

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



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

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The Specific Ministry Plan - Part II **Can the LCMS Survive with Large Numbers of Inadequately Prepared Pastors?**

The numbers are out and they are not encouraging for those who are concerned about the theological formation of future pastors of the Church. In two years we will see the first wave of Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) into the parishes of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod. Certainly these are pious men who seek to serve the Lord, proclaim His Gospel and treasure His Sacramental gifts offered through His bride, the Church.

And yet both their formation and the office to which they are to be ordained are a shadow of that which has characterized the formation

and office of Lutheran pastors. After eight distance education courses over two years, they will be ordained as an SMP. Once in office, they must complete another eight distance education courses over two more years to

retain their Calls as SMPs. 2007 Resolution 5-01B (which established the SMP) provides the following, "Refusal to complete the Specific Ministry Pastor Program would result in the pastor's removal from the Synod roster, at which point he is not eligible for a call." In other words, the Call of an SMP will be terminated on the condition of non-compliance with the educational requirements of the Synod.

This differs from the historic understanding of the Call in The LCMS. In 2003, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations developed a document entitled, "Theology and Practice of the Divine Call". That document states,

The church has traditionally laid down two grounds for deposing pastors and other servants of the Word: persistent teaching of false doctrine, and leading a scandalous and offensive life. Persistent teaching of false doctrine undermines the foundation of the faith. A scandalous life leads people to

blaspheme God's name...A third reason has often been cited within the Lutheran tradition, namely, the inability or refusal to perform the duties of the office. (pp. 42-43)

The CTCR document then lists two other conditions added by Walther, both of which are elaborations of the first two causes. The SMP will now labor under a fourth cause for removal: "refusal to complete the Specific Ministry Pastor

Program." As the Synodically recognized reasons for the removal of a pastor from his Call grow in number, every parishioner should be concerned. Why? The threat of removal from office for new reasons can only have a chilling effect on the prophetic voice of the Ministry. And with that the people of God will be impoverished.

So, what does this mean for the future of the Church? Let's get back to the fact that "the numbers are out." The December 2008 *Reporter* (p.3) provides some disturbing data. Total residential enrollment in programs leading to ordination at the two Seminaries is down from 752 in 2007 to 660 in 2008 (a drop of 92 students or 12 percent). According to this article, however, 55 new SMP students were enrolled between the two Seminaries. Other sources report 93 new residential students at St. Louis and 55 at Fort Wayne for a total of 148 new residential students. That means that of the total of 203 new students (148 residential, 55 SMP),

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over 25% will be Specific Ministry Pastors. While one year does not make a trend, one out of four pastors classified as SMP does not bode well for the parishes of the Synod. And all of them will serve with the limitations of this newly created office. Is this something the people of the Synod really want?



Restructuring Overtures to Districts Needed Now!

(The following is a copy of Rev. Daniel Torkelson's letter to the pastors of the South Wisconsin District in response to the Blue Ribbon Task Force's recommendations regarding proposed changes in the Synod's structure. The Editorial Committee of the LCA commends it to you for your consideration.)

December 1, 2008 (Advent 1)

Dear Brothers in the South Wisconsin District,

As many of you know, a proposal to restructure the LCMS is rapidly approaching. As the clergy delegate from the South Wisconsin District to the so-called "theological conference" in August, I became convinced, for a number of reasons, that the proposals being set forth for Synodical restructuring were not in the best interest of the Synod's pastors and congregations.

Among these reasons, I include the following:

1. The theological and Gospel foundations of our current structure were completely ignored in the Conference itself.
2. The proposals, as a whole, point to a greater centralization of Synod and not necessarily a greater sense of our congregational identity.
3. The proposals address the wrong problem - the problem of disunity and uneven confession of our theology. This hampers missions considerably. A confessional church body will, by its very nature, be a missional church body. (Witness the ecumenical movement as a negative example of this truth.)

