

## **WALKING TOGETHER: The LCMS Future**

Presented to the 2009 District Conventions by the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance

Edited from transcription of the PowerPoint slides used by the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance in presentation to the North Dakota District Convention 1/20/09 to compare it with the Southern Illinois District presentation differences on 2/20/09. Several slides were taken out altogether, several added. There is no indication of changes (or not) in the BRTFSSG background report, just the presentation slides, at this time.

**NOTE: Deletions from NDAK to SID are “lined-out”, additions are in red.**

### **The LCMS Future**

The future of the Synod lies in a spiritually strong congregational mission and ministry:

- Our focus must be on strengthening existing churches and starting new congregations.

*“Understandably, the Synod considers the local congregation to be the basic unit of synodical polity, whether acting as a single congregation or in association with other congregations.”*

(Congregation-Synod Church, BRTFSSG document, 2007)

### **Challenge**

The Synod faces significant challenges in accomplishing mission and ministry today in the unchurched culture. Now is the time to find ways for:

- Congregations
- Lay leaders
- Commissioned ministers
- Pastors.

*“Our ecclesiastical polity...arrangements are not means of grace, but simple, outward means of assistance...”* (Synod President Rev. Henry C. Schwan, 1896 convention address)

### **Overview of Task Force Directives**

- Thorough zero-based assessment of Synod’s system of governance and organizational structure.
- Suggest form of structure and governance to serve the Synod in the decades to come.

### **Key Considerations**

Focus on suggesting improvements to our system of structure and governance that include these characteristics:

- Flexibility.
- Forward thinking.
- Open to new opportunities.
- Maximizing limited human and fiscal resources.
- Locating ministry resources closer to congregations.

### **Features of Improved System of Structure and Governance**

- A representative system with sufficient checks and balances.
- Not overly cumbersome or complex.
- Maximum operating efficiency.
- Equitable representation at national and district conventions.
- Internal ministry structure that aligns resources and encourages cooperation among all agencies and entities of Synod.
- Identify functions best accomplished at congregational, circuit, district and national levels.

- ~~Emphasize careful stewardship of gifts and offerings at all levels.~~
- ~~Consistent, comprehensive and collaborative system of mission and ministry development and ecclesiastical supervision by districts.~~

### **The Task Force's Foundation**

The proposals and possibilities for review and discussion are rooted in, align with, flow from, and guided by the Synod's theological principles:

- ~~All dimensions of church structure and governance are intended to serve Jesus Christ, the Lord and Head of the church (Congregation Synod Church, BRTFSSG document, 2007)~~
- ~~In His grace, God "desires all people to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1Tim2:4). "The Synod therefore designs and evaluates its structure and governance in terms of their faithfulness and effectiveness in serving God's mission" (Congregation Synod Church, BRTFSSG document, 2007)~~

### **Presentation Format**

Each proposal will include:

- The desired **goals**.
- The current **challenges, problems, deficiencies**.
- The **rationale**.
- The estimated **fiscal ramifications** (still to come).

## **FOUNDATIONAL MATTERS**

### **No. 1: Affirming in Our Governing Documents the Mission and Purpose of the Synod**

Goal:

- Affirm **in our governing documents** that the reason for the Synod's existence is for congregations to walk together in God's mission and to serve one another for His purpose of saving all people through Jesus Christ (Acts 15 and 1 Corinthians 12).

Challenge~~Current Problem or Deficiency~~:

- ~~Provide stronger~~ **Current wording in our synod's Constitution fails** to underscore the continuity of the Synod's commitment to Christ, Scripture, Confessions and the mission of God.

