

Evaluation of 2007 Synodical Convention

1. Closed Communion

Our congregation's dissent lists six points in which the LCMS is teaching and/or tolerating falsehood. The first point is that although the synod's official position on paper is **closed communion**, "widespread open communion practices are not disciplined." We submitted an overture asking that the District Presidents visit each congregation in their District to assess whether closed communion is being practiced. Our District submitted a similar overture(3-46), which also asked that "extraordinary situations and circumstances" be discussed and defined.

Floor Committee #3 declined to consider(See Res 3-13, line 13-14) our overture(also sent in by the Southern Illinois District(SID) and Greater Egypt Circuit Forum) because they said that the duty of District Presidents to visit congregations was already included in the bylaws. Our response: If District Presidents were doing their job, then we wouldn't have the practice of open communion practiced by many congregations. By passing **Res. 3-13** (dismissing our concern), widespread open communion practices will not be addressed.

A related **resolution(3-09)**, "**To Address Administration of the Lord's Supper**" commends a 1999 CTCR document for study and asks the CTCR to prepare practical guidelines for responsible pastoral care in administering Lord's Supper. There were 12 overtures which address the topic of the proper administration of the Lord's Supper. This resolution asks only for more study, but does not address our concern for practicing the correct doctrine. We do not need more study, we need to practice the doctrine we have.

2. Contemporary Worship (Diverse Worship)

The second point of our dissent is that "the widespread use of revivalistic '**Contemporary Worship**' is not disciplined." We submitted an overture asking the Synod to rescind 2004 Resolution 2-04, which directed the Commission on Worship to "initiate a process leading toward the development of diverse worship materials." This overture was rejected by the Synodical President and was not printed in the workbook at all. The Synodical President claims, "This overture contains information that is materially in error and is an apparent misrepresentation of truth and character." Though the Synod didn't see it, the overture was given to the floor committee, along with the President's comments. Included in the workbook were 5 overtures supporting and encouraging contemporary worship and 3 overtures asking for study of "our theology of worship." The SID Board of Directors resubmitted their overture(which was also rejected by the President) with changes and it was printed as a late overture(L2-26).

Floor Committee #2 has proposed two overtures. **Resolution 2-01** asks that the Commission of Worship(COW) and the CTCR organize a theological conference on worship and asks that Bible studies be prepared for use. **Resolution 2-02** asks the COW to develop "diverse worship resources," provide conferences to educate and build on the diverse worship that already exists, and develop a network of LCMS contemporary composers. In other words, the very opposite of what we desired is proposed.

3. Unionism and Syncretism

The third point of our dissent is that the "renunciation of **unionism and syncretism** of every description," is no longer practiced or disciplined. We submitted overture 3-17 asking the Synod to rescind 2004 Res. 3-06A and 2001 Res. 3-07A, because they did not unambiguously renounce syncretism and unionism. We also asked for guidelines to be produced that would rule out any repetition of LCMS participation in syncretism and unionism in the future. 2001 Res. 3-07A was used to give approval for LCMS participation in government-sponsored events. 2004 Res. 3-06A denied the possibility of unionism and syncretism for serial prayers in which clergy take turns. Our district submitted a similar overture(3-20), which asked the synod to recognize that 2004 Res. 3-06A and 2001 Res. 3-07A was ambiguous and asked the Council of District Presidents with others to produce new guidelines.

Floor Committee #3 has proposed two overtures. **Resolution 3-04** resolves "that there is no salvation apart from Jesus and that it is impossible to worship the one true God properly apart from saving faith in Jesus Christ" and it resolves that the CTCR study "the natural knowledge of God" and its implications for our public witness. One of District President Benke's justification for his participation at Yankee Stadium

was based on the natural knowledge of God, that Muslims also worship God, but improperly. **Resolution 3-05** resolves that the CTCR provide “further guidance for participation in civic events that includes the offering of serial prayer.” Although the first part of Res. 3-04 sounds promising, the adjective “properly” allows a loophole which Benke’s opinion concerning “the natural knowledge of God” will use as an excuse for more syncretism and unionism. We declared that serial prayer is wrong, if passed, Res. 3-5 is going to provide guidelines in which serial prayer is allowed.

4. Lay Minister (lay deacon)

The fourth point of our dissent is that “the unscriptural office of ‘**lay minister**’(lay deacon) is not being removed, but recognized, affirmed, and encouraged.” We submitted an overture asking that 1989 Res 3-05B, which established licensed lay deacons, and 2004 Res. 5-09, which affirmed District programs that equip laity for ministry, be rescinded. The Southern Illinois District submitted a similar overture(3-55) to rescind 1989 Res. 3-05B and direct all district programs following 2004 Res. 5-09 keep a clear distinction between the service of laity and pastors.

Floor Committee #5 has proposed two resolutions. **Resolution 5-02** (and the almost identical resolution from committee #3 Res. 3-12) asks the Board for Pastoral Care and the Council of District Presidents to study the current situations served by lay deacons to determine if there is still a need for lay deacons and report in 2010. Simply put, the unscriptural office established in 1989 is being studied for another three years—not to determine if it is Scriptural or not, simply whether we still need it.