(After circulating this letter to the Wisconsin South District Pastors, a kind brother pointed out that perhaps a better working of item #3 above might be crafted. Rev. Torkelson agreed and offered the following.)

3. The proposals address the wrong problem – the main problem facing the Synod being disunity and uneven confession of our theology. This hampers missions considerably. A confessional church body will, by its very nature, be a missional church body.

(Witness the ecumenical movement as a negative example of this truth.)

4. The impetus for restructuring does not emanate from the congregations, but from the Synod's leaders' wrong perceptions of the problem in our Synod.

I have been travelling the District, as has President Wille, to measure attitudes toward this process. The response, at this point in time, has been singularly negative, crossing political/theological lines, as well as small/large congregational lines. Suffice it to say, the prospect of restructuring is not a popular one on the grass roots level. Many see this as a power play. Too many times now I have heard pastors tell me that the solution is simple. We simply need to return to the Lord our God through His Word. Unity will come when the pastors and congregations are freed from the constrictions of the national church body to be the mouth-houses of the Lord. Hearing God's Word rightly, we can do no other than to boldly proclaim Christ's love in word and deed in our villages, towns, cities, and regions.

To that end, if the LCMS is going to be delivered from such an unwise direction, the Synod's congregations are going to need to demonstrate to the national church body that any call for restructuring of the Synod must needs come from them (the congregations) and should aim to confess the Gospel as well as our current structure does.

In other words, the congregations need to speak now or forever hold their peace. I am lovingly asking you to consider taking the following steps toward assisting your congregations in avoiding what could be a mistake of absolutely stunning proportions on the part of the national church body.

1. Please go over the proposals with your church councils, elders, and be ready to summarize the problems with your congregations as a whole, utilizing newsletters, bulletins, whatever communication options you have, in order to catechize the laity on the problem.
2. Select a lay delegate to the 2009 District Convention who is concerned not to allow this to continue and be willing to put forth delegates to the 2010 National Convention who feel the same way.
3. Overtures, overtures, overtures. The SWD is one district which is providing a special floor committee dedicated to the topic of Synodical Structure and Governance at its next District Convention in June of 2009. I invite you to "weigh in" in the form of overtures to the District Convention. The more, the better. We cannot receive too many.

(continued)

With regard to overtures, I ask you to consider the reasons I listed above, as well as your own concerns, in writing your overtures. Please remember that a good overture is short and to the point. What the President of Synod needs to see is a large number of such overtures. Please ask your congregations to consider the overall benefit of weighing in with an overture, as well as your circuits.

Above all, I ask that you pray for our Synod. The proposals on the table will change the Synod at its most fundamental level. This is not merely a "rearranging of the deck chairs" but a centralization of authority which will likely breed further distrust and sap the dynamics that come from a vigorous confession of the Gospel in our congregations and localities. Please pray that the Synod not make such an unwise move as to restructure along the lines it is proposing and that she put the Lord of the Church first in her confession and in her mission.

The Lord bless you all richly this Advent season as you prepare for Christ's Second Coming and the celebration of His first.

Sincerely in Christ,
 Rev. Daniel T. Torkelson, Pastor
 Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Clyman, WI
 SWD Clergy Delegate to the 2008 Theological Conference On Synodical Structure And Governance

Will You Stand With Us?

To stand up for God's truth is sometimes challenging, but it is always a privilege. Will you stand with the Lutheran Concerns Association as we seek to keep the message straight in Missouri so that the message we proclaim to the world is right? Please prayerfully consider offering us some financial support so that we may continue to keep the message straight as well as get it out. Please send your tax deductible donations to:

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

2009 District Meetings

District	Dates	Location
North Dakota	Jan 18 - 21	Minot, ND
Southern Illinois	Feb 19 - 21	Collinsville, IL
Oklahoma	Apr 24 - 25	Norman, OK
Minnesota North	Apr 27 - 29	Brainerd, MN
South Dakota	Apr 29 - May 2	Sioux Falls, SD
Wyoming	Apr 30 - May 2	Casper, WY
Southeastern	May 1 - 3	Norfolk, VA
Northern Illinois	May 8 - 9	Lombard, IL
Calif-Nev-Hawaii	May 15 - 17	Fremont, CA
New Jersey	Jun 4 - 6	Swedesboro, NJ
Kansas	Jun 4 - 6	Topeka, KS
Nebraska	Jun 4 - 6	Seward, NE
New England	Jun 4 - 6	Springfield, MA
Atlantic	Jun 5 - 6	Bronxville, NY
South Wisconsin	Jun 7 - 9	Milwaukee, WI
Minnesota South	Jun 11 - 13	St. Paul, MN
Mid-South	Jun 12 - 15	Memphis, TN
Florida-Georgia	Jun 12 - 14	Lake Mary, FL
Eastern	Jun 12 - 13	Buffalo, NY
Missouri	Jun 14 - 16	Columbia, MO
North Wisconsin	Jun 14 - 16	Green Bay, WI
Montana	Jun 15 - 18	Billings, MT
Northwest	Jun 18 - 20	Portland, OR
Ohio	Jun 18 - 20	Dublin (Columbus), OH
Rocky Mountain	Jun 18 - 20	Denver, CO
English	Jun 18 - 20	Hales Corners, WI
Southern	Jun 18 - 20	Baton Rouge, LA
Iowa West	Jun 21 - 24	Milford, IA
SELC	Jun 22 - 25	Ann Arbor, MI
Indiana	Jun 25 - 26	Fort Wayne, IN
Texas	Jun 25 - 28	Addison (Dallas), TX
Iowa East	Jun 26 - 27	Cedar Rapids, IA
Pacific SW	Jun 28 - 30	Irvine, CA
Michigan	Jun 28 - Jul 1	Ann Arbor, MI
Central Illinois	Jul 5 - 7	Springfield, IL

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Beware of the Unintended Consequences of Electing Synodical Delegates at District Conventions

One general problem that plagues the current proposal for revising the structure of the Synod is the lack of a clear purpose guiding the provisions. To the extent that such an explanation has been offered, it has generally been the financial problems of the Synod. However, many of the provisions have no apparent connection to the financial issues facing the Synod, and seem rather to advance a different, if undefined, agenda. Of such a nature is the proposal to change how the delegates to the Synodical convention are chosen. On page 4 of its document "Walking Together — The LCMS Future: Proposal and Possibilities for Consideration and Discussion," the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance proposes the following:

Elect national convention delegates at district conventions (where all congregations are represented) from a list of congregational delegates to the district convention that immediately precedes the national convention.

Allow each district to determine how these candidates would be selected and elected, involving all congregations within the district and based upon criteria established by the national Synod.

"...the proposal creates the possibility for manipulation of the process by a district president determined to skew the representation of his district towards his own perspective."

Let us consider the likely outcomes of such a change.

First, by limiting the pool of candidates as delegates to a national convention to those who were delegates to the preceding district convention, the Synod will deprive itself of the possibility of benefiting from the talents and abilities of the vast majority of its members, who for reasons of health or work or other causes may not have been able to serve as a delegate to a district convention.

Second, since the task force has elsewhere in the document proposed to allow larger congregations to have more delegates at district conventions than small congregations, these two proposals, taken together, will result in a pool of potential delegates to a national

convention that would be skewed toward the over-representation of large congregations at the expense of small congregations.

Third, by eliminating the current requirement of one lay and one pastoral delegate from each circuit, the proposal opens the door for the possibility that some, if not many, circuits would be either entirely unrepresented or under-represented at the national convention.

Fourth, changing the current arrangement at the district level would be difficult to implement without violating the Synodical Constitution's requirement that "At the meetings of the Synod a number of congregations shall form a group which shall be represented by two voting delegates, one a pastor and one a lay delegate" (Article V(a)).

