

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



Lutheran Concerns Association
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President Keischnick's Task Force Recommendation: Power to the President

This is the first of a three-part series analyzing significant changes to the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws being proposed by President Kieschnick's Task Force on Structure.

The structure and governance of an organization is often about who is given what authority and power. There must be some person or group within the organization given the authority to make decisions and carry out the purposes of the organization. So it is not surprising that President Kieschnick's Task Force on Structure would make recommendations relating to who in the LCMS has what authority and power.

But what is deeply troubling is how far the recommendations would have the LCMS go in fundamentally shifting power to the Office of President. Authority and power are shifted to the President from the Board of Directors, the seminaries, the members of the Synod, the delegates to the Synodical Convention, the program boards, and many of the executives. **If adopted, the cumulative effect of the transfer of power and authority to the President of the Synod will result in a very different church body than what currently exists.**

A sample of the recommended changes to the Bylaws that expand the power of the President illustrates the overall direction that President Kieschnick's Task Force recommends. Consider the following:

1. All program boards of the Synod, most of which are currently elected by the Convention delegates or the Board of Directors, would be eliminated and replaced with two commissions **under the direct supervision and control of the President.**
2. The Board for Mission Services and Board for Human Care would be eliminated and replaced by a "Commission for National Mission" and "Commission for International Mission," which would

"assist the President" and "advise the President." **The President in turn would appoint the "Chief Mission Officer"** who would "serve at the pleasure of the President." **The President further would supervise**

all "national and international mission." The new "Office of National Mission" and "Office of International Mission," which **effectively replace most of the program board executives,** would "be

responsible to the President and "receive direction from the President of the Synod on all aspects of its responsibilities, including program, policy, budget management, and staffing."

3. Following the Convention, **the President would set the goals** for the national office "that will support and encourage ministry at the congregational level." Instead of the congregations, through their elected delegates, establishing the goals for the

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"This is just a sample list of the far-reaching and extensive transfer of power and authority away from others in the Synod to the President."

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Synod, it would now be **the President identifying the goals** for the national office that would influence work at the congregational level. **The President also would “supervise** the content of communications, public relations, and news and information provided by the Synod.”

4. The Treasurer of the Synod would no longer be nominated by the Board of Directors and elected by the Convention. Instead, the **Treasurer would be appointed by the Board of Directors, but only with the “concurrence of the President.”** And the Commission on Structure, currently appointed by the Board of Directors, would be replaced by a **“Commission on Handbook,” appointed by the President.**

5. **The President would select from the list of the top 20 nominees** those five persons the delegates would be allowed to consider for First Vice-President. **No longer would the delegates be able to elect** whom they deemed best suited for First Vice-President. Instead, the delegates would be limited to **electing from the President’s list of who he deems “most compatible with his style of leadership and vision.”** Thus the congregations of the Synod would be confined to following the “leadership and vision” of the President, instead of the President being subject to direction given by the congregations.

This is just a sample list of the far-reaching and extensive transfer of power and authority away from others in the Synod to the President. The list could go on and on.

Unfortunately it is not possible to correct such a massive transfer of power by making a few amendments here and there. Because the transfer of power to the President is so deeply incorporated into the recommendations, **stopping this power shift can only be done by defeating President Kieschnick’s Task Force recommendations altogether.** It will be up to the delegates at the 2010 Convention to decide whether the President of the Synod should be given such far-reaching and unchecked power.

Christian A. Preus
 LCMS Board of Directors (1995-2007)



Countdown to Houston: How Much More “Church Growth” Can the Missouri Synod Stand?

During the 2003 District Convention cycle of The LCMS, President Kieschnick attended the vast majority of district conventions in our Synod. His message to the Synod was very clear: If The LCMS continues to do its ministry as it has in the past, it would cease to be a force among Christian church bodies in the United States. It was during these presentations to the districts at which the President laid out his plans to change the future of the Synod with the *Ablaze!* Initiative

What should have been the result of the *Ablaze!* effort after another six years of its influence? Should we have been able to expect some measurable increase in the membership of The LCMS? Should the membership figures of the Synod at least show a decrease in the loss of membership? That would be a logical expectation.