Recommended Solution:

- Update our Constitutional language to clarify our:
  - Reasons for existence.**(the current Preamble.)**
  - **Confession (Art. II)**
  - Mission and purpose.**(Art. III)**
  - ~~Confession of faith.~~
  - **Conditions of Membership (Art. VI)**
  - **Relation of the Synod to its members (Art. VII). (see the BRTFSSG Web site for proposed full wording.)**

Rationale:

- Affirm and clarify that Christ **and His mission are** is the center of our common confession, **while assuring that the confessional basis remains unchanged.**
- ~~Assure that our confessional basis remains unchanged.~~

### **No. 2: Priority of Synod Governing Documents (This was deleted from slides @ SID)**

Goal:

- ~~Clarify the priority of the Constitution over the Bylaws of Synod.~~

**Challenge:**

- ~~• The priority of the Constitution over the Bylaws has not always been understood or honored.~~
- ~~• The Constitution currently does not provide authorization for the amending of Bylaws.~~

**Recommended Solution:**

- ~~• Add an article to the Constitution such as the following: “The Synod in convention may adopt Bylaws that are consistent with and do not contradict the Constitution of the Synod, which controls and supersedes the Bylaws and all other rules or regulations of the Synod. Bylaws, which may be adopted, revised, or eliminated by a simple majority vote of a Synod convention, are binding regulations for the Synod and its conduct and governance.”~~

**Rationale:**

- ~~• The Constitution must indicate the importance of honoring the Bylaws.~~
- ~~• The new article would provide Constitutional authorization for the Bylaws, clarify the relationship between the Constitution and the Bylaws, and clarify the relationship between the Bylaws and the members of the Synod.~~

**No. 27: Emphasize the Importance of Doctrinal Resolutions and Doctrinal Statements**

**Goal:**

- Strengthen Synod doctrinal unity **by requiring stronger consensus on doctrinal resolutions and statements.**

**Challenge****Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Current Constitution and Bylaws require only a majority vote for adoption of doctrinal resolutions and, **along with a complex system of requirements,** doctrinal statements.
- Close majority votes **on doctrinal matters** do not promote unity **and are conducive to increased internal conflict and consternation.**
- ~~• Lack of unity causes conflict and consternation.~~

**Recommended Solution:**

- Doctrinal resolutions of special significance and doctrinal statements will require a two-thirds vote at Synod convention.
- **Reaffirm, clarify, amplify and strengthen** BRTFSSG will recommend amendments to Bylaws and clarifications to Constitution **(Art. VIII) and Bylaws** to enhance doctrinal unity.

**Rationale:**

- Doctrinal resolutions and statements of the Synod express ~~its~~ **our** collective understanding of what God’s Word teaches and **articulate** the official position of the Synod. As such, these should be broadly supported and adopted in convention.
- The process for adopting doctrinal resolutions and statements should seek to avoid the internal conflict that may be caused **d** when such important matters are adopted by very narrow majorities.

**No. 3: Clarifying the Categories of Membership in Our Synod Membership**

**Goal:**

- Underscore in more **understandable** ~~contemporary~~ language:
  - The ~~C~~ongregational nature of the Synod.
  - The **categories** ~~role~~ of ordained and commissioned ministers.
  - The participation of the laity in the life and work of the Synod.

**Challenge****Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Many do not understand the term “member” as it is used in the Constitution.
- The relationship of laypeople to the Synod is not universally understood.
- Our current provision for “advisory members” is unnecessary.

- Commissioned ministers are currently not authorized to serve as voting delegates.

Recommended Solution:

- Revise Article V of the Constitution to reflect that:
  - Congregations are the *voting* members of the Synod.
  - Ministers of Religion (ordained and commissioned) are members of the Synod.
  - Laypeople, though not members of the Synod itself, are closely linked to the Synod through their congregational membership.

Rationale:

- Underscores the congregational character of the Synod.
- Recognizes the important role of LCMS ordained and commissioned ministers.
- Elevates the sense of belonging, responsibility and participation of the laity.
- Eliminates the unnecessary and confusing provision of advisory members.

**No. 419: Consider a New Name for Our Synod Change**

Goal:

- Adopt a name for the Synod that accurately describes our church body and assists congregations in their mission identity.

