establishes procedures for such action including the identification of those who are responsible for ecclesiastical supervision of its members. Such supervision includes not only suspension or termination of membership but also advice, counsel, encouragement, and, when necessary, admonition regarding teaching and/or practice. Furthermore, the procedures that may lead to termination of membership also provide for the protection of members by including provisions for challenging the decisions of ecclesiastical supervisors in these matters as well as provisions for restoration of membership that has been suspended or terminated.

General

2.13.2 (a) Although the Constitution (see Art. VI 3 and Art. XII 7–8) deals with the “life” of ordained and commissioned ministers of the Synod and provides for dealing with “ungodly life” of ordained and commissioned ministers, this does not suggest that the Synod, including any district of the Synod, has the duty or even an opportunity to observe the activities in the life of an individual member of the Synod or has the means or authority to regulate, restrict, or control those activities. The only remedy available to the Synod in response to improper activities in the life of such a member of the Synod is, as is true with respect to violations of other conditions of membership or is otherwise appropriate under the Constitution or these Bylaws, and following the procedures set forth in these Bylaws, to take such action as may lead to termination of that membership and the attendant rights and privileges.

2.14.1 (b) The action to commence expulsion of a congregation or individual from membership in the Synod is the sole responsibility of the district president who has the responsibility for ecclesiastical supervision of such member. This Bylaw section 2.14, among others, provides the procedures to carry out Article XIII of the Constitution, “Expulsion from the Synod.” However, it does not provide the

procedure for the expulsion of the district presidents and the officers of the Synod (Bylaw section 2.15), the President of the Synod (Bylaw section 2.16), or individual members in cases involving sexual misconduct or criminal behavior (Bylaw section 2.17).

(C) Add a new section at the beginning of Bylaw section 2.13 to define a “specific ministry pastor” and the limitations on membership privileges and responsibilities that pertain, as follows:

Specific Ministry Pastor Status and Limitations

2.13.1 A “specific ministry pastor” is a minister of religion—ordained who has completed the requirements for service as a specific ministry pastor and has been examined by one of the Synod's seminaries, has received a regular call and has been placed by the Council of Presidents into a specific Word and Sacrament ministry context. He is eligible to serve only in that specific ministry context for which he has been trained and may not be offered or accept a call for ministry for which he has not been certified as determined by his district president. He shall serve under the supervision of his district president and another pastor who is not a specific ministry pastor.

- (a) Because he is under supervision of another pastor and because a specific ministry pastor's theological education has been formed in part by and for a specific ministry context, he may not be placed or called into ecclesiastical roles that exercise pastoral oversight outside the location of his call.
- (b) A specific ministry pastor is not eligible to
 - (1) serve as a voting delegate to a national convention of the Synod—but may serve as an advisory delegate to national conventions and as a pastoral delegate to district conventions;
 - (2) hold any elected or appointed office on the district or national Synod level that is assigned by the Bylaws of the Synod to “a pastor” or “an ordained minister” (although specific ministry pastors may serve in all other capacities, especially representing the ministerial contexts in which they serve);
 - (3) supervise vicars; or
 - (4) serve as a circuit counselor.
- (c) The ministers of religion—ordained records maintained by district presidents as well as the official membership roster of the Synod shall distinguish between specific ministry pastors and other pastors.

(D) Change the titles and bylaw numbering of subsequent paragraphs of Bylaw section 2.13 to accommodate the introduction of the “specific ministry pastor status and limitations” paragraphs, as follows:

Restricted Status and Limitations

2.13.3

2.13.2 An individual member of the Synod may be placed...

Removal of Restricted Status and Limitations

2.13.4

2.13.3 An individual member of the Synod who is placed...

Suspended Status and Limitations

2.13.5

2.13.4 When formal proceedings have been commenced...

(E) Change Bylaw 3.1.3.1 to read as follows:

3.1.3.1 Each district shall select one advisory delegate for every 60 advisory ordained ministers and specific ministry pastors, and one advisory delegate for every 60 commissioned ministers on the roster of the Synod. Fractional groupings shall be disregarded except that each district shall be entitled to at least one advisory delegate in each category. and be it further

Resolved, That the DELTO Oversight Committee be renamed the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee; and be it Further

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee be placed under the supervision of the Board for Pastoral Education; and be it further

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee develop comprehensive guidelines that are consistent with the theological foundations, educational expectations, rostering process, training of mentors and supervising pastors, and membership limitations intended for this Specific Ministry Pastor Program; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee submit a progress report to the Synod at least nine months prior to the 2010 convention.

Action: Adopted (8)

(Discussion of this proposed action began during Session 3, when the assembly received background information for Res. 5-01A and received answers during a Q & A session with the committee.

The committee announced that the introductory information preceding the actual resolution was supplied only to inform the convention's decision. The Q & A session continued during Session 5 until Res. 5-01B was introduced by the committee and discussion continued for the remainder of the committee's allotted time.

During Session 8, the committee called attention to several changes, inserting "certification," before the words "call and ordination" in the second paragraph under step 3 of the introductory information; inserting or "an ordained minister" after "a pastor" in paragraph a. of step 5 of the introductory information; and inserting the words or "an ordained minister" after "a pastor" in paragraph (b) (2) of proposed Bylaw 2.13.1. A lengthy amendment was proposed

for the introductory materials accompanying the resolution, which the chair ruled a substitute motion and which was not accepted for consideration by the convention. An amendment to delete the words "others responsible for the program" in the first resolve and replace them with "Board for Pastoral Education and Council of Presidents" was agreed to by the committee. An amendment was introduced to delete all of Step 6 after the word "Program" and to replace it with "will be expected, whenever possible, to pursue the path to become a 'general ministry pastor.' To accomplish this:" —also deleting the next line, 1. They may remain rostered as a specific ministry pastor. An amendment to the amendment was then introduced to replace the word "expected" in the amendment with "encouraged." After further debate, the amendment to the amendment was adopted, but the amended amendment failed to be adopted. As discussion returned to the original resolution, a motion was introduced to add a final resolve:

Resolved, That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee submit a progress report to the Synod at least nine months prior to the 2010 convention." After this change was agreed to by the committee, Res. 5-01B was adopted as changed [Yes: 908; No: 287].)

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CORRECTION IN REGISTRATION LISTING
(For Delegates Only)

It is important that the delegate lists published after the convention in the *Convention Proceedings* be as accurate as possible. Please use this form to report any correction to your personal listing in the front of this *Workbook*.

The lower section of this page serves as your notice to the Office of the Secretary to report corrections. Remove it from your *Workbook* and hand it to the Secretary at the convention or mail it within two days of the close of the convention to:

Raymond L. Hartwig, Secretary
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
1333 South Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

(Please note that this form is not to be used when there is a change of delegates. In such cases necessary documentation is required from the Secretary of the District.)

To the Office of the Secretary:

My personal listing in the front of the 2013 *Convention Workbook* is not accurate and should be corrected as follows (please print):

On page _____, column _____, under District _____,

the present reading: _____

should be changed to: _____

Thank you for making this correction.

Signed: _____

Date: _____