Instead, what has the Synod experienced? Let’s let the numbers speak for themselves as they have been reported on p. 762 of *The Lutheran Annual 2009*:

Year	Membership	Loss/Gain
2001	2,540,045	
2002	2,512,714	-27,331
2003	2,488,936	-23,778
2004	2,463,747	-25,189
2005	2,440,864	-22,883
2006	2,417,997	-22,867
2007	2,383,084	-34,913
*2008	2,337,349	-45,735

*Obtained from Synod’s Office of Information

Total Loss of Membership Since 2001: -202,696

Perhaps still more troubling may be the recent increase in the rate of loss. Surely after all our “Missional” efforts, better results should have been achieved. However, it’s not as though we haven’t tried! In our efforts to be more fully *Ablaze!*, to have every congregation be “Mission Out-posts,” and to conform our worship practices to our culture’s expectations we’ve spend much effort and money to turn things around, but it doesn’t seem to be working.

Even after “Fan Into Flame” -- the fundraising effort to support *Ablaze!* -- went to work raising the funds needed, things haven’t gone so well. According to the LCMS e-news of August 13, 2009, “The total represents nearly 20,000 gifts – including \$23 million in cash – from some 7,000 individuals and 850 congregations.” **Let’s do the math: 850 congregations represent 13.7 percent of the 6,167 congregations of the Synod and 7,000 donors represent .003 percent of 1,835,064 communicant members in Synod.** We applaud the good intentions of those who donated but it seems clear that President Kieschnick’s *Ablaze!* vision for the future of The LCMS has been resoundingly rejected by most of our Synod.

This does not, however, support the validity of any claim that our Synod does not care for the lost. Our pulpits are filled with faithful pastors who preach the Word of God in all its truth and purity and who administer our Lord’s Sacraments as He instituted them. Every sermon and Bible class is an equipping of God’s saints enabling them to spread the Gospel in their God-given vocations. The loss of membership has absolutely nothing to do with Synod not caring about the lost.

Why then are we losing members in our Synod? To be sure the causes are likely complex but changing who we are as Lutherans into a church body which attempts to appease our culture by watering down who we are as Lutherans and pandering to a largely pagan culture’s expectations in our worship is not the way to go and it seems our Synod wisely understands that. Reshaping the LCMS into a different kind of Church body has been rejected and the effort has failed.

What would work then? Perhaps we should take a page from our own history. The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod was growing most rapidly, and was most unified when we stood on the clear doctrine of Holy Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions without any apology whatsoever. This was also a period of time in which we were unified in our worship practice, our communion practice, and in our doctrine. It seems that people will respect a church body which knows what it believes and why it believes it, but no one respects a church body which seeks to please the world.

Rev. Richard A. Bolland
Senior Pastor
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Kansas City, Missouri



It’s Time to Support The Lutheran Clarion

As the pivotal Synodical convention in Houston looms in our immediate future, the need for conservative/Confessional unity in supporting efforts to help the delegates to the convention (and the Synod at large) be well informed of candidates and proposals which can redirect our church body back to faithful doctrine and practice, becomes quite critical.

We at *The Clarion* need your help to change the dangerous direction in which our Synod has been moving. Will you please consider assisting in this effort by sending your tax deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Concerns Association
1320 Hartford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116

Make Use of Your Nominating Ballot

In late October the Secretary of the Synod mailed out to each congregation the official nominating ballot for the offices of President, First Vice-President, and Other Vice-Presidents. That official ballot is one of the most important pieces of mail your congregation will receive. Which names receive enough nominations to make the final slate of candidates, and how many nominations they receive--this is where your congregation can play an important role.

