

### Our State of Confession Against Six Points



### State of Confession January 9, 2005

- 1. Closed or Open Communion
- 2. Contemporary Worship
- 3. Unionism and Syncretism
- 4. Lay Ministers
- 5. Service of Women (Order of Creation)
- 6. Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution

State of Confession Explained

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### State of Confession

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Note: This State of Confession was passed at the Voters' Assembly of Trinity Lutheran Church on Sunday, January 9, 2005 with 29 voting yes, 4 no, and 2 abstaining. There is also a one page shortened "State of Confession" and one page inserts on each of the six points available.

All Christians are commanded to avoid those who teach or tolerate falsehood in their midst(Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:3ff.). With great sadness, it has become increasingly apparent that our own beloved Missouri Synod(LCMS)

- --has allowed her "official" teachings to become corrupted **by Synodical resolutions which approve falsehood**. And furthermore,
- --the LCMS has negated her "official" doctrine by the actual false teachings and practices of her members.<sup>1</sup>

We have identified six points in which the LCMS is teaching and/or tolerating falsehood.

- 1. Although the LCMS officially professes the historic and Scriptural teaching of closed communion, many congregations within the LCMS practice some form of **open communion** without being disciplined. In our Synodical President's reports he minimizes the present false practices as being only differing practical applications.
- 2. Although the LCMS Constitution and bylaws requires the "exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms," many congregations are being encouraged to follow the false revivalistic worship of the Reformed without being disciplined. Our Synodical President has

been heavily promoting **Contemporary Worship** from within his Synodically approved *Ablaze!* Program. His convention reports consider Contemporary Worship to be acceptable practical applications. The 2004 Convention Resolution 2-04 has directed the Commission on Worship toward "the development of diverse worship."

- 3. Although the LCMS Constitution requires the "renunciation of **unionism and syncretism** of every description," our Synodical President approved of the participation of District President Benke in a unionistic and syncretistic service at Yankee Stadium. Since that time, as well as in his sermon and reports to the 2004 Convention, he continues to maintain publicly that his decision was correct, and furthermore, that his decision is the "position of the LCMS." The 2004 Convention passed Resolution 3-06A, "To Commend the CTCR Document Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events" (GPCE) which effectively denies the existence of syncretism by claiming that Christian and non-Christian clergy could "take turns" offering prayers without it being joint worship.
- 4. At the Synodical Convention in Wichita(1989), the unscriptural office of "lay minister" was created in direct violation of Augsburg Confession XIV. Instead of putting an end to the practice as was recommended by 2001 Resolution 3-08(and endorsed by our seminaries), a substitute resolution 3-08B endorsed and continued this practice. With the passage of 2004 Resolution 5-09, the Convention directs "the Synod in convention recognize, affirm, and encourage the work of the Districts in developing ministry-equipping programs for laity." Those who publicly teach in the Church or administer the sacraments are no longer required to be called and ordained clergymen.
- 5. With the passage of 2004 Convention Resolution 3-08A, "To Affirm the Conclusions of the 1994 CTCR Report: The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices," our Synod has changed its official teaching on the "**order of creation**"(that a woman is not "to have authority over a man," 1 Timothy 2:12), and thereby approved women to serve in every humanly established office, including elder and congregational chairman.
- 6. With the passage of 2004 Resolution 8-01A, widespread changes in the "Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution," process removed a congregation's and pastor's right to initiate formal proceedings so that each member is held to the Word of God. Now that power lies solely in the discretion of the District Presidents and Synodical President. Furthermore, the rulings of the Committee on Constitutional Matters [which state that the prior approval of an ecclesiastical supervisor precludes the possibility of discipline for wrong doing] were approved by the Synodical Convention,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "A church body is orthodox only if the true doctrine, as we have it in the Augsburg Confession and the other Lutheran Symbols, is actually taught in its pulpits and its publications and not merely 'officially' professed as its faith. Not the 'official' doctrine, but the actual teaching determines the character of a church body, because Christ enjoins that all things whatsoever He has commanded His disciples should actually be taught and not merely acknowledged in an 'official document' as the correct doctrine. It is patent that faith in Christ will be created and preserved through the pure Gospel only when that Gospel is really proclaimed" (Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, III, p.423)

overturning their annulment by the Synodical Board of Directors. The Word of God is no longer the "only rule and norm of faith and life" in the LCMS.

In order to retain our membership in the Missouri Synod with a clear conscience, we must plainly state that we do not agree with nor do we tolerate these false teachings. The above six points are not occasional errors that are in the process of being corrected. Either these false doctrines have been approved by our Synod in Convention and become the new "official teaching," or on account of their widespread practice and corresponding lack of discipline, should be considered the *de facto* teaching of our Synod. Those who desire to have true fellowship with us will of necessity need to disavow these new false teachings.

In keeping with God's Word not to participate(share) with those who do not continue to hold to the Apostolic teaching, we hereby declare that from January 9, 2005 we will refuse altar and pulpit fellowship with those who are erring in these six points or those who practice fellowship with those who are erring in these six points.

Let it be known that...

- 1. Trinity Lutheran Church will not permit those who teach, practice and support these six protested false teachings to commune at our altar, nor will we commune with them. (altar fellowship)
- 2. Trinity Lutheran Church will not allow those who teach, practice and support the six protested false teachings to preach in our pulpit. (**pulpit fellowship**)
- 3. Trinity Lutheran Church will not support with our talents or money the church and mission work of those who teach, practice and support the six protested false teachings. (**mission support**)

Those who teach, practice and support false teachings include not only those who actively announce their acceptance of falsehood, but also those who by refusing to take a stand(Rev 3:16) show that they either agree with the falsehood or show by their toleration that they do not consider the false teaching to be important.

This is NOT a decision to leave the LCMS! This is a godly decision to stay and fight for the truth, but without partaking of the error. During this "state of protest," Trinity Lutheran Church retains "all benefits and privileges of Synodical membership"(1971 Res. 5-01). With the exception of altar and pulpit fellowship and its financial support, the pastor and members of Trinity Lutheran Church will continue to attend meetings, conventions, and conferences of our circuit, District and Synod.

Out of love for our neighbor, we do not want to proceed too quickly, lest the Lord not be able to use us as a witness to other congregations, pastors and members. As a result of pastors shielding their members from the Synod's problems and Synodical publications only giving one side of the story, there are many who do not know of the present false practice and approved false teaching. Many have not been taught for years and thus are not able to distinguish the intentionally vague and changing terminology that seeks to hide the new falsehood under the guise of truth.

Over the next three years, we pledge to take advantage of every opportunity to speak the truth in love in order to call back our Synod to her former doctrine and practice.