Challenge **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Current name **with single state identification** causes confusion and fails to represent the national nature of our church body.
- The word “synod” is unfamiliar to many and may be confused with the “synods” (districts) of the ELCA.

Recommended Solution:

- Rename our church body **to clarify our identity as a distinctive Lutheran church within the USA.**
- **Your suggestion?**

## Lutheran Church – USA

Rationale:

- **We want a new name that:**
  - ~~New name +~~ **Reflects our nature** ~~who we are~~ as a church body.
  - Is easily grasped by the media and public.
  - **Would be more in sync with names of** ~~Acceptable to our 20~~ partner churches.
  - **Would be more easily understood internationally.**
  - **Would enhance congregational identity in the community it serves.**
  - ~~Reflects something more than just a small Lutheran church group from Missouri.~~

## CONVENTION-RELATED MATTERS (GOVERNANCE)

**No. 54: Redefine Determining Congregational Representation at to District Conventions, Including Commissioned Members**

Goal:

- Enable congregations to ~~determine~~ **choose** voting **delegate** representatives from all constituencies – lay, ordained and commissioned.
- Enable commissioned ministers to have a more significant role ~~in~~ **at** district and national conventions **than is currently the case.**

Challenge **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Congregations are not allowed to elect commissioned ministers as **voting** delegates to conventions **of the district or the Synod.**

- Commissioned ministers have special gifts and training that are not utilized in voting functions.

Recommended Solution:

- Voting delegates **for congregations** at both district and national conventions shall be:
  - One of the called pastors of the congregation (~~either the senior or associate pastor, not an assistant pastor~~) and
  - ~~A non-ordained person (either~~ **One layperson or rostered minister of religion-** commissioned).

Rationale:

- Commissioned ministers have special gifts, training and understanding that would serve the Synod well as voting members.
- There is no theological reason prohibiting a commissioned minister from serving as ~~non-~~ **ordained** delegate of a congregation.
- Congregations should have the opportunity to select their own voting delegates **from among all available candidates**.

**No. 65: Determine Equitable Congregational Representation at to District Conventions**

Goal:

- To ~~p~~**Provide** equitable representation for: ~~large congregations, vacancies, and dual or multi-point parishes.~~
  - **Congregations with a pastoral vacancy.**
  - **Multiple-congregation parishes.**
  - **Large congregations.**

~~Challenge~~ **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- ~~Vacant~~ **Currently**, congregations **with a pastoral vacancy** receive only one vote, not two.
- ~~Dual and multi-point~~ **Multi-congregation** parishes are not treated equally.
- ~~Currently, a~~ **All** parishes are given equal representation regardless of size, **resulting in inequitable representation.**
- ~~Larger congregations represent more confirmed members.~~

Recommended Solution:

- ~~Vacant e~~ **Congregations with a pastoral vacancy are entitled to** get a vote by the vacancy pastor and one non-ordained vote.
- ~~Duals and multi-points get~~ **Multi-congregation parishes being served by one or more pastors are entitled to** one pastoral vote, with each **congregation in the parish** ~~getting~~ **having** one non-ordained vote.
- ~~Each congregation gets two voting delegates—one called pastor and one non-ordained person (lay or commissioned).~~
- Congregations with more than 1,000 confirmed members ~~get~~ **are entitled to** two additional votes, at least one being a layperson.

Rationale:

- ~~Vacant, dual and multi-point congregations would enjoy~~ **Congregations with a pastoral vacancy and multiple-congregation parishes are entitled to** consistent and equitable representation.
- In recognition of the priesthood of all believers, and for fair and equitable representation, larger congregations should receive additional votes at district conventions.

## **No. 78: Establish a Fixed Number of Delegates to the National Convention**

### Goal:

- Create a cost-effective, manageable and representative voting delegation for national conventions.

### Challenge/Current Problem or Deficiency:

- Having 1,250 voting delegates ~~and~~ **plus** several hundred advisory delegates and representatives limits the personal engagement of each delegate.
- Current size forces the convention to use larger, **more expensive** facilities and multiple hotels, contributing to greater costs and logistical concerns.
- Current size of the convention (**approximately 1,600 official delegates**) places a costlier burden on the districts and congregations **for expenses of travel, lodging, and food for many people**.

### Recommended Solution:

- ~~Set the~~ **Establish a fixed** number of **total** voting delegates to the national convention at approximately ~~625~~ **650**.
- ~~Change~~ **Amend the** Bylaws to delete the “advisory delegate” category from national conventions and reduce the number of “advisory representatives”.

### Rationale:

- Fewer delegates would provide greater opportunity for individual delegates to be more deeply engaged in discussion and proceedings.
- Fewer delegates would provide for a more cost-effective conventions for the Synod, districts and congregations.

## **No. 89: Determine Congregational Representation at National Conventions**

### Goal:

- Achieve equitable voting representation **from districts and congregations** at Synod conventions.

### Challenge/Current Problem or Deficiency:

- The current electoral circuit arrangement ~~may~~ **does** not ~~produce~~ **ensure** fair representation ~~aeross~~ **from all the** districts (**7 to 20 congregations and 1,500 to 10,000 communicants**).
- Electoral circuits are not constituted consistently from district to district, thus producing disparity in voting representation related to district representation at the Synod convention.
- “Exceptional” delegate **bylaw** provision ~~has raised concerns following recent Synod conventions~~ **contributes to inequity of delegate representation from districts**.

### Recommended Solution:

- Determine each district’s number of delegates according to that district’s *exact percentage of the total number of congregations and confirmed members in the Synod*.
- Allow each district **in convention** to determine how these candidates would be selected.
- Whichever method or system a district uses to choose its delegates, it would ~~send~~ **choose** an equal number of ~~clergy~~ **ordained** and non-ordained delegates.

### Example:

| District        | Current             |                         | Option 625           |                |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
|                 | Dist.% of Delegates | Standard # of Delegates | Composite % of Total | # of Delegates |
| District A      | .64                 | 8                       | .79                  | 6              |
| District B      | 3.18                | 40                      | 3.98                 | 24             |
| District C      | 7.01                | 88                      | 7.61                 | 48             |
| Total Delegates | —                   | <b>1250</b>             | —                    | <b>625</b>     |

Rationale:

- Equitable representation across districts would better ~~represent~~ **reflect** the whole of Synod.
- **The bylaw allowing** “Exceptional” delegates **requested by district boards of directors and approved by the Synod president** would be eliminated ~~from the process of delegate selection.~~
- **A Each** district would have the flexibility to ~~redefine~~ **determine** its **delegate** selection methodology.

**No. 910: Amend the Process of Submitting Overtures to National and District Conventions**

Goal:

- Engage **more fully** the priesthood of all believers and all members of Synod **at the grassroots level** in generating and discussing the mission-centered agreements and actions of the Synod.
- **Generate a broader base of support before a proposal is submitted to a district or synod convention, thus i** ~~Improving~~ the quality of overtures submitted to the Synod convention.

**Challenge Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Relatively few congregations are involved in the process of submitting overtures to district and Synod conventions.
- **A small number of congregations submit a large number of overtures, adding to the cost of printing and publishing the convention *Workbook*.**

Recommended Solution:

- Encourage the submission of overtures from congregations:
  - to their district conventions through circuit forums.
  - to the Synod convention through their district conventions.
  - **While all overtures submitted would still be considered, resolutions from circuit forums and district conventions** ~~These resolutions~~ would receive priority at district and Synod conventions, **respectively.**

Rationale:

- Expands the leadership, participation and influence of congregations and representatives for the sake of **God’s** mission.
- Gives a more meaningful participative role to district conventions (the assembly of **all LCMS congregations in each** ~~district congregations~~) in setting priorities for and establishing the Synod’s mission and ministry.