The envelope your congregation received from the Office of the Secretary has in it three items: the official nominating ballot; a printout of the bylaw (3.12) covering Nominations and Elections; and an envelope for your congregation to return your completed ballot. Your congregation has until the March 10 deadline to make its nominations and return the completed ballot in the envelope.

“Nominating good candidates for Synod President and Vice-Presidents is one of the most important things...to affect the future direction of our synod.”

The official ballot has three sections for nominations: for President, for First Vice-President, and for Other Vice-Presidents. Your congregation may nominate (one or) two ordained ministers for President, (one or) two ordained ministers for First

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Vice-President, and (up to) four ordained ministers for Other Vice-Presidents. You can nominate the same man for more than one office, but you can nominate that man only once in each category.

Here's how it works. Let's say your congregation wants to nominate a certain pastor--oh, let's call him "C.F.W. Walther"--for Synod President, and another pastor, a "Friedrich Wyneken," for First Vice-President. But you get to nominate two names for each office. You can't nominate Walther twice for Synod President, and you can't nominate Wyneken twice for First Vice-President. So here's what your voters' assembly decides to do. You nominate Walther and Wyneken for Synod President, and then you nominate them both again for First Vice-President. Those sections of the ballot would then be filled in as follows:

PRESIDENT

1. Nominee: C. F. W. Walther
City, State: St. Louis, Missouri

PRESIDENT

2. Nominee: Friedrich Wyneken
City, State: Baltimore, Maryland

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

1. Nominee: Friedrich Wyneken
City, State: Baltimore, Maryland

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

2. Nominee: C. F. W. Walther
City, State: St. Louis, Missouri

But really, the order of how you list them within each category, Walther-Wyneken or Wyneken-Walther, doesn't matter. Either way, it counts the same toward that person's total number of nominations for that office. (By the way, if you don't know the city where an ordained minister lives, go to Directories, Church Workers, at www.lcms.org.)

After Synod President and First Vice-President, your congregation then may nominate four pastors (by "pastors," I mean any ordained minister on the LCMS clergy roster; they could be seminary professors, for example) for "Other Vice-Presidents." You end up selecting these four:

OTHER VICE-PRESIDENT

1. Henry Schwan; Cleveland, Ohio
2. Francis Pieper; St. Louis, Missouri
3. Friedrich Pfotenhauer; Hamburg, Minnesota
4. Friedrich Wyneken; Baltimore, Maryland

Again, the order in which you list them within that category doesn't matter. You're not ranking them as to which Vice-President slot they would get; you're just trying to get them into the pool of names from which the convention will then pick four and rank them.

(A tip on nominating Vice-Presidents: It doesn't make much sense to nominate a sitting District President for "Other Vice-President," since it is almost certain he would decline such nomination. A man can only hold one elective office at a time, and he would not resign being a District President in order to become a 2nd - 5th unpaid Vice President. A sitting District President may very well accept nomination for the full-time positions of Synod President or First Vice-President, but not for 2nd - 5th Vice-President.)

Once your voters' assembly has made their nominations, and the slots have been filled in, at the bottom of the ballot the date of the meeting is written in and your congregation chairman and congregation secretary sign their names. Then mail the ballot back in the envelope provided (adding postage).

The five names that receive the most nominations for Synod President will be on the ballot in July in Houston. Likewise with the five names that receive the most nominations for First Vice-President. The top twenty names for Other Vice-President will comprise the pool for Vice-Presidents Two through Five.

The number of nominations a candidate receives not only gets that name on the final ballot, it can also "send a message." A large number of nominations can help a candidate going into the convention. So if you have a particular candidate you'd like to see elected, don't just assume, "Well, he'll have enough nominations to make the ballot anyway." He may, but the more nominations the better. If you think your congregation would be willing to nominate "your guy," then suggest that synodical nominations be included in a voters' assembly agenda between now and early March. Many congregations don't even bother to submit nominations unless someone suggests it.

Nominating good candidates for Synod President and Vice-Presidents is one of the most important things your congregation can do to affect what happens at the convention in July--and thus to affect the future direction of our synod. Make use of the nominating ballot!

Rev. Charles Henrickson
Pastor, St. Matthew Lutheran Church
Bonne Terre, Missouri



Lutheran Concerns Association Endorses United List

It is no secret that The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod will be at an historic crossroads when she gathers in convention this coming July 10th – 17th in Houston, Texas. It has become clear that our Synod will need to decide if she will radically change her character and nature, as has been the tendency of late.

The congregations of the Synod have an opportunity to curb the changes currently being imposed upon the Synod and set a direction that will better ensure that we retain both our biblical and historic conservative/Confessional Lutheran church body and our financial viability. One opportunity available to the congregations is to nominate and elect candidates who will lead the Synod in a more doctrinally sound, mission oriented, and financially sound direction. It is toward that end therefore, the Lutheran Concerns Association concurs with groups and individuals across the Synod who are supporting the United List recommendations:

President of the LCMS

Rev. Matthew Harrison of St. Louis, Missouri

First Vice-President of the LCMS

Rev. Herbert Mueller of Waterloo, Illinois

2nd through 5th Vice-Presidents

Rev. Dr. John Wohlrabe of Geneseo, Illinois

Rev. Daniel Preus of St. Louis, Missouri

Rev. Dr. David Adams of St. Louis, Missouri

Rev. Dr. Scott Murray of Houston, Texas

Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher of Ft. Wayne, Indiana (alternate)

The deadline for submission of nominations is March 10, 2010.

Each congregation of The LCMS should have received the nomination's form from the Synod. If it cannot be located, telephone the Rev. Dr. Raymond Hartwig, Secretary of The LCMS for a duplicate (314-965-9000).

We encourage congregations of the LCMS will take the time and effort to nominate them for office, and encourage their delegates to elect these men at the 2010 Convention in Houston.

As it says on the United List website:
<http://theunitedlist.org/>, "Since 1998 the "United List"

has served the congregations of the LCMS who seek to be faithful to the synod's constitution and confessions. It has done this by recommending candidates who also uphold the synod's constitution and confessions, who are impeccably ethical, and who have proven themselves in every way for service to the Lutheran church." We of the Lutheran Concerns Association concur with their recommendations and are pleased to join our voice with theirs in support of these men.

LCA CONFERENCE: An Opportunity for Information

As The LCMS draws near an historic and pivotal Houston convention in July, it becomes critical for members of the Synod in general and delegates to the convention specifically to become well informed on issues which will determine the nature and character of our Synod for decades to come.

The program planned for the LCA convention, January 18th at the Don Hall's Guesthouse Hotel and Convention Center will provide precisely such helpful information. We strongly encourage every reader of *The Lutheran Clarion* to approach any and all delegates to the Synodical convention and urge them to come to the LCA conference!

The speakers the LCA has arranged for the conference will be speaking about critical proposals which will come before the delegates to the Synodical convention and will be providing a solid, rational, logical and theological foundation for each of them.

Registration commences at 8:30 A.M. on January 18th and the program begins at 9 A.M. at Don Hall's Guest House, 1313 West Washington Rd., Fort Wayne, IN (1-800-348-1999).

Make your reservations now and mention they are in connection with the meeting of Lutheran Concerns Association. At the time of check in, coupons will be given for the free breakfast and dinner (designated entrees) with a limit of two (2) breakfast and two (2) dinner coupons per room. **A free lunch will be served in the LCA meeting room to attendees pre-registered by January 7th.** Walk-in's are welcome to register at the door.

**Synodical Convention Delegate
Mailing Addresses Needed!!**

In order to assist the delegates to the next Synodical convention to become better informed regarding the issues of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, we are seeking the names and addresses of all elected delegates to next summer’s Synodical convention in Houston. We would prefer not to wait until this information is published by the Synod but desire to send them *The Clarion* as soon as possible to assist them in their preparation for the convention. Please send the names and USPS mailing addresses to:

Rev. Richard A. Bolland
2003 NE Englewood Road
Kansas City, MO 64118

Has the LCMS Lost Her Lutheran Identity?

A trip to an Alzheimer’s Unit is a difficult visit on many levels. Family members, friends, and even pastors have a difficult time witnessing the slow, progressing memory loss. There are flashes of memory, good days and bad days, and many, many tears. While I have witnessed some miraculous reversals, for the most part this dreaded disease slowly but surely rips away a persons memories and identity. It is heart wrenching, to say the least.

This past June I freely and willingly set aside elected office in the LCMS. I had asked for a few minutes to address our District Convention as outgoing 1st Vice President. This request to speak words of encouragement to and for the church was denied by the District President. Since that time my remarks have had a wide reading throughout the synod and I have received many comments of support. Perhaps the most referenced statement of all was this simple observation: “I fear that in our desire to be diverse and contemporary, we have inadvertently lost our Lutheran identity.”

Are we in the LCMS today suffering from a slow, progressive memory loss? I fear that in many ways we have indeed forgotten who we are as truly confessing Lutherans. I see a loss of identity in several areas and in some cases downright embarrassment over Lutheran doctrine and practice. There are flashes of memory of who we are, good days and bad days, and many tears. Please allow me to share some observations and you can arrive at your own conclusions.

At the heart, core, and soul of a truly Lutheran identity is

the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for forgiveness, life, and salvation. The doctrine of justification is and will always be the heartbeat and pulse of true Lutheranism. Every doctrine and practice in the church flows from the cross and empty tomb and all error in any doctrine and practice ultimately tears away at this foundation of the faith. The technical term for the “main thing” in a theological system is the “material principle” or the thing that matters most. Justification by grace alone through faith alone in the person and work of Christ alone as revealed in Scripture alone to God alone be the glory is the material principle of true Lutheranism; it is our ultimate identity!

We have heard many times from the very top of the LCMS that we need to “keep the main thing the main thing.” I heartily agree. However, I have seen some very mixed signals at to what the “main thing” actually is. There is a seeming obsession with numbers, growth, money, mission and outreach. To hear many of our synodical officials speak, you might get the impression that our material principle is mission and outreach; we must grow or the institution will die. In a sermon by our synodical president at a district convention the comparison was made between the “city shining on a hill” in Scripture and the LCMS. Just look at the mass of materials where people sincerely speak of mission and outreach, and notice how little mention is made of Jesus and His once and for all sacrifice on Calvary’s cross. I have had our synodical president snap his fingers at me more than once as he scolded me and the entire gathering about all the people dying and going to hell as if their fate was somehow dependant upon our efforts (and money) and that Christ’s “It Is Finished!” word meant nothing.

I have heard numerous sermons from our pulpits throughout the synod where the cross and empty tomb of Jesus were not even mentioned much less boldly proclaimed as if Jesus were tired and needed a week off. When I have asked about this the responses have varied from “we have moved beyond the Law/Gospel paradigm in this congregation” to “our people know the Gospel, they need to know how to live” to “we proudly preach sanctification here.” I would humbly submit to you that the Gospel assumed is not the Gospel, in fact, the Gospel assumed is the Gospel denied! Where Christ crucified and risen for the forgiveness of sins is not clearly and boldly proclaimed in every sermon, study, program, and activity (the true mission and outreach of the church), I believe the Lutheran identity has been forgotten and/or lost.

“...the Gospel assumed is not the Gospel, in fact, the Gospel assumed is the Gospel denied!”

I can't tell you how many times I have been confronted with the question, "Is this a Missouri Synod church?" Family, friends, and congregational members either traveling throughout the country or surfing the web have often come face to face with doctrine and practice that seems strange and foreign to true Lutheranism. There was a day, not all that long ago, when folks could travel from one end of the country to the other and the basic identity of Lutheranism was clear in nearly every LCMS church. Marketing people call this "branding." You don't go to a McDonalds for pizza or to a Ford dealer to buy a Chevy. The "brand" (identity) means something and conveys a clear message.

The Lutheran church, to varying degrees, has always been a liturgical church. Ours was a conservative Reformation, not scrapping everything and starting from scratch, but keeping that which was not opposed to the clear message of the Gospel. The historic liturgy connects us to our past and our future, and is faithful to Christ and His Word. Many LCMS congregations have lost this identity and fail to see the real danger. When we put aside the historic liturgy in favor of weekly pastoral creations, we stop "walking together" and begin to display the characteristics of a cult.

When we sell our birthright for the lentil stew of "contemporary" or "emerging" worship, without realizing that doctrine and practice are intrinsically linked, we open ourselves up to error upon error. Is it any wonder that Lutheran congregations that have adopted the worship style of Evangelicals and Pentecostals often have trouble with the doctrines of baptismal regeneration, the real presence of Christ in the Supper, the Office of the Holy Ministry, and the work of the Holy Spirit? Baby dedications, open Communion, non Lutheran (and non ordained) preachers, altar calls, and decision theology are a present reality in our beloved synod and little to no discipline is happening.

We hear the cry, "This is not your grandfather's church," echoing the ad line from Oldsmobile from several years ago (This is not your grandfather's Oldsmobile). Might I remind you that this particular ad campaign was the beginning of the end for Oldsmobile? People wanted the reliability and craftsmanship of "their grandfather's Oldsmobile." Attempting to keep up with the times and culture, Oldsmobile lost its identity and quickly went out of business. In one respect I agree with our synodical president's assessment that the LCMS is not our grandfather's church. I would humbly submit, as I witness and observe the "worship style" of many in the LCMS, that it is our great-great-great-great-great grandfather's church. We have scrapped the historic liturgy of the church for worship

Thank You

We of The Lutheran Concerns Association wish to express our sincere gratitude for the continued

support of Balance-Concord, Incorporated, in the publication of *The Lutheran Clarion*. We encourage other Confessional groups within the LCMS to consider financially supporting this effort.

doctrine and practice that is the "liturgy" of the revivalism and New Measures of the 19th century! When this happens, I believe that the Lutheran identity has been forgotten and/or lost.

I could go on, but do I really need to? Stewardship tactics that are built around guilt and shame rather than as a joyous response to the precious Gospel ("get out your checkbooks" because "you've got it, we need it, let's have it") have nothing to do with the true identity of Lutheranism. Tolerance of false doctrine and practice while faithful pastors and laymen are persecuted for the faith has nothing to do with the true identity of Lutheranism. Mocking faithful parish pastors for taking care of the souls of the flock entrusted to them as "maintenance" ministry and contrary to the "real" mission of the church has nothing to do with the true identity of Lutheranism. This seeming loss of memory and identity has been painful to watch and has produced many, many tears. If you agree that the LCMS has in many ways lost her Lutheran identity, then be challenged, encouraged, and refreshed by these words of Christ to the Church in Ephesus:

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first."
(Revelation 2:1-5)

Humbly and respectfully submitted,

Rev. Clint K. Poppe

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The Lutheran Clarion

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The principal place of business for all matters pertaining to the LCA is:

1320 Hartford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116

Other faithful Lutheran individuals who are members of LCMS congregations are invited to submit articles of approximately 500 words for consideration to:

Rev. Richard A. Bolland, 1608 NW 78th St.
Kansas City, MO 64118 (816-519-3780)

Articles should be approximately 500 words in length. Inquiries are welcome. Manuscripts will be edited.

The Board of Directors for the LCA:

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Lutheran Concerns Association
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