

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



Lutheran Concerns Association
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Word of God Determines Doctrine, Not Commission on Constitutional Matters

The Formula of Concord, in the Lutheran Confessions, mentions Doctor Luther as asserting that "the Word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of doctrine, and that no human being's writings dare be placed on a par with it, but that everything be subjected to it." (Preamble to Resolution 3-01, 1973 LCMS Convention at New Orleans).¹

[Editorial Comment: Resolution 3-01 of the 1973 Convention, adopting "A Statement," and Resolution 3-09 "To Declare Faculty Majority Position in Violation of Article II of the Constitution," are defining actions in the history of Confessional Lutheranism and the Synod. Both resolutions are posted at www.lutheranclarion.org.]

Synodical convention delegates in July 2013 will be given the opportunity to overrule the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matter's (hereafter CCM) ruling on syncretism. I encourage the delegates to do so. The resolution they should adopt is #4-09, titled "To Overrule Commission on Constitution Matters Opinion 'Interpretation of Constitution Article VI 2 b' (11-2598 CW pp. 300-303). It is found in *Today's Business: Proposed Resolutions 2013*.² The parenthetical reference is to the "opinion" of the CCM #11-2598 in three pages of the 2013 *Convention Workbook*.³ I put "opinion" in quotes, because

"...reception of the Lord's Supper, by itself, does not constitute 'taking part in the services and sacramental rites' of a congregation..."

[CCM Opinion 11-2598]

Say what?!!

CCM decisions are binding and mandatory, not merely an opinion. I encourage you, the reader, to take some time to read these documents, whether or not you are a delegate.

Here is a brief background to Resolution 4-09. On September 8, 2011, the President of the Rocky Mountain District asked the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (hereafter CTCR) whether it is "appropriate for a rostered LCMS pastor (active, emeritus,

candidate, or non-candidate) to commune regularly at the altar of a congregation of a heterodox (ELCA [Evangelical Lutheran Church of America]) church body?"⁴ The district president was dealing with a case in his district where this was the issue.

The CTCR correctly ruled that "it would not be appropriate to attend the Lord's Supper in [such] a church," and "communing regularly at the altar of a heterodox (ELCA) church body" is 'church fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine,' such

action is unionism."⁵ According to LCMS Constitution Article VI.2, "renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description" is one of the "conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod."⁶ So according to the CTCR ruling, a rostered member of synod doing such things forfeits his membership.

Comes now the CCM. In its Opinion 11-2598, it rules on the same question, "No, reception of the Lord's Supper, by itself, does not constitute 'taking part in the services and sacramental rites' of a congregation, as that phrase is used in Article VI, paragraph 2 b of the Constitution."⁷ Say what?!! You can read the convoluted argumentation for yourself. I won't try to duplicate it here, because it doesn't make any sense to me.

What is going on here? Here are some clues. At the beginning of Opinion 11-2598, it states that the CCM received four questions by a pastor of the synod requiring an interpretation of Article VI 2b. Notice that this did not come from a Reconciler, Dispute Resolution Panel, Appeal Panel or Review Panel under the procedures given in Bylaw 1.10.8.1 (h).⁸ This meant that the person asking the question could determine the wording of the question, even if they were an interested party to a case. The wording of a question is often critical for determining the outcome from the CCM. According to the LCMS bylaws, any member of synod may ask for an opinion from the CCM and "an opinion rendered by the commission shall be binding on the question decided unless and until it is overruled by a convention of Synod" (Bylaw 3.9.2.2 (c)).⁹

The CCM Opinion 11-2598 is now a binding LAW that all synodical officers have to follow, unless and until it is overruled by the convention. Thus the convention needs to pass Resolution 4-09 in order to uphold the Constitution of the Synod. If the convention does not pass Resolution 4-09, then the CCM ruling stands and any rostered member of synod can, I presume, take the Lord's Supper anywhere and with anyone.