### **Our Prayer**

O Lord, give our people the wisdom to discern the false teaching that was approved at our Synodical Convention this summer, and the false practices that are openly tolerated. Through our neglect in teaching the Word of God and the lack of discipline among our pastors, you have given us over to our own desires. Do not abandon us now, but use this crisis to awaken your pastors and people to the importance of the true faith in Jesus Christ. Bring healing to our Synod so that we repent of our lack of attention, and trust in the Word. Grant our Synod peace and concord for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### Closed or Open Communion

- --Closed communion is the Scriptural practice of refusing to give Lord's Supper to those with whom we are not completely united in doctrine and practice.
- --Open communion is the practice of welcoming to the Lord's Supper those with whom there is not unity in doctrine and practice. Open communion will be see in varying degrees depending on how much disunity is allowed.

### **Concerning communion with non-Christians**

- 1 Corinthians 10:20-21, "No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons."
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?"

### Concerning communion with the openly unrepentant

- 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 "But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. ... 'Expel the wicked man from among you."
- 1 Corinthians 11:27-28, "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

# Concerning communion with those who do not confess the presence of Christ's Body and Blood

1 Corinthians 11:29-32, "For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. 32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."

# Concerning communion with those for whom there is not unity in doctrine and practice

Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

- 1 Corinthians 1:10 "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought."
- 1 Corinthians 11:26, "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
- Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

# The synod has repeatedly upheld that closed communion is the only Scripturally and Confessionally faithful practice.

"The practice of refusing Communion to certain Christians and the general population at Lutheran altars is called *close Communion*. This practice serves the Gospel, and even those refused, by its reverence for our Lord's last will and testament....

Since fellowship at the Lord's Table is also confession of a common faith, it would not be truthful for those who affirm the Real Presence and those who deny it to join one another. Their common Communion would indicate to the non-Christian community that the last will and testament of Christ could be interpreted in contradictory ways. Indeed, the non-Christian might rightly ask whether it was Jesus' word which determined the church's position and practice or simply a human consensus....

Close Communion seeks to prevent a profession of confessional unity in faith where there is, in fact, disunity and disagreement. It would be neither faithful to the Scriptural requirements for admission to Holy Communion (1 Cor. 11:27 ff.; cf. 10:16-17) nor helpful to fallen humanity if the Christian church welcomes to its altars those who deny or question clear Scriptural teachings" (Theology and Practice of The Lord's Supper, CTCR, 1983).

# In actual practice, there are many congregation and even whole Districts in which it seems that open communion is the rule.

In May of 1997, the Florida-Georgia District in Convention approved *A Declaration of Eucharistic Understanding and Practice(DEUP)*, in which it stated that there should be no "denominational requirement of baptized Christians who desire to receive the body and blood of Christ offered in the Lord's Supper." This open admission of open communion by an entire district generated some 30 Synodical overtures in 1998. Most sought to reaffirm Synod's position or reject this document, but five were in support of open communion. The Northwest District declared, "A practice congruent with Scripture and the Confessions calls for the Sacrament to be shared with baptized Christians who repent of their sins, believe the real presence, and sincerely intend to amend their sinful lives" (Rev. 3-04).

At the 1998 Synodical Convention, a resolution was passed "To Recognize Action of Florida-Georgia District as Null and Void" (3-06A), "because it is contrary to the resolutions of the Synod which have consistently upheld the truth, "that pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri

Synod, except in situations of emergency and in special cases of pastoral care, commune individuals of only those Lutheran synods which are now in fellowship with us" (1967 Res. 2-19; see also 1977 Res. 3-12; 1981 Res. 3-04; 1983 Res. 3-12; 1986 Res. 3-08; 1989 Res. B; 1992 Res. B; 1995 Res. 3-08).

Though the Synod in 1998 turned back this assault on closed communion and included a good critique of DEUP in the 1999 CTCR document, "Admission to the Lord's Supper," the position expressed by these Districts has never been rescinded by those Districts in question.

# Here are the words of our Synodical President, in Part I of The President's Report to the 2004 Synodical Convention:

"In my travels across the Synod, I have not encountered disagreement in the doctrine of what the Lord's Supper is. With unanimity, we believe, teach, and confess the Real Presence of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, received in, with, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion, for the forgiveness of sin, the strengthening of faith, and the assurance of life eternal through faith in Christ. I do not believe that fundamental doctrinal disagreement concerning what the Lord's Supper is exists in the LCMS.

At the same time, significant disagreement exists in the Synod regarding the policies of admission to Holy Communion, namely, who should be allowed or even encouraged to receive the Sacrament at the altars of our LCMS congregations. Some believe that all baptized Christians who believe in Jesus Christ, who are penitent, who accept the Real Presence of our Lord's body and blood, and who desire to amend their sinful lives should be welcome at our altars. Others believe that only members of LCMS congregations and congregations of other church bodies with whom the LCMS is in altar and pulpit fellowship should be communed at our altars, with no exceptions.

The official position of our Synod, which welcomes members of LCMS congregations and congregations of church bodies with whom we are in altar and pulpit fellowship, also understands this policy to include "the necessity of exercising responsible pastoral care in extraordinary situations and circumstances" in the communing of "Christians who are member of denominations not in fellowship with the LCMS" (1986 LCMS Convention Resolution 3-08). There is significant disagreement about what constitutes "extraordinary situations and circumstances," which some pastors and congregations interpret very broadly and others quite narrowly.

This disagreement in practice has resulted in dissension and disharmony between pastors and congregations of the LCMS, even though they are otherwise agreed on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

It is important to recall the words of Francis Pieper, fourth President of the LCMS: Christian congregations, and their public servants, are only the ad-ministrants and not lords of the Sacrament....On the one hand, they are not permitted to introduce 'Open Communion'; on the other hand, they must guard against denying the Sacrament to those Christians for whom Christ has appointed it. (Christian Dogmatics, III, p. 381)

# Here are the words of our Synodical President, in Part III of The President's Report to the 2004 Synodical Convention:

"Much of that disharmony has resulted from doctrinal difficulties, as our Synod has struggled, among other issues, with the fine line between being confessional and becoming sectarian. Other disagreements have been practical, namely, how our pure doctrine is to be applied. And many of our struggles concern what appear today to be minor issues but in the past were anything but minor. For example, in the LCMS:

- It once was considered a sin to purchase life insurance.
- Membership in the Boy Scouts of America was not allowed.
- Lutheran musicians could not play the organ or other musical instruments in non-Lutheran weddings or funerals and some were even excommunicated for doing so.
- Lutherans were not allowed to dance and were often chastised and even excommunicated for doing so.
- Lutheran pastors and people were not allowed to pray with anyone, anytime, anywhere, outside our own church.
- Women were not allowed to sit in church together with the men.
- Many congregations were in conflict over whether the pastor should continue to preach and teach in German or should begin to do so in English.

Today our Synod views these practices from the past, staunchly defended on the basis of Holy Scripture at the time, as matters not specifically commanded or forbidden in Holy Scripture and thus matters of Christian freedom about which there is little, if any, current dissension....