**No. 106: Amend the Frequency of District and National Conventions**

Goal:

- Ensure sufficient frequency of **district and** national conventions to conduct business critical to congregations, while meeting no more than necessary.
- Expand opportunities for congregations to address important theological matters **between conventions of the district or Synod.**
- Be the ~~best~~ **most faithful** stewards **possible** of congregations’ resources.

**Challenge Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- The urgency of matters that need to come before a **district or** Synod convention does not demand a three-year cycle.
- The current cycle does not provide sufficient frequency or intentionality with respect to theological matters.
- Current cycle **requires and** consumes too many resources **from congregations.**

Recommended Solution:



- Hold the **district and** national convention ~~every in a~~ four years-cycle:
  - Year One: Circuits may hold theological convocations (**Such forums could be helpful in the development of convention overtures**).
  - Year Two: Districts may hold theological convocations (**Such forums could be helpful in the development of convention overtures**).
  - Year Three: District conventions are held.
  - Year Four: Synod convention is held.

Rationale:

- The four-year cycle ~~allows~~ **provides**:
  - Sufficient opportunity to conduct **district and** Synod business.
  - Sufficient time for elected officials to follow through on initiatives that matter to Congregations, **circuits, districts, and national Synod**.
  - Sufficient opportunity for congregations to address important theological matters.
  - Optimal stewardship of congregational resources.

## **STRUCTURAL MATTERS**

### **No. 1144: Allow Flexibility of Circuit Structure**

Goal:

- Provide for clusters of congregations that “walk together” for mutual care, support, advice, encouragement, service coordination, resources, and counsel.

~~Challenge~~ **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Currently, **geographic** circuits too often do not provide the intended support for their congregation and pastors.
- ~~Similar in~~ **Ministries with similar needs and challenges** are not always present within a **geographical** circuit.

Recommended Solution:

- Allow districts to establish visitation circuits (or congregational “clusters”) according to mission, geography, demographic criteria, or other factors determined by the district. (**Geographic considerations may or may not be the determining factor for circuit alignment**.)

Rationale:

- Districts will be able to ~~group~~ **organize** congregations in ways that make the groupings more meaningful **and helpful** to the congregations.
- This proposal seeks to engage fully every congregation in its circuit.

### **No. 1220: Consider Future District Configuration**

Goal:

- ~~Provide a size of~~ **Configure** districts that is **are** most effectively and efficiently sized for ~~in~~ providing ecclesial support and counsel to local congregations.
- ~~Be~~ **Exercise** the best possible stewardship of human and fiscal resources **in doing so**.

~~Challenge~~ **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Districts without “critical mass” or geographical proximity (**in the case of non-geographic districts**) lack the resources to provide congregations with the most effective and efficient support.
- Differences in **size of** districts’ ~~size requires~~ (**53 to 372 congregations and 11,000 to 166,000 communicants**) **result in** uneven levels of service from, **and historically declining support to**, national Synod.



- Some smaller districts are already facing fiscal pressures and viability uncertainties.

Recommended Solution:

- Under ~~prescribed~~ **convention-adopted** criteria, the 2010 **Synod** convention direct the Council of Presidents to submit to the next **Synod** convention a recommendation with respect to the number, function, and configuration of the districts, **including the impact on funding the national Synod**.

(Note: The BRTFSSG currently is suggesting 15-25 districts comprising ~~250~~ **200-400** congregations each.)

Rationale:

- Districts of more uniform **and viable** size would be better equipped **with human and fiscal resources** to carry out their responsibilities (and new ones assigned to them).
- Decision-making on ministries assumed from the national Synod would be closer to the congregations.

**No. 1314: Establish Five Regions in Our Synod**

*No formal proposal on this topic has been prepared as yet. It will deal with the idea of forming **five geographical regions in the Synod**, ~~each containing a fairly even number of districts and confirmed members (if not actual territory)~~. The districts within a region still would have their own respective district presidents. The five regions would have national election, communication, and coordination functions, but **no administrative authority or responsibility**.*

**No. 1413: Provide Collaborative and Efficient National Synod Structure**

Goal:

- Engage congregations in the development and attainment of Synod goals and objectives.
- Streamline national office operations **for greater efficiency and effectiveness**.