Fifth, even if a district preserved the current two-delegates-per-circuit standard, circuits would not be able to choose for themselves who should represent them, but would have representatives imposed upon them by the district, and in many cases from outside the circuit.

Sixth, by allowing each district to decide for itself how delegates to the national convention will be selected and elected, the proposal creates the possibility for manipulation of the process by a district president determined to skew the representation of his district towards his own perspective.

In short, then, the proposed process replaces the current fair and equitable arrangement of one lay and one pastoral delegate per circuit with a system that is open to manipulation and certain to contain inequities and under-representation on the part of some, if not many, congregations and circuits. This does not appear to be the kind of proposal that will promote harmony and a sense of fraternity throughout the Synod, and as a result is likely to exacerbate rather than ameliorate the financial problems that the Synod faces.

Rev. Dr. David Adams
Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, Missouri

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Revelation 3:11

Lutheran Concerns Annual Conference 2009

The Lutheran Concerns Association Extends a cordial invitation to all Confessional Lutherans to attend our annual conference. We look forward to meeting you and working together to make the LCMS a faithful, strong voice for Evangelical Lutherans



REGISTRATION FORM

Lutheran Concerns Association
Annual Meeting - April 21-22, 2009
RAMADA INN--MALL OF AMERICA
BLOOMINGTON, MN

REGISTRATION FEE: Paid Member of LCA: \$25.00 Non-Members: \$35.00

I will attend the meeting: _____
Name

Address

My check is enclosed _____. I will pay at the door _____.

The Ramada Inn Mall of America is located at 2300 East American Blvd., Bloomington, MN. Telephone: 952-854-3411 or 1-800-272-6232. The special rate of \$89.00 plus taxes will apply **provided** you mention at the time of the reservation that you are attending the meeting of the **Association of Confessional Lutherans** which meets following the LCA meeting. A free shuttle service from the airport is offered by Ramada-Mall of America. As many as four people can stay in a room at the noted rate. You must make your own reservation. **Make check payable to:** Lutheran Concerns Association.

Kindly detach this reservation form and return it to:

Rev. Daniel Jastram,
1320 Hartford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55116



LCA CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

“Your Father’s Church”

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2009

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM Rev. Joseph Fisher, “How A Confessional Congregation Works With A District and Neighboring Congregations With a Different Agenda”

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2009

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM LCA Business Meeting
8:30 AM – 9:15 AM Rev. Timothy Rossow, “Specific Ministry Pastors”
9:15 AM – 10:00 AM Rev. Thomas Queck & Mr. Walter Dissen, “Funding the Mission: As Seen By a Parish Pastor & Layman”
10:00 AM – 10:15 AM Break
10:15 AM – 11:45 AM Mr. Christian Preus, “The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Structure and Governance”

OUR SPEAKERS

REV. JOSEPH FISHER:

Rev. Joseph M. Fisher, 1994 Graduate Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Serves as Senior Pastor Pilgrim Ev. Lutheran Church West Bend, WI since 1994. I am happily married to Christine and have been blessed with two wonderful daughters Elizabeth and Rebecca. Along with family and parish duties, I have served as Pastoral Advisor for Wisconsin Lutheran's for Life, on the Concordia Theological Foundation Board, a founding Board for Consensus Lutheran, SWD Horizon Free Conferences, and have worked with State Senators and Assembly people to pass a law in Wisconsin to allow pastor to bring wine when communing their members in the State Correctional institutions. At present, I am serving on the Board of Directors of the Concordia Bible Institute, and SWD Communication Task Force.