Yet, our Synod endured in remaining true to our Scriptural and Confessional principles. While most of the issues mentioned above are no longer in contention, we nevertheless continue to experience in our Synod today difficulty, disagreement and even conflict regarding numerous other issues, mostly regarding the practical application of our doctrinal principles. A few examples will suffice:

Close Communion - There is little if any disagreement among us on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. But there is disagreement regarding the policies of admission to Holy Communion, namely, who should be allowed or even encouraged to receive the sacrament at the altars of our congregations, campus ministries and military chaplaincies.... {My Note: Here he also mentions "Church and Ministry," "Traditional and Contemporary Worship," and "The Service of Women in the Church."}

Perhaps your congregation or one in your Circuit is wrestling with one or more of these issues, which can become divisive."

These two reports may not be considered LCMS doctrinal statements, but they are our Synodical President's officially published report. Their contents were not disputed. By these words, a wedge is driven between doctrine and practice. The practice of closed communion is compared with so-called long abandoned practices of bygone eras. Emergency exceptions for those on the death bed or in a state of confession are now opened to "pastoral discretion."

### Contemporary Worship

The problem with what is called, "contemporary worship," is not that it is contemporaneous with the present times, as opposed to the liturgy, which is said to be, "traditional worship." The concern is not that we must use the exact words of a particular rite and forbid any and all changes. The problem with "contemporary worship" is that it is none other than the heterodox worship of "Evangelical" Protestant Revivalism, as is consistently employed by those who hold to the false tenets of the Church Growth movement.

Contemporary Worship...

- 1) is not centered in the **doctrine of justification**, but views worship primarily as something I do for God. It has good works (**sanctification**) as its goal, not the forgiveness of sins.
- 2) believes that the Word of God(substance) needs something else(style) in order to be effective. The correct application of Law and Gospel is replaced with an emphasis on approach(methods), and appeals to the felt needs and desires of people.
- 3) justifies its changes on the **practical** grounds of **evangelism** and increased church attendance. By appealing to observable results, it does what "works." In order to reach people, it uses entertainment methods to move the emotions and it waters down the content of the Christian faith in order not to offend.

On account of its frequently changing form, "contemporary worship" cannot be easily cited. Therefore, a description of contemporary worship will simply need to describe some of the general characteristics which are usually present. Those are:

- --Sturdy doctrinal hymns are replaced with simplistic repetitive praise songs.
- --Doctrinal sermons are replaced with chancel dramas or how-to sermons for Christian living.
- --Creativity and variety are used to keep the experience relevant.
- --Worship is made meaningful by meeting the felt needs of the worshipper.
- --Sacramental emphasis is diminished, while sacrificial (prayer, praise, testimonial, etc.) is highlighted. Lay service leadership increased and brought to the front. Pastor to lead and equip laity.
- --Entertainment practices and music appeal to and manipulate the emotions.
- --Worship is seen as evangelism and therefore must be understandable and appealing to the non-Christian.

### 1. Style and Substance (a false division)

Lutherans put complete and utter trust in the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God (including the Word-instituted Sacraments) to accomplish God's purpose of creating and strengthening faith. Contemporary Worship likes to say that they are simply using Evangelical style, but keeping Lutheran substance. Those who think that they can increase the effectiveness of God's Word by jazzing up the service, etc. are directing attention away from the Word alone to others causes. At no point is there ever another cause or reason for a person coming to faith. Neither is there ever

anything beside the Holy Spirit working through the Word that keeps us in the true faith or strengthens our faith in Christ.

Ap, XIII, 13 "It is good to extol the ministry of the Word with every possible kind of praise in opposition to the fanatics who dream that the Holy Spirit does not come through the Word but because of their own preparations."

AC, VIII; FC, SD, II, 48; St. John 6:63, 1 Corinthians 3:1-7

### **Pre-Evangelism (Word + something)**

To think that our own words and actions could better prepare someone to hear the Word or make them more receptive to the Word is a denial of original sin.

FC, II, 5; SC, III, VIII, 10; 1Cor 2:6-14, 2 Cor 10:3-6, Rom 8:5-8

FC, Ep, II, 13, 19, "Likewise we reject and condemn the error of the Enthusiasts.... 19
Prior to man's conversion there are only two efficient causes, namely, the Holy
Spirit and the Word of God as the Holy Spirit's instrument whereby he effects
conversion...."

### 2. <u>Doctrine of Justification (Central Article)</u>

The Doctrine of Justification is the main doctrine of Christianity by which the church stands or falls. Note the logical progression from these excerpts from Articles IV. Justification, V. Pastoral Office, and VI. Good Works of the Augsburg Confession.

- AC, IV, "We receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith..."
- AC, V, "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith...."
- AC, VI, "It is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works and that we must do all such good works..."

1 Corinthians 3:8-11, Romans 1:16-17, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

Everything the church does either directs us to the forgiveness of sins or flows out of it. Therefore, our Divine Services are concerned with giving out the faith-creating and faith-strengthening message of justification. The Scriptural understanding of worship is one in which God serves us with His Word and Sacraments(Rom 10:17, 1 Cor 4:1) and we receive His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation with thanksgiving and praise.

AC, XIII; Ap, IV, 49; Colossians 1:3-8, 2 Peter 1:5-11, Romans 10:14-18, 21

### 3. Practical Appeal to Results

Those who practice Contemporary Worship usually cite the results of supposedly-increased attendance, etc. in order to justify their actions. Even when the excitement and novelty of Contemporary Worship does result in a short-term increase in attendance, enthusiasm, outreach, caring-attitude, etc., there is not a corresponding real growth in faith and Christian knowledge.

- Ap, IV, 130; Ap, VII and VIII, 12-14; 1 Corinthians 10:1-5; Hebrews 11:6; Galatians 3:1-5; Matthew 6:1-4
- Ap, VII and VIII, 5, "The church is not merely an association of outward ties and rites like other civic governments, however, but it is mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts. To make it recognizable, this

association has **outward marks**, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the Gospel of Christ.

### <u>Adiaphora</u>

Ceremonies instituted by men **cannot be required** for there to be true "worship," but are called *adiaphora*(things neither commanded, nor forbidden in the Holy Scriptures). AC, VII, 2-3; FC, SD, X, 5; Ap, VII and VIII, 36; Ap, VII and VIII, 10; Romans 14:5-8, Romans 14:13-18.

However, there are good reasons for observing *adiaphora*. Ceremonies **provide good order and teach what we need to know about Christ**. AC, XV. 1-2; AC, XXIV 1-3(German), 40-42; AC Concl., 4-5; Ap, XXIV, 3; Ap, XV, 20-21; 1 Cor 14:26-40 Not all adiaphora are created equal. Simply to say something is *adiaphora* doesn't mean that it should be brought into the Divine Service. FC, SD X, 7; AC, XXIV, 40-42.