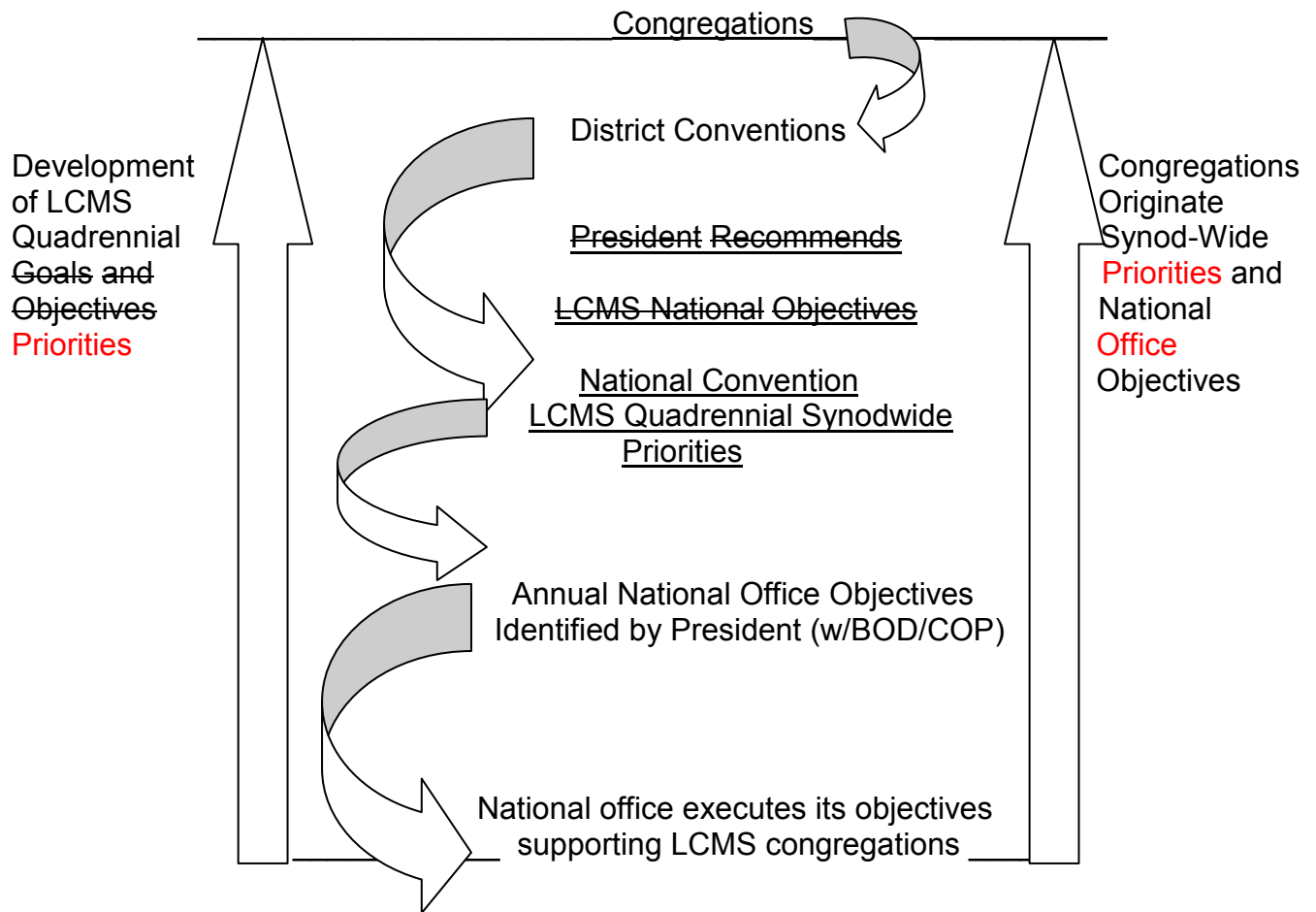
~~Challenge~~ **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Congregational involvement in national office objectives is not direct and/or clear.
- Programs, services and initiatives ~~are sometimes~~ **can be** redundant.
- Program ~~B~~board/~~C~~commission structure lacks accountability and is expensive.
- Structure at times hinders coordination of Synod objectives.
- Legal **compliance** and business oversight is more difficult under current structure.

Recommended Solution:

- Implement process for Quadrennial Synod ~~Objectives~~ **Priorities**.

*(See conceptual chart on following page)*



- Realign national Synod ministries into two Mission Advisory Councils (council staff execs report to Synod President):
  - International Mission Advisory Council.
  - National Mission Advisory Council.
- **Provide** ~~E~~coordination with districts for certain ministries.
- **Transfer** ~~S~~ome responsibilities ~~transferred~~ to districts
- **Transfer** ~~M~~ost BUE and BPE responsibilities ~~transferred~~ to ~~R~~egents and BOD. (CUS would be continued with certain responsibilities.)

Rationale:

- Manage **fiscal resources entrusted by congregations to national synod** ~~national dollars~~ more efficiently **and effectively**.
- Reduce or eliminate overlap, **repetition and redundancy**.
- Streamline **and reduce cost of** national operations.
- Locate ministries closer to congregations.

## OFFICE-ELECTION MATTERS

### **No. 1517: ~~Involve More Congregations in~~ Election of Synod President and First Vice-President**

Goal:

- Establish a system for electing the Synod's President and First Vice-President that facilitates broader participation from the congregations and districts of Synod.

~~Challenge~~ **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- At present, ~~many~~ **most** congregations of Synod do not participate in the nomination of candidates for these two key national offices. **(In the past 20 years, an average of 51.3% of the congregations submitted nominations for these officers.)**
- At present, Synod convention voting delegates who elect those officers come from only 20% of the congregations of our Synod.

Recommended Solution (and Rationale):

- *After much deliberating, the BRTFSSG is close to recommending a specific proposal on this subject. Discussion continues on how best to involve the totality of congregations, ~~in the context of their district conventions~~, in selecting candidates for (if not outright electing) the Synod President and First Vice-President.*
- *Discussion also continues on how the President and First Vice-President might be elected as a team.*

### **No. 1615: Election of Synod Vice-Presidents ~~Regionally~~**

Goal:

- ~~Have~~ **Provide** balanced geographical representation for vice presidents of the Synod. **(Currently only one vice-president resides west of the Mississippi River-St. Louis.)**

~~Challenge~~ **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Geographical representation on the Praesidium is not required and often has not existed.

Recommended Solution:

- In the event the Synod adopts a "five regions" model, each of the five regions would be represented by a regional vice-president.
- Develop a mechanism for nominating and electing these vice-presidents (e.g., candidates nominated at district conventions and elected by the full national convention).

*(Note: This process does not apply to the ~~selection~~ of the First Vice-President.)*

Rationale:

- The five regional vice-presidents would serve as:
  - liaisons between the Synod President and the district presidents.
  - helpful leaders and resources at district pastoral conferences, conventions, etc.

### **No. 1712: ~~Amend the~~ Composition of Synod's Board of Directors**

Goal:

- Make the Board of Directors more representative of LCMS districts and geographic regions, thereby ~~engendering~~ **establishing** a closer relationship to congregations.
- **Allow for** ~~B~~**bro** broadening the skill base of the members of the Board of Directors to meet better the business, **legal and fiscal** needs of the Synod.

~~Challenge~~ **Current Problem or Deficiency:**

- Current system does not ensure ~~adequate~~ geographical representation.
- Current system does not ~~necessarily~~ ensure an array of specialized skill-sets ~~helpful to~~ **necessary for the work of** the BOD.