REV. TIMOTHY ROSSOW:

Rev. Dr. Timothy A. Rossow holds an M. Div. from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, and a D. Min. from Ft. Wayne, IN, as well as a B.A. in Humanities from Concordia, Seward, NE. His doctoral dissertation outlines a smaller and tighter parish structure organized around Walther's six duties of the church. His first call was to Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Dearborn, MI, and since 1994 he has served Bethany, Naperville, IL, as Administrative Pastor. His wife, Phyllis, is a graduate of Concordia, Seward, NE. Pastor Rossow is the founder and publisher of Brothers of John the Steadfast.

REV. THOMAS QUECK:

Rev. Thomas Queck grew up on a farm in SW Iowa. He attended Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD, on an athletic scholarship. Following graduation he taught and coached in the High School in Adair, Iowa. In 1979 he entered Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, graduating in 1983. His vicarage was at Holy Cross Lutheran, St. Cloud, MN. His first call was to the dual parish in Sebeka and Nimrod, MN. In 1988 he was called to Zion Lutheran Church in Annandale, MN, where he continues to serve. He was married to Kathryn Meister in 1983 and has three children: Anna, David and Timothy.

MR. WALTER DISSEN:

Mr. Walter Dissem is a preacher's kid raised in North Dakota. He retired in 1999 from Norfolk Southern Corporation in Norfolk, VA, where he was a Senior General Attorney. He served twelve years on the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; twelve years on Synod's Commission of Appeals and twelve years on the Board of Regents of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, and has served as a delegate to Synodical and District Conventions. He has also served on the Board of the Lutheran Home For the Aged in Westlake, OH; the Board of Consensus, Inc. and Lutheran Concerns Association.

MR. CHRISTIAN PREUS:

Mr. Christian Preus is a Partner with the law firm of Meagher & Geer in Minneapolis with over 22 years of legal experience. He has worked on over 500 legal claims relating to churches and other religious entities, primarily in the areas of insurance coverage, employment law, and First Amendment rights. He has represented clients in state and federal courts throughout the United States. He also was a law clerk to the Chief Justice of the North Dakota Supreme Court and Administrative Assistant to the Majority Leader of the North Dakota House of Representatives. Mr. Preus served on the Board of Directors of the LCMS from 1995 to 2007, and on the Board of Regents of Concordia University - St. Paul from 1989 to 1992. He has also been a delegate to several district and synodical conventions. In addition to serving on various boards and committees on the congregational, district and synodical level in the LCMS, he has been active in local government as a member of the City Council, Planning Commission, and Charter Commission of Plymouth, Minnesota.



LCA Needs Your Feedback

QUESTIONNAIRE

(In order to better serve our membership your in-put is desired. Please complete the following questionnaire and return it to: Lutheran Concerns Association, 1320 Hartford Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55116)

PAID LCA MEMBER? Yes No

Have you attended LCA's Annual Meeting: Circle Year(s) 2008 2007 2006 2005 2004

LCA's Constitution lists eight (8) numbered objectives including concerns with problems facing the church; revealing them; working for an open, honest, ethical and truthful response to those concerns and communicating with other confessional groups, however, first and always is to honor, obey, and glorify God.

Your comments on the need to expand LCA's base of support and how to accomplish that:

Since LCA is committed to expanding participation at its annual meetings it would be helpful and appreciated if your thoughtfully considered preferences were expressed for that meeting.

Preferred City: Metro-Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, St. Louis



The Lutheran Clarion

(The official publication of the Lutheran Concerns Association. A non-profit 501c3 organization.)



Published regularly to support issues and causes within the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod which build faithfulness to true Confessional Lutheranism and to be a clear voice of Christian concern against actions and causes which mitigate against faithfulness to the One True Faith.

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

1320 Hartford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116

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

Rev. Richard A. Bolland, 1608 NW 78th St.
Kansas City, MO 64418 (816-519-3780)

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

The Board of Directors for the LCA:

Mr. Christian Preus (President)
Rev. Richard Bolland Mr. Walter Dissen
Mr. David Hawk Rev. Thomas J. Queck

Lutheran Concerns Association