Finally, some ceremonies that externally appear to be *adiaphora*, may not be *adiaphora* at all as a result of their intended use or resulting effect! FC, SD, X, 10; Matthew 15:1-9; Colossians 2:4-12, Galatians 4:9-11, FC, SD, X, 5 "We should not consider as matters of indifference, and we should avoid as forbidden by God, **ceremonies which are basically contrary to the Word of God, even though they go under the name and guise of external adiaphora and are given a different color from their true one.** Nor do we include among truly free adiaphora or things indifferent those **ceremonies which give or (to avoid persecution) are designed to give the impression that our religion does not differ greatly from that of the papists, or that we are not seriously opposed to it. Nor are such rites matters of indifference when these ceremonies are intended to <b>create the illusion (or are demanded or agreed to with that intention) that these two opposing religions have been brought into agreement** and become one body, or that a return to the papacy and an apostasy from the pure doctrine of the Gospel and from true religion has taken place or will allegedly result little by little from these ceremonies."

### **Lutheran Practice Described**

AC, XV. 1-2; AC, XXIV, 1-3(German); AC, XXIV, 9(Latin); AC, XXIV, 40-42; AC, Conclusion, 4-5; Ap, XXIV, 1-5; Ap, XV, 20-21; Ap, XV, 38; Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:15-17; Acts 20:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Timothy 4:11-14

### **Official Synodical Position**

The First Synodical Constitution was concerned about Synod's congregations adopting the camp revivals of common American religion saying, "Especially is Synod to investigate whether its pastors have permitted themselves to be **misled into applying the so-called 'New Measures' which have become prevalent here**, or whether they care for their souls according to the sound Scriptural manner of the orthodox Church" (VI,A,15), and "Furthermore Synod deems it necessary for the purification of the Lutheran Church in America, that the emptiness and the poverty in the externals of the service be opposed, which, having been introduced here by the false spirit of the Reformed, is now rampant. All pastors and congregations that wish to be recognized as orthodox by Synod are prohibited from adopting or retaining any ceremony which might weaken the confession of the truth or condone or strengthen a heresy, especially if heretics insist upon the continuation or the abolishment of such ceremonies" (VI, A,14b).

The present Constitution of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Article III, point 7 states one of the objectives of our Synod, "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 point 1 states another objective of our Synod, "Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith... and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism(Rom 16:17), and heresy," and Synodical Bylaw 4.71d2, directs the District President or his representative saying, "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."

Article IV of the Constitution of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, lists as one of the conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod, "Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school;" and Synodical Bylaw 3.929a states, "All service books and hymnals that are to be accepted as official service books and hymnals of the Synod shall be given such status only by a convention of the Synod after a process of exposure and testing decided upon by the Synod in Convention." Synodical Bylaw 3.928 lists as one of the functions and duties of the Commission on Worship, "recommend worship material to the church and advise and warn against the use of worship material that are unworthy of use in the corporate worship of the Lutheran Church," thereby implying that not all worship materials are helpful.

### **Present Synodical Practice**

Our Synodical President in his first report to the 2004 Convention states, "In the past few decades, numerous congregations of the LCMS have introduced 'contemporary' worship forms and music in addition to and, in some instances, even in place of traditional liturgies and hymnody." Over the past three years, it is no secret that our President has been heavily promoting the use of contemporary worship in our Synod from within his *Ablaze!* program. Though, he admits, that this practice "presents a dilemma," because it does not agree with our LCMS Constitution's requirement for the "Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school" (Art. VI), he sees the solution as having the Synod approve and develop more of these new methods. 2004 Resolution 2-04 directs the Commission on Worship to "initiate a process toward the development of diverse worship resources for use in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod." Instead of striving for uniformity, but allowing "responsible practices and customs," our Synod now develops contemporary worship to increase the diversity.

Our President is correct when he concludes saying, "The proper utilization of any form must always provide a proper setting for receiving the divine gifts of God and giving praise and glory to our triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Nevertheless, his assumption, that contemporary worship--founded upon American Protestant Revivalism—is only a "form," "expression," or "style," that can be made to conform with our Scriptural understanding of worship, is false. Contemporary worship is not the same as "responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith."

### Unionism and Syncretism

### In simple terms, syncretism is joining in worship with non-Christians.

"You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. 18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.' Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord" (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

# Unionism is joining in worship with other Christians with whom we are not in agreement in doctrine.

"I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause division and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them" (Romans 16;17).

"If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing..... you, man of God, flee from all this and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness" (1 Tim 6:3-4,11). Also see 2 Timothy 3:1-17.

"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. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work." (2 John 9-11).

# The actions of unionism and syncretism are expressly forbidden in our Synodical constitution.

Article VI of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod lists the "Conditions of Membership." It says,

"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 a 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...."
    (There are 7 conditions in all)

"LCMS pastors and congregations agree as a condition of membership in the Synod not to take part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of those of mixed confession. But what is meant by a public worship service? According to the historic LCMS understanding, a worship service is any occasion in which the Word of God is preached and prayer is made to Him by a fully authorized church worship leader" (A study of Fellowship principles). Thus our Synod's constitution and by-laws are specifically concerned with pastors, as official representatives, and public situations(services) where participation would imply joint worship to either false gods or with those who hold false teaching about the true God.

Concerning worship with those Christians with whom we are not fully united in doctrine, the Scriptures say, "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" (Romans 16:17). "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). "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). Therefore syncretism and unionism is both a breaking of our Synodical constitution, and also forbidden by the Holy Scriptures.

In September/October 1998, the Synodical President together with his presidium, disciplined a District President for participation in a unionistic and syncretistic service in accordance with our Synodical Constitution which requires the renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description.

On September 23, 2001, District President Dr. David Benke participated in "A Prayer for America," an ecumenical service which opened with an invocation and closed with a benediction and included the readings, songs and prayers of many different Christian denominations, as well as Muslims, Jews, a Sikh, and a Hindu clergy. Prior to Benke's participation, Synodical President Dr. Gerald Kieschnick determined that Dr. Benke's participation was "permissible and appropriate."

"My counsel to President Benke was based primarily on the Synod's collective understanding of the teaching of Holy Scripture, expressed in Resolution 3-07A of the 2001 Synod Convention.... Further, as indicated in Part I of my Report to the Synod, I agree with and uphold the position of the LCMS that pastors of our Synod should have the freedom, tempered with the accompanying responsibility, of 'offering prayers, speaking, and reading Scripture at events sponsored by governments...' if the organization in charge does not restrict a Christian witness, and if this can be done without any compromise of our Scriptural, Confessional and constitutional commitments" (Page 77, of the 2004 *Convention Proceedings*).

Formal charges were brought against Dr. Kieschnick for his counsel, as well as his own participation in an ELCA service. Due to the opinion of the Committee on Constitutional Matters(CCM) that the President of the Synod is only accountable to the convention of the Synod, the merit of these charges were never considered.

Formal charges were brought against Dr. Benke. Although he was initially suspended from the clergy roster, his appeal to a Dispute Resolution Panel resulted in his reinstatement on the basis of a CCM opinion. That CCM opinion determined that the prior approval of President Kieschnick, who serves as Dr. Benke's ecclesiastical supervisor, means that Dr. Benke cannot be charged. Once again, the merit of the charges is not considered.

The 2004 Synodical Convention passed Resolution 3-06A, "To Commend the CTCR Document *Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events*" (GPCE) which effectively denies the existence of syncretism by claiming that

Christian and non-Christian clergy could "take turns" offering prayers without it being joint worship.

The CTCR document states the unresolved disagreement. "The members of the Commission disagree about the issue of so-called 'serial' or 'seriatim' prayers involving representatives of different religious (Christian and/or non-Christian) groups or churches. Some members of the Commission believe that under no circumstances is it permissible for LCMS pastors to participate in any type of an event in which various Christian and/or non-Christian leaders 'take turns' offering prayers, holding that such an activity by its very nature constitutes 'joint prayer and worship.' The majority believes that in some instances it may be possible and permissible for LCMS pastors to participate is such an event as long as certain conditions are met(e.g., when the purpose of the event in question is clearly civic in nature, and when it is conducted is 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 my 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)."

The minority opinion speaks to the ambiguity of this document in guiding future actions. "Everyone knows that the notion of 'civic events' has been used to justify participation in the notorious 'A Prayer for America' in Yankee Stadium in 2001. The undersigned recognize that the CTCR has not been asked for an opinion on that particular event. However, the guidelines requested of the CTCR in the aftermath of that event can and indeed ought to be expected to be so clear and unambiguous as to rule out any repetition of such participation in similar occasions of syncretism in the future. Instead, it was stated in support of the document that both sides in the argument about the Yankee Stadium affair were entitled to appeal to the Civic Events document."

A man commits adultery with his neighbor's wife.

The man's wife asks him, "Did you commit adultery?"

The husband responds, "I firmly believe that it is every husband's right to have appropriate relationships with other women, provided that those associations do not impinge on my marital vows to you."

The wife asks, "Did you commit adultery?"

The husband responds, "In questions of marital judgment, you will need to trust me that I am committed to our commonly agreed upon marital principals.

The wife asks, "Will you commit adultery again?"

The husband asks, "Can't we just put all this behind us and move forward with our marriage?"

### Lay Ministers

The word oxymoron is defined as "a phrase in which two words of contradictory meaning are used together for special effect, for example, 'wise fool' or 'legal murder.'" The phrase "lay minister" is an oxymoron. A minister is an ordained clergyman who has a call to minister/serve in the Office of the Public Ministry, that is, a pastor. A layman(male or female) is someone who is neither called nor ordained, but receives the service of a minister.

### The Office of the Ministry(Pastoral Office) has been instituted by God.

- Ephesians 4:11, "It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be <u>pastors and teachers</u>."
- Acts 20:28, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers."
- Augsburg Confession V, "In order that we might have such faith, God has given us the ministry of the teaching of the gospel and the distribution of the sacraments"
- The Treatise on{rejecting} the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 67, "It is as Paul testifies to the Ephesians when he says, "When he ascended on high he gave gifts to men" (Ephesians 4:8,11,12). He enumerates pastors and teachers among the gifts belonging exclusively to the church, and he adds that they are given for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ."

### God calls men to fill the Pastoral Office through the church.

- 2 Tim 2:2, "The things you have heard me say in the presences of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."
- Titus 1:5, "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you."
- Apology{Defense} of the Augsburg Confession, XIII, 11-12, "The ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promise: {at this point the text cites Rom 1:16 and Isa 55:11}.... The church has the command to appoint ministers; to this we must subscribe wholeheartedly, for we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it."
- The Treatise..., 67, "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" (Latin text).

### The Pastoral Office is an office of Service/Ministry

- Acts 6:4, "...and we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." 1 Cor 4:1, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God(NKJV).
- 2 Tim 2:2, "The things you have heard me say in the presences of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."
- 1 Ptr 5:1-4, "...Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers"

- AC, XIV, "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call."
- AC, XXVIII, 8, "This power of keys or of bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching the Word of God and by administering the sacraments(to many persons or to individuals, depending on one's calling)."
- Treatise..., 60, "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."

### The Priesthood of the Baptized is different from the Pastoral Office.

- 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."
- Isaiah 40:9, "O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift it up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"
- Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Also Eph 5:19)
- Numbers 11:29, "Then Moses said to him, 'Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!"
- Romans 10:9, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

### Two Commonly misunderstood Passages

Is the pastoral office given in order to train and make the laymen to do the work, or is the pastoral office an office of service that builds up the church?

Ephesians 4:11-13, "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

# Is this the Great Commission given to all individual believers, or the Lord's promise for the church as a whole, that Jesus is present in the church's Apostolic office of teaching and baptizing?

Matthew 28:16-20, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

#### **Our Synod on the Office of the Ministry**

Prior to 1989, men were Seminary trained and then ordained and called into the office of the Holy Ministry in accordance with Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession,

"It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call."

All of the other offices in the church(Day School Teacher, lay elder, etc.) are made by human arrangement. These churchly offices were considered "auxiliary offices," in order to support the Pastor in His work or to do works of Christian service.

At the Synodical Convention in Wichita(1989), the unbiblical category of "lay ministers" was created in response to a supposed emergency situation regarding a lack of ordained clergy to serve parishes.

In 2001, Synodical President, Dr. A.L. Barry made plans to reverse the 1989 convention decision. But instead of putting an end to the practice as was recommended by Resolution 3-08(and endorsed by our seminaries), a substitute resolution 3-08B endorsed and continued this practice.

Now in 2004, Resolution 5-09, entitled, "To affirm District Programs that Equip Laity for Ministry," directed "the Synod in convention recognize, affirm, and encourage the work of the Districts in developing ministry-equipping programs for laity such as the Lay Leader Institute, Missionary Training Center, Training Leaders for Ministry, and The Alaska Project."

For what reasons is it so very important that a minister of the church have a legitimate call? (Question #11 from *An Enchiridion* by Martin Chemnitz) One must not think that this is done by human arrangement or only for the sake of order; but there are many weighty reasons, consideration of which teaches many things and is very necessary for every minister of the church.

I. Because God Himself deals with us in the church through the ministry as through the ordinary means and instrument. For it is He Himself that speaks, exhorts, absolves, baptizes, etc. in the ministry and through the ministry. Lk 1:70; Heb 1:1; Jn 1:23 (God crying through the Baptist); 2 Co 2:10, 17; 5:20; 13:3. It is therefore absolutely necessary that the minister as well as the church have sure proofs that God wants to use this very person for this His ordinary means and instrument, namely the ministry.

Now, a legitimate or regular call provides these proofs; for in this way every minister of the Word can apply to himself the statements of Scripture [in] 2 Co 5:19; Is 59:21; Mt 10:20; Lk 10:16; 1 Th 4:8.