If no one realized this previously, now it is obvious that the entire Constitution and Bylaws of the synod could be amended by one person asking questions to a compliant CCM. The synod was warned about the problem of binding CCM opinions almost 20 years ago¹⁰ and has ignored that warning.

For the present convention, there are a few resolutions before the delegates that could improve CCM functioning and should

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be adopted: Resolutions 6-04, 6-16, 7-11, and 7-12.¹¹ Resolution 4-07 should also be adopted, as it clearly states that LCMS rostered workers should not commune at heterodox altars.¹²

For the long term, the synod needs to rethink the functions of the CCM and how its members are appointed. It is too easily used as a “final-and-friendly court of appeal” in adjudication cases by parties who know how to use it. It is too easily used, as the present case demonstrates, as a way of avoiding “supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office” by the authorized church officer.¹³ Furthermore, the CCM should never be involved in CTCR matters. Doctrine should be decided on the basis of Scripture, not constitutionality.

Rev. Dr. Martin R. Noland

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Evansville, Indiana

- 1 See page 127 in *Proceedings of the Fiftieth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, New Orleans, Louisiana, July 6-13, 1973* (St Louis: LCMS, 1973).
- 2 See pages 93-94 in *Today's Business: Proposed Resolutions 2013, 65th Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Saint Louis, Missouri, July 20-25, 2013* (St Louis: LCMS, 2013). Online version is available at: <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=2380>; accessed May 31, 2013.
- 3 See pages 300-303 in *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures 2013, 65th Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Saint Louis, Missouri, July 20-25, 2013* (St Louis: LCMS, 2013). Online version is available at: <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=2337>; accessed May 31, 2013.
- 4 See *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures 2013*, 83.
- 5 See *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures 2013*, 84.
- 6 See *2010 Handbook, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St Louis: LCMS, 2010), 15. Online version is available at: <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=928>; accessed May 31, 2013.
- 7 See *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures 2013*, 300.
- 8 See *2010 Handbook*, 55.
- 9 See *2010 Handbook*, 141.
- 10 See Martin R. Noland, “Law and Due Process in the Kingdom of the Left and the Kingdom of the Right,” in *God and Caesar Revisited: Luther Academy Conference Papers No. 1, Spring 1995, No. 1* (Shorewood, MN: The Luther Academy, 1995), 47-58; and Martin R. Noland, “District Presidents and their Council: Biblical and Confessional Limitations,” in *Church Polity and Politics: Papers Presented at the Congress on the Lutheran Confessions, Itasca, Illinois, April 3-5, 1997* (Crestwood, MO: Luther Academy, 1997), 156-172). These monographs can still be purchased in print versions online at: <http://www.shop.logia.org/Church-Polity-and-Politics-297.htm> and <http://www.shop.logia.org/God-and-Caesar-Revisited-33.htm>; accessed May 31, 2013.
- 11 *Today's Business: Proposed Resolutions 2013*, 129, 142-143, 158-159, and 170-171.
- 12 *Today's Business: Proposed Resolutions 2013*, 92.
- 13 LCMS Constitution XII.7; see *2010 Handbook*, 20.

Report & Thank You to Our Readers

We have been privileged to let our conference attendees and DVD viewers know about Rev. Jeffrey Horn's promising ministry to New Guinea. To date you have responded with gifts of \$1,585.00.



Lay Deacons: Kicking the Can Down the Road?

“Therefore an overseer must be . . . able to teach. . .” (1 Timothy 3:2)

“He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9)

“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1).

“Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call” (Augsburg Confession, Article XIV).

In spite of Scripture and Confessions, the 1989 convention at Wichita authorized the licensure of lay ministers to do Word and Sacrament ministry in place of pastors (1989 Res. 3-05B). In the years following, measures were adopted to try to alleviate this problem (DELTO, Distance Education Leading To Ordination; SMP, Specific Ministry Pastor). So you would think that by now we would have seen the end of Wichita-style lay ministers.

Wrong. The Wichita laymen are still on the line. How so? In the form of district “lay deacon” programs. When SMP was passed in 2007, what was left undone was the “sunsetting” of those district programs. So some districts are still using their own programs to license their own “lay deacons” (now more than 600) to do pastoral ministry in place of pastors. This ought to stop.