Resolution 5-01 establishes the Specific Ministry Pastoral Program(SMPP), a new alternate route program to bring men into Word and Sacrament ministry. Applicants would be given a minimal level of preparation, and then would be ordained. After ordination, they would take the remainder of their SMPP curriculum. These men would be restricted to a specific “ministry” under the supervision of a general ministry pastor and the District President. There are many practical problem with this proposal, including whether the SMPP Pastor is “apt to teach” after only 5 required seminary-level theological courses before ordination and 5 seminary-level theological courses after ordination. Nevertheless, this program does include a call and ordination, unlike the present lay ministers. Most important though is that the present proposal (Res 5-01) does not do away with the present lay ministers or the District programs that are producing them. Concordia Seminary St. Louis submitted a similar overture(5-03) to Resolution 5-01, but their proposal included a resolve to do away with the lay ministers created under 1989 Res. 3-05B. It is too bad that Committee #5 didn’t choose this proposal. As it is, the present proposals do nothing to address the unscriptural office of lay minister.

Resolution 5-01 "To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program"

5. Order of Creation

The fifth point of our dissent is that “the ‘**order of creation**’ (that a woman is not “to have authority over a man,” 1 Timothy 2:12), has been removed in order to allow a woman to serve as elder and congregational chairman.” We submitted an overture to reject the unapproved 1994 CTCR report, “The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices,” to rescind 2004 Res. 3-08A, which affirmed the conclusions of the same unapproved 1994 CTCR report, and to direct the LCMS to apply the Scriptural teaching on the Order Creation to both the pastoral office and all humanly established offices. The SID sent a similar overture(3-76), which also asked that the CTCR complete the 1995 (Res. 3-10) convention directive to prepare a complete study of the scriptural relationship of man and woman.

In response, Floor Committee #3 proposed **Resolution 3-07, which commends the Synod to study Section 3 of the “CTCR Response to Expressions of Dissent (2004-2006)” and asks the Synod to wait until 2008 when the CTCR will issue its comprehensive report. Section 3 of the first report states, “the Synod has concluded in 2004 Res. 3-08A that women may hold all humanly instituted offices in the church because we have no ‘thus says the Lord’ about the order of creation for service in these offices.” If passed, this proposed resolution would confirm that the Synod no longer applies the order of creation to humanly established offices.**

6. Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution

The sixth point of our dissent is that “**Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution** now allows human councils to overrule the Word of God.” We submitted several overtures to address some of the problems.

--We submitted overture 8-26 asking the Synod to rescind 2004 Res. 8-01A, which changed the Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution Process. The SID submitted overture 8-20 to modify 2004 Res. 8-01A to require an appeals process for the accused and remove the requirement for a face-to-face meeting. In response, Committee #7 proposed **Resolution 7-09, which “reaffirms the use of Synod’s system of dispute resolution for the exclusive and final remedy for those in disputes” and condemns “the use of secular remedies, such as lawsuits.”** It should be noted that Committee #8 has proposed that there be a special task force to study **the composition of hearing panels** for the Dispute Resolution Process and report in 2010. We expressed concern about the composition of hearing panels in our overture 8-26. However, committee #8 has also proposed **Resolution 8-05 in which it “affirms the importance of face-to-face meetings” and encouraged the study of the CTCR document “Public Rebuke of Public Sin.”**

--We submitted an overture to rescind 2004 Res. 7-02A, which amended the synodical articles of incorporation so that the Synodical Board of Directors would not be allowed to overrule the opinions of the Committee on Constitutional Matters(CCM) in between conventions. This overture was rejected by the Synodical President and was not printed in the workbook at all. The Synodical President claims, “This overture contains information that is materially in error and is an apparent misrepresentation of truth and character.” Floor Committee #8 has proposed **Resolution 8-01, “To adopt amendments to the Article of Incorporation and Bylaws re Resolution 7-02A” at the recommendation(See LR 8-01) of the 7-02A Committee formed at the request of the 2004 Res. 7-02A, the very resolution we sought to rescind.**

--We submitted an overture(8-02) to rescind 2004 Res. 7-21 which sought to amend Article XI F 2 of the Constitution in order to limit the authority of the Board of Directors. **Floor Committee #8 declined to consider it(See Res 8-12, lines 25-28).** They said it had an incorrect premise.

--We submitted an overture(7-22) to change bylaw 3.1.6.2c so that instead of the President of the Synod determining which overtures should not be printed in the Workbook because they are materially in error or a misrepresentation of the facts, that power would be given to the Secretary of the Synod. The SID submitted a similar overture(7-21), except the authority was to be given to the Praesidium of the Synod. **Floor Committee #7 declined to consider both our overture(See Res 7-13, line 29) and the SID overture(See 7-13, line 26) because “2001 Res. 7-04A is still adequate.”** The very reason we submitted these overtures is because we didn’t think it was adequate.

Resolution 8-01 "To Adopt Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws re Resolution 7-02A" was passed by 75.6%.

The work of the Floor Committees makes it quite clear that our dissent has made little, if no progress toward calling back our Synod to her formerly true teaching and practice.

MDH