II. Very many and necessary gifts are required for the ministry. 2 Co 2:16. But one who has been brought to the ministry by a legitimate call can apply the divine promises to himself, ask God for faithfulness in them, and expect both, the gifts that are necessary for him rightly to administer the ministry (1 Ti 4:14; 2 Ti 1:6; 2 Co 3:5-6) and governance and protection in the office entrusted to him (Is 49:2; 51:16).

III. The chief thing of the ministry is that God wants to be present in it with His Spirit, grace, and gifts and to work effectively through it. But Paul says, Ro 10: 1 5: "How shall they who are not sent preach" (namely in such a way that faith is engendered by hearing)? But God wants to give increase to the planting and watering of those who have been legitimately called to the ministry and set forth doctrine without guile and faithfully administer whatever belongs to the ministry (1 Co 3:6; 15:58), that both they themselves and others might be saved. 1 Ti 4:16.

IV. The assurance of a divine call stirs up ministers of the Word, so that each one, in his station, in the fear of God, performs his functions with greater diligence, faith, and eagerness, without weariness. And he does not let himself be drawn or frightened away from his office by fear of any peril or of persecution, since he is sure that he is called by God and that that office has been divinely entrusted to him.

V. Finally, on this basis the hearers are stirred up to true reverence and obedience toward the ministry, namely since they are taught from the Word of God that God, present through this means, wants to deal with us in the church and work effectively among us.

### The Service of Women

1. Both man and woman were made in the image and likeness of God.

Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

2. Both man and woman have dominion or authority over creation.

Genesis 1:28, "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

3. Nevertheless, the man and the woman are not the same, nor are they interchangeable, but they are placed in a God-given order.

Mathew 19:4, "And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female'..."

Ephesians 5:33, "Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

4. The man has been given headship over the woman.

1 Corinthians 11:7-9, "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man."

5. The woman has been given subordination under the man.

1 Corinthians 14:33-37, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."

6. This order of creation does not teach or imply any "superiority" or "inferiority," but reflects the good and gracious will of God which is rooted in the very structure of God's creation itself.

1 Corinthians 11:11-12, "Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God." Ephesians 5:21, "...submitting to one another in the fear of God."

7. St. Paul bases God's command for man and woman on the "Order of Creation"(1 Timothy 2:11-14 and 1 Cor 14).

A. According to the order of creation, we do not allow a

woman to have authority over a man.

1 Timothy 2:11-13, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve."

Ephesians 5:22-25, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her..."

1 Peter 3:5-6, "For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."

**B.** According to the order of creation, we do not allow a woman to hold the pastoral office. {Note: The Scripture uses the terms bishop, elder, and overseers to refer to the pastor.}

1 Corinthians 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says."

1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5, "A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; ... one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5(**for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of <b>God?**); (also v. 14-15)

1 Timothy 5:17, "**Let the elders who rule well** be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine."

1 Thessalonians 5:12, "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those **who** labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you..."

8. In the "Order of Redemption," both man and woman are equally redeemed by Christ and are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28). Nevertheless, the order of creation is not abolished by the order of redemption. As long as we live in this world, we remain male or female(Mt 19:4).

Galatians 3:26-29, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, **there is neither male nor female**; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Also see 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Corinthians 12;13, Colossians 3:11)

Up until 1969, the Missouri Synod, along with other members of the Synodical Conference, taught and practiced that on the basis of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12, a woman was not to have authority over a man by either participation in congregational meetings, nor by holding a congregational office.

"All adult male members of the congregation have the right to participate actively in the discussions, votes, and decisions of the congregation since that is a right of the whole congregation. See Matt. 18:17-18; Acts 1:15, 23-26; 15:5, 12-13, 22-23; 1 Cor 5:2; 6:2; 10:15; 12:7; 2 Cor 2:6-8; 2 Thess. 3:15. Excluded from the exercise of this right are the youth(1 Pet 5:5) and the female members of the congregation (1 Cor 14:34-35)" (Walther's "Pastoral Theology," 1995, translated from 1906 version)

In 1969, the Missouri Synod in Convention, granted women the right to vote in congregational meetings and to hold congregational offices which do not involve a violation of the order of creation. Furthermore, any office whose function was to assist the Pastor in his office was strictly forbidden to women.

"Does such an exercise of the franchise constitute an act of domination over someone else, especially over one's husband? Suffrage is defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary* as "a vote given by a member of a body, state, or society..."; also "the right or privilege of voting as a member of a body, state, etc."... From this definition of suffrage public teaching in the church is not an essential or necessary part of suffrage in the church... It is also evident from the definition of the franchise that it does not give to those who have the right of suffrage the power to lord it over others... In the matter of suffrage, then, we conclude that there is nothing in Scripture to prohibit women from exercising the franchise in the voters' meeting of the congregations to which they belong.

When it comes to the matter of holding office in the church.... ... the basic question remains: Does such office-holding, of itself, constitute an act of lording it over others?" ... After all, the church is the people of God, among whom the structures of organization, exist as a means of ministering to others(cf. Eph 4:12, Luke 22:25). In this understanding of the church, the exercise of the franchise offers the privilege of service to the body of Christ rather than the prerogative of power over a political entity" (1969 CTCR Report "Woman Suffrage in the Church").

In 1985, the CTCR report "Women in the Church," began to collapse the Scriptural prohibition, "that a woman is not to have authority over a man," so that it only applied to the exercise of the Pastoral Office.

In 1994, the CTCR report "The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices" concluded that women may serve "in all offices of the congregation, including that of chairman, vice-chairman and elder, and district and Synodical boards and commissions" provided that they don't involve the public accountability for the function[ing] of the pastoral office."

A CTCR Minority Report of five LCMS professors disagreed.

The most glaring problems with the report: "first, the treatment of terms such as 'teaching,' 'exercising authority,' etc., and second the understanding of the doctrine of the order of creation.... Simple equation of teaching with the pastoral office seems too facile for this text.... The issues surrounding the verb *authenteoo*("to exercise/usurp authority") are very difficult and simply must be handled, as the Report does not.... This is especially true in the case at hand, when the current Report puts forth positions which are at odds with the official position adopted by the Synod. Our fundamental concern, however, is that in an important matter such as this we study seriously and reverently the Word of God as his faithful people" (CTCR Minority Report, 1985).

The 1995 LCMS Convention did not accept the 1994 report, but told the CTCR to continue to study the issues in consultation with the faculties of the seminaries and to "address concerns regarding the priesthood of all believers, the order of creation, and the Greek word authentein."

Without another study being produced, the 2004 Synodical Convention approved Resolution 3-08A, "To Affirm the Conclusions of the 1994 CTCR Report: The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices." Based on an incomplete and flawed report, the LC-MS Convention approved women to serve in every humanly established office. The issue of authority(point 7A above) was not considered.