#### Recommended Solution:

- The Board of Directors be composed of 17 (~~not currently~~ 15) voting members.
  - 5 laypersons (one elected from each of the five regions)
  - 5 clergy (one elected from each region – ~~not the regional vice-presidents~~)
  - 1 commissioned minister elected at-large
- (no more than 1 of the 11 elected members above may come from the same district.)*
  - President of ~~the~~ Synod
  - 5 at-large laypersons appointed by the elected BOD members to obtain specific skill-sets (legal, finance, etc.)
  - First Vice-President, Secretary, and VP Finance-Treasurer are non-voting members.

#### Rationale:

- The Board of Directors should be representative of LCMS districts and geographic regions.
- ~~More skillful management of Synod.~~ *Specific skill-sets to ensure quality and comploiant management of the Synod need to be ensured.*

#### **No. 1816: Provide Consistency of Terms of Office and Term Limits**

##### Goal:

- Provide consistency in the length of terms for all elected ~~Synod and district offices, boards and positions.~~
- ~~Provide that the length of terms is consistent for all Synod and district offices.~~

##### Challenge~~Current Problem or Deficiency:~~

- Some elected Synod positions ~~provide~~ *are* for three-year terms, others for six-year terms.
- Some offices in districts and Synod have term limits; others do not.
- There is no consistency in the lengths of terms in the Synod or in the use of term limits among the districts.
- *Term limits hamper ministry in the Synod and district by artificially ending an effective leader's tenure.*

#### Recommended Solution:

- Elect or appoint all Synod and district officers ~~rs and board members~~ *holders* to four year terms.
- ~~Eliminate~~ *Have no* term limits for all Synod and district offices ~~district presidents.~~
- *Have no term limits for any national board and commission members.*

#### Rationale:

- No ~~obvious~~ *apparent or necessary* reason for terms of varying lengths ~~or existence or absence of term limits.~~
- By eliminating term limits, there would be no denial of continued service by those whom voters want to keep in office.

### **CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR PASTORAL CANDIDATES**

#### **No. 1918: Expand the Certification Process for Pastoral Candidates**

##### Goal:

- Provide the church with well-equipped pastors who have demonstrated their *holistic* fitness for ministry.

##### Challenge~~Current Problem or Deficiency:~~

- Seminary faculties currently are required to certify candidates, but may not be fully aware of a student's interpersonal and leadership *competencies* ~~or~~ deficiencies.

- Congregations and district officers see seminary graduates as well grounded in theology but often in need of greater interpersonal and leadership skills.

Recommended Solution:

- Expand responsibility for the certification of pastoral candidates to include congregations **being served, their** district presidents and circuit counselors.
- This process would follow policies developed by the COP in consultation with officials of the seminaries **and currently in use in the Specific Ministry Pastor program.**
- Seminary faculties would continue to certify **seminary graduates satisfactory completion of the academic requirements for pastoral ministry** ~~qualifications of graduates.~~

Rationale:

- Provides for actual **supervised** experience in the ministry as **a** certification requirement.
- Allows for better evaluation of a candidate's skills and his **possible** need for additional education or experience.
- ~~Assures~~ **Allows** congregations **directly involved to determine whether** ~~that~~ seminary graduates possess the necessary aptitudes for ministry.

**NOTES**

- These preceding topics and recommendations are not exhaustive.
- Additional matters under consideration by the task force, or to be studied by others in the future, include:
  - The Funding of the Mission Task Force recommendations.
  - Universities and seminaries.
  - Synodwide corporate entities.
  - Articles of Incorporation.

**Walking Together – The LCMS Future**

For more information, please visit: [www.lcmsorg/lcmsfuture](http://www.lcmsorg/lcmsfuture)

To give feedback, please write: [lcmsfuture@lcms.org](mailto:lcmsfuture@lcms.org)

**Thank you**

**Walking Together**

***The LCMS Future***

Presented to the ~~North Dakota~~ District Conventions

By the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance

~~January~~ **February** 20, 2009