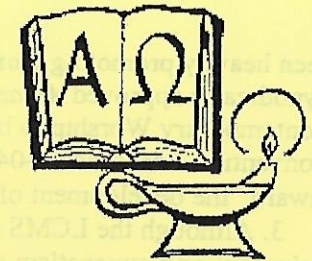


Out of love for our neighbor, we do not want to proceed too quickly, lest the Lord not be able to use us as a witness to other congregations, pastors and members. As a result of pastors shielding their members from the Synod's problems and Synodical publications only giving one side of the story, there 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.

State of Confession

For
Trinity Lutheran Church
1000 North Park Avenue
Herrin, IL 62948



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.¹

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

¹ "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)

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.

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,

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.