### Here's what part of the resolution says:

...WHEREAS, This 1994 report also stated that "these considerations imply and even require, that in determining the eligibility of women for services in all congregational, District, and synodical offices, attention be given to the functions attached to a given office. As the Commission stated in the 1985 report on *Women in the Church*, 'For other offices [other than the office of public ministry of Word and sacraments] we have no express "thus saith the Lord" and everything depends on the functions assigned to these offices'"; and....

Therefore be it Resolved, That the Synod affirm that women on the basis of the clear teaching of Scripture may not serve in the office of pastor nor exercise any of its distinctive functions, and 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";...

It's not a good sign when the Synod doesn't understand what it has passed. Soon after the Convention, Synodical President Gerald Kieschnick appointed a task force to provide guidelines for implementing Res. 3-08A. He acknowledged:

"For the sake of maintaining the unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of the Synod, it is imperative that the congregations of our Synod understand clearly what this resolution says and does not say, what it allows and does not allow, in order to prevent widely varying interpretations of such phrases as 'the distinctive functions of the pastoral office' and 'public accountability for the pastoral office."

### Dispute Resolution and Discipline

In response to the Robert Preus debacle, the 1992 convention of the Synod followed the advice of the Bohlmann administration and replaced a true adjudication process, which was based on determining truth and justice through evidence, due process, and sound reasoning, with a Dispute Resolution Process(DRP) that was based on a binding arbitration model. At the time, the change was touted as moving from a harsh win-lose process to a gentler win-win solution. This new Dispute Resolution Process(DRP) was designed to be "the exclusive remedy" for all controversies and conflicts between members of the Synod.

Following the participation of District President Benke in a syncretistic service with non-Christian clergy at Yankee Stadium in 2001, many pastors and congregations filed charges. Initially Dr. Benke's was suspended by Dr. Schultz for disobeying the Scripture, the Confessions and our Synodical Constitution, but later Dr. Benke was restored to the clergy roster by a Dispute Resolution Panel. The Dispute Resolution Panel, citing the opinion of the Committee on Constitutional Matters(CCM), ruled that Dr. Benke could not be disciplined because he had gotten the approval of Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, his ecclesiastical supervisor.

### **District President's Rule**

It is unknown what the delegates were thinking when they passed 2004 Convention Resolution 8-01A—a lengthy 26 pages long of bylaw changes, first printed in its entirety on the Tuesday that it was approved. I can only assume many did not read or understand it. While some may have thought that they were fixing a flawed dispute process, others stated from the floor of the convention, "Let's make sure this never happens again!" The "this" was the embarrassing attention given to the Yankee Stadium controversy.

With the passage of 8-01A, widespread changes in the "Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution," process removed a congregation's and pastor's right to initiate formal proceedings so that each member is held to the Word of God. Now, according to 8-01A, "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 ecclesiastical supervision for such member." In addition, a Synodical President can no longer discipline a District President, but the District Presidents have the power to discipline themselves and the Synodical President. If the District President chooses not to initiate formal proceedings, there is nothing else that can be done.

Resolution 8-01A goes against Scripture when it excludes the laity and all rank-and-file clergy completely from their divine right to judge doctrine, and places that right solely in an ecclesiastical supervisor.

Matthew 7:15-16, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?"

1 John 4:1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

1 Corinthians 10:15, "I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say."

#### Additional Burdens on the Accuser

Resolution 8-01A requires, "A face-to-face meeting in person between the accuser and the accused following the guidelines of Matt. 18:15. E-mail, regular mail, fax or telephone call (or any combination thereof) does not satisfy this requirement." "Even if the alleged violation of Article XIII is considered to be 'public,' this provision of Matt. 18:15 shall be followed. The reputation of all parties is to be protected as commanded in the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment." Furthermore all complaints require first-person, first-hand knowledge of the offence of the accused. Until those requirements are met, the District President will not even consider disciplinary action. It is debatable whether someone who speaks publicly against public sin would be allowed to pursue a complaint under the new rules.

However, this interpretation of Matthew 18, in which there is no distinction made between public and private sins, disregards what the Book of Concord says in the Large Catechism.

"All this has been said regarding secret sins. But where the sin is quite public so that the judge and everybody know it, you can without any sin avoid him and let him go, because he has brought himself into disgrace, and you may also publicly testify concerning him. For when a matter is public in the light of day, there can be no slandering or false judging or testifying; as, when we now reprove the Pope with his doctrine, which is publicly set forth in books and proclaimed in all the world. For where the sin is public, the reproof also must be public, that every one may learn to guard against it" (284).

Another great concern for the process is the newly private hearing panel(bylaw 2.26.e6b)—attended only by the persons involved, the witnesses, and the panel of three District Presidents. In an effort to protect the reputation of the accused, Resolution 8-01A has created a closed unmonitored system that does not allow the scrutiny which comes from the light of day.

### **Binding Power of CCM and CTCR**

In November of 2001, two pastors file charges against President Kieschnick for his action of participating in two unionistic services and his approval of Dr. Benke's syncretism at Yankee Stadium. In December of 2001, the CCM ruled that only a Synodical Convention can remove a Synodical President. The CCM did not consider the merit of President Kiescnick's actions.

On May 30, 2002, Dr. Wil Sohns wrote *An Evangelical and Fraternal Plea*, in which he defended Benke on the grounds that he had gotten the approval of his

ecclesiastical supervisor. On December 2, 2002, President Kieschnick appoints Dr. Sohns to the CCM, bringing the number of Kieschnick appointees to three (out of five). February 20-23, the CCM released a set of opinions in which it is stated, "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." Despite what the LCMS Constitution says, the CCM interpretation effectively elevates the ecclesiastical supervisor above everything else. The Word of God is no longer the "only rule and norm of faith and life" in the LCMS.

The Greater Egypt Circuit sent an overture to the 2003 Southern Illinois District Convention. The SID Convention(SID Resolution 3-09) was one of six districts to ask the LCMS Convention that these decisions be overturned. The Synodical Board of Directors were concerned that the CCM opinions had gone well beyond an interpretation of the Constitution and bylaws. Concerned that these CCM opinions would cause great legal and financial consequences and jeopardize Synod's incorporation status, the Synodical BOD declared in November of 2003 that eight CCM opinions were to be of "no effect." Furthermore, the LCMS BOD stated, "Recognizing the need to address and resolve the source of the problem in the Handbook of the Synod, the Board has turned this matter over to the Commission on Structure...."

However, President Kieschnick bypassed the Commission on Structure and appointed his own Blue Ribbon Committee, which ignored the advice of the Commission on Structure and brought forth Resolution 8-01 and later 8-01A on Monday of the Convention, with changes announced orally. After complaints of confusion, the entire amended resolution was reprinted on Tuesday, the same day it was adopted by the LCMS Convention, 683-528.

Although Resolution 8-02, "To Affirm CCM Opinions Regarding Ecclesiastical Supervision," was not considered on the floor of the Convention, another resolution sought to have the same result. Resolution 7-21, "To Amend Constitution Regarding Officer and Board Responsibilities" was passed. This resolution was presented as simply a needed clarification of the present LCMS Constitution. However, in reality it misinterprets the constitution and serves to limit the duties and authority of the Board of Directors. Most importantly, this resolution gives the CCM the responsibility and authority to overrule actions taken by the Board of Directors where property, business, and legal issues are concerned.

Because the LCMS Convention adoption of Resolution 7-21 mandated a change in the LCMS Constitution, the proposed constitutional changes must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the congregations. This change, now called Amendment A is presently being considered by LCMS congregations. Trinity Lutheran Church voted against Amendment A on November 21, 2004. The balloting continues until February 16, 2005.

Some things to note in the mean time. While this change is being considered, the dismissed chairman of floor committee 7, Warren Schumacher, has been campaigning for its passage in the Reporter and in an unprecedented mailing sent out from the Synodical President's Office. In response, the Synodical Board of Directors has sent out a lengthy mailing in order "to shed additional light on the issues involved in Constitutional Amendment A." Despite the administration's campaigning for Amendment A, it appears that it is not doing that well. A recent decision of the CCM has stated that even if the amendment should fail to garner the 2/3 vote needed by congregations, the intent of the resolution would still be valid, because the change is not really a change, only a clarification.

#### **Justice**

There are many other areas in which there are irregularities and abuse:

- --At the last LCMS convention, 138 delegates were seated, but did not the meet the requirements of the LCMS Handbook requiring each circuit to have seven congregations or 1500 confirmed members. The presidential election could have gone differently if 35 delegates had changed their vote.
- --At the last LCMS convention, Dr. David Benke was appointed by President Kieschnick to serve on the served on the floor committee that considered overtures concerning Benke's syncretism and unionism. The only one to reach the floor commended Dr. Benke.
- --The CTCR increasingly approves reports with many and significant minority reports. The CTCR does not print the minority reports along with the majority report.

I quote from Dr. Wohlrabe's paper to the Chicago Convention,

"The Synodical President has appointed the majority of the members of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, which will govern procedure and make decisions in future appeals cases. The Synodical President will appoint the next floor committee, which will take up issues generated by Resolution 8-01A at the coming 2007 synodical convention. Such future convention floor committees can be expected to ignore or subvert overtures they or the Synodical President disagree with, as they did in 2004. My point here is that there is not much hope of changing the bylaws affected by Resolution 8-01A at the 2007 convention by the normal means. Laymen will not be able to regain their divinely-given powers of judging church court cases until the 2010 convention, and that is only if the current Synodical President is not reelected in 2007.

It is my opinion that the best plan of action at this time is for the pro-laymen's group within the Missouri Synod to go on the offensive and depose(by that I mean vote out of office) all of our District Presidents...."

### State of Confession

For Trinity Lutheran Church, Herrin IL

All Christians are commanded to avoid those who teach or tolerate falsehood in their midst(Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:3ff.). With great sadness, it has become increasingly apparent that our own beloved Missouri Synod(LCMS) (1) has allowed her "official" teachings to become corrupted by Synodical resolutions which approve falsehood. (2) And furthermore, the LCMS has negated her "official" doctrine by the actual false teachings and practices of her members. Six points in which the LCMS is teaching and/or tolerating falsehood:

- 1. Widespread **open communion** practices are not disciplined.
- 2. Widespread use of revivalistic "Contemporary Worship" is not disciplined.
- 3. The "renunciation of **unionism and syncretism** of every description," is no longer practiced or disciplined.
- 4. The unscriptural office of "lay ministers" is not being removed, but recognized, affirmed, and encouraged.
- 5. The "order of creation" (that a woman is not "to have authority over a man," 1 Timothy 2:12), has been removed allowing a woman to serve as elder and congregational chairman.
- 6. Ecclesiastical Supervision and Dispute Resolution now allow human councils to overrule the Word of God.

In order to retain our membership in the Missouri Synod with a clear conscience, we must plainly state that we do not agree with nor do we tolerate these false teachings. In keeping with God's Word not to participate(share) with those who do not continue to hold to the Apostolic teaching, we hereby declare that from January 9, 2005 we will refuse altar and pulpit fellowship with those who are erring in these six points or those who practice fellowship with those who are erring in these six points.

- 1. Trinity Lutheran Church will not permit those who teach, practice and support these six protested false teachings to commune at our altar, nor will we commune with them. (altar fellowship)
- 2. Trinity Lutheran Church will not allow those who teach, practice and support the six protested false teachings to preach in our pulpit. (**pulpit fellowship**)
- 3. Trinity Lutheran Church will not support with our talents or money the church and mission work of those who teach, practice and support the six protested false teachings. (**mission support**)

Those who teach, practice and support false teachings include not only those who actively announce their acceptance of falsehood, but also those who by refusing to take a stand(Rev 3:16) show that they either agree with the falsehood or show by their toleration that they do not consider the false teaching to be important.

This is NOT a decision to leave, but a godly decision to stay and fight for the truth, but without partaking of error. During this "state of confession," the goal of our remaining in Missouri is to use the next years in order to try and call back our Synod to her former doctrine and practice.

### State of Confession Explanation

**Romans 16:17**, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them."

1 Timothy 6:3-16, "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness.... 5From such withdraw yourself.... 11But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. Two requirements for orthodoxy(being a correct teaching church).

- (1) Public Profession -- "official" statements from convention, etc.
- (2) Actual Practice -- actual teaching and practice from pulpits, publication, etc. *Note: The casual intrusion of error into an orthodox church is not a reason to withdraw, provided that error is being combated and eventually removed.*

#### False teachings or practice explained in detail

We list six, so that others know what changes we are seeking to overturn. For those who desire to know more, we have an expanded "State of Confession," and will make available the Bible Study sheets on each topic.

#### Possible responses to falsehood

- 1. Approve of falsehood and promote it.
- 2. Tolerate falsehood and thus permit it to have an equal footing with truth.
- 3. Protest it, fight it, and separate from falsehood. (State of Confession) This includes not just those who follow #1, but also #2.

### Three-fold Separation from falsehood.

- **1. Altar Fellowship -** We do not approve of falsehood nor do we tolerate it. Therefore we cannot commune with those who either actively promote or show by their lack of action that they are willing to tolerate falsehood in their midst.
- **2. Pulpit Fellowship -** Pastors following the response of 1 or 2 are not allowed to teach or preach in our congregation.
- **3. Mission Support** We support with our money those who teach correctly.

#### Reasons for a State of Confession

- 1. Follow God's Word concerning the separation of falsehood (clear conscience)
- 2. Warn others of the dangers of tolerating or approving falsehood (**love of neighbor**)

#### Outcome Desired

With a clear conscience we can remain members of the Missouri Synod and use the opportunities we have to make others aware of the false teaching within our Synod. We can encourage our brothers to protest, fight against and separate from falsehood, so that our beloved Synod is not changed, but returned to her former pure confession.