Many overtures were submitted by congregations, circuits, and districts to the 2013 *Convention Workbook* to deal with this issue. Most of them include a “Resolved” that calls for the discontinuation or phasing out of district lay deacon programs (e.g., 4-29, 4-30, 4-31, 4-32, 4-33, 4-34, 4-37, 4-38, 4-41, 4-45, L4-74). A few of them are in favor of the district programs (e.g., 4-36, 4-39, 4-40). And a couple of overtures (e.g., 4-22, 4-35) call for further study before possible action at the 2016 convention.

Floor Committee 4, Theology and Church Relations, has taken this last approach, proposing a resolution that some would say only “kicks the can down the road.” Resolution 4-06, “To Address Questions re Service Apart from AC XIV” (*Today's Business*, pp. 90-92), calls for the Synod President to develop resources for study and discussion and to establish a task force to develop a plan to resolve this issue and to bring a report to the 2016 convention.

As one who authored an overture to bring an end to the district lay deacon programs (Overture 4-45), I am a bit disappointed that the committee did not go further than that. Of

We Need Your Help at The Lutheran Clarion

With the March 2013 issue, we published extra issues leading up to the 2013 LCMS Synodical convention. In a non-convention year we would have published four issues in the January to July time frame; this year we published six issues. This means our costs of publication and mailing increased proportionately. Accordingly, we ask you our readers, to increase your donations in support of this convention-year effort.



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course, if this summer's convention delegates decide we're ready to take action now and thus vote to phase out (or at least limit) the district lay deacon programs, they may do so. Picking up on President Harrison's thought (*TB*, p. 22, lines 25-27), and simply to put things "on hold," Resolution 4-06 could be amended by adding a final "Resolved" such as this: "*Resolved*, That no new persons be admitted into district lay deacon programs between now and the 2016 convention."

I understand the floor committee's desire to try to bring more people along in a unified way before acting on the matter. That approach may work, and we may indeed finally be ready to "sunset" Wichita in 2016. But kicking the same can down the road for so many years can get a little tiresome.

Rev. Charles Henrickson

Pastor, St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Bonne Terre, Missouri, and Redeemer Lutheran Church, Potosi, Missouri

The Office of the Holy Ministry & 2013 Convention Resolution 4-33

Nobody forced us to be Lutherans, let alone to be part of the LCMS. If you are like me, you've looked over the fence at other Lutherans and even non-Lutherans thinking the grass might be greener. You've examined what each believes, teaches and confesses and after that you said there is no place like home. Maybe you've been on the other side of the fence and for one reason or another you could no longer choke down what they were feeding you and looking around you came to the conclusion that the LCMS was the place for you.

Our confession is not confusing. We believe that the Holy Scriptures as found in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible are the inspired and inerrant Word of God. We also confess that the Lutheran Symbols as contained in the Book of Concord are true expositions of Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of our doctrine. We can take great comfort in knowing that the documents in the Book of Concord were neither hastily thrown together nor written in a time of euphoria when the Church was only thinking best case scenario. No, they were written at a time when the Church was in great distress and needed clear guidance. If something is in our confessions it is there because those writing saw it as important for the support and benefit of the Church.

One of the congregations I am blessed to serve offered an overture to Synod (*Convention Workbook* 4-33 pp. 178, 179). The goal of this action was to encourage Synod to help support the office of the public ministry and thereby support its congregations and their members. Augsburg Confession XIV is one of the shortest articles in the AC and traditionally has been one that most could find agreement in. The Reformers understood the importance of making it clear who held the office and by whose authority he was there. They understood that as time and location might

Note from the Clarion Editorial Staff

Unionism & Syncretism: What are They, was the title of a presentation made by Rev. Joseph Fisher to a South Wisconsin District Circuit Conference which later appeared in the May 15, 2013, *Clarion* issue. One sentence reads in part: "Now, to make a bad situation worse, District President Benke, former Synod President Kieschnick, and even missionary at large to the Indiana District Matthew Becker have chimed in on the Newtown incident..."



Rev. Geoffrey Robinson, Executive Counselor for Outreach of the Indiana District contacted Pastor Fisher stating in part: "I have only one complaint with your article which I would like to have corrected. Rev. Matthew Becker is not a missionary at large to the Indiana District..." Pastor Fisher contacted the Chairman of the Editorial Staff of the *Clarion*, explained he had not said the Indiana District had called Dr. Becker and referred among other things to a blog of Dr. Becker's in which Dr. Becker wrote in part: "As an errant, sinful theologian who continues... (the Board of the NW District of the LCMS on which I served for many years, has labeled me the NOW District's LCMS missionary to Valparaiso University)..."

A question was raised by the *Clarion* to Synodical Secretary Hartwig as to the status of Dr. Becker and he responded: "I don't know the status of Dr. Becker's situation. I believe he remains a member of the Northwest District at this time." [The *2013 Lutheran Annual* shows Dr. Becker as being in the NW District and "NC08/2008" with the footnote explaining that "NC" means a "Non-Candidate," yet here in 2013 he is serving in a vacancy relationship in a District in which he does not hold membership.]

A story in the May 7, 2013, internet edition of thenewsdispatch.com of Michigan City, Indiana, headlined: *Church in the spotlight: Immanuel Lutheran Church* with a byline reading: "Writing for Immanuel Lutheran Church in this interview is Pastor Matthew Becker." The following appears as an answer by Dr. Becker: "In October 2010, Pastor Palmer died suddenly. Since that time, the congregation has been served part-time by Dr. Matthew L. Becker, an associate professor of theology at Valparaiso University. The congregation is in the process of calling a full-time pastor." Dr. Becker has been at Valparaiso since 2004 according to his biography on the Valparaiso web site which also shows him as tenured.

The *Clarion* suggests its interested readers communicate with the Synodical Secretary, the Indiana District President and the Northwest District if they wish to check on the rostered status of Dr. Becker.

change the means for training, examining, and certifying might also change. Their goal was not to set rigid parameters for how the Church was to prepare Pastors. It was also not out to say anything goes.

By ordaining and installing Pastors, the calling congregations feel secure that their Pastor has been placed there by God to stand as His representative. A major issue with Res. 3-05B of the 1998 convention is that there is no path to ordination. I read through the proceedings of that convention and it seems that every time an amendment was made that would have implemented a path to ordination it was voted

down. In 1995 Res. 3-07A provided a path for ordination. Unfortunately, it was rescinded in 2001. It seems unconscionable that as a Synod we would place a man into Word and Sacrament ministry, into the office of the public ministry with no path for ordination.

In his address to the convention after the passing of Res. 3-05B Dr. Nafzger makes reference to the “many dedicated lay ministers who for up to 20 years have been asked to carry out word and sacrament ministry” (1989 proceedings page 114). The reasoning for that 20 years and Res. 3-05B was in great part due to a crisis or emergency. The last time I checked, crisis and emergency were not reasons to change your confession, but reason to cling to it tighter and to thank God for providing wise men to help us even today to more clearly proclaim the Gospel.

Rev. Matthew William Nix

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The TCN Challenge at the 2013 Convention

The upcoming LCMS Convention’s Workbook contains four overtures related to the Transforming Churches Network (TCN).¹ These overtures’ differences highlight a serious divide in theology. While one overture seeks to affirm TCN (3-31), another endeavors to revoke its RSO (Recognized Service Organization) status (3-32). Though TCN’s zeal for revitalizing congregational mission focus is notable, the program itself has grave problems.

Pro-TCN Overture 3-31 (*Workbook* p. 157), submitted by the vision-guided CNH District, whose District President is also the Vice-President of TCN, reads: “TCN’s statement of faith is consistent with and supportive of the doctrine and confession of the LCMS as found on their public web site.” TCN’s *practice*, however, is not compatible with our confession. Consider the New Jersey District’s Pro-TCN report (p. 65): “Therefore, every task of the Church makes sense only if it serves His mission of making disciples. ...We have often failed to act upon the reality that all of our talents and abilities have been entrusted into our care so that we might prosper the Master’s business of making disciples of all nations.” Or consider TCN President Terry Tieman’s idea: “Shorten or Cancel Worship [for Service Project Sunday]. Whoa! Are you kidding? No, because this demonstrates that you are serious about being the church ‘in’ your community and that you care about your ‘neighbors’ around you.”² “Mission” is now the ultimate function of the Church. **Everything** else must bow down to the missional idol. This worldview subordinates justification and abandons Augsburg Confession Article V.

TCN’s plethora of hoops and congregational prescriptions underscores its Law-based non-Lutheran beginnings. While each District’s approach may be somewhat different, trying to “Lutheranize” a program built on a non-Lutheran foundation does not work. TCN has a low view of the Office of the Holy Ministry, a penchant for making everyone a minister while jilting the Doctrine of Vocation, advocates a pastor-as-CEO model, depends on business and sociological meth-

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ods, utilizes an unsavory dialectic process, missional visioning, and a reliance on man-made techniques for attracting the “unchurched” with a consequent lack of emphasis on the means of grace. All these characteristics lead to an unsurprising final result, a shoddy theological framework built on a bedrock of mission rather than justification by grace through faith. Their practices demonstrate a *profound* departure from the catholic Lutheran understanding of conversion, sanctification, and vocation.

TCN has been wooed by a *Theology of Glory*, which takes things into its own hands, thinking that God needs a little help in the *means* department. The *Theology of the Cross* is the way we *used* to do it, but since congregations are shrinking, that obviously doesn’t work – though we must still mention Word and Sacrament somewhere in our plan. So we create a new model. The pastor is the foreman who ensures accountability, and the parishioners are the work force who target various groups in the community to market the product. The sanctuary becomes the showroom floor where the customer is enticed to buy.

Meanwhile, back at corporate headquarters, as the Eastern District report clearly shows (p. 53), the district staff works “to encourage, nurture, and link the district congregations and ministries in prayer, vision setting, asset evaluation, and strategic planning of professional church workers and lay volunteers work to map the best utilization of existing resources and the development of key areas of needed growth to best reach the community in which the congregation is situated with the Gospel message.” This strategy sounds nothing like *Christ for you* – it is strictly pragmatism.

For TCN, *mercy* becomes a missional tool, and *life together* is largely forgotten – it’s *witness* or bust. And the Synod *will* bust if we continue on this path. A more Scriptural path is nicely summed up by the Wyoming District (p. 77): “Pastors and congregations faithfully proclaiming the truth of God’s Word, faithfully administering the Sacraments, gathering in worship, going forth into communities to share Christ in their vocations—these continue to be the joy and strength of our

Mark your Calendar for January 20, 2014!

The 2014 LCA Conference & Annual Meeting will be at Don Hall’s Guesthouse in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on **Monday, January 20, 2014**. We are working on the lineup of speakers. It promises to be another good one that you won’t want to miss! Much more to come in future issues of **The Clarion**.



district." God grant us repentance and unity, that His message would be rightly proclaimed.

Scott Diekmann

Airline Captain and retired dentist; Puyallup, Washington

For further documentation, download Mr. Diekmann's nine-part series on TCN, available at: <http://www.soundwitness.org/misc/tcn.pdf>. You can email Scott at zanson@msn.com

¹ Download the 2013 Convention Workbook at <http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=2337>.
² 10 May 2013 <<http://transformingchurchesnetwork.org/3-big-ideas-and-2-small-ones-on-revitalization-what-ive-learned-from-500-churches-in-5-years/>>.

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 Lutheran Concerns Association will have a booth in the Exhibit Hall at the Convention. Please stop by to visit and meet people who help bring you *The Lutheran Clarion*. You will meet some wonderful Confessional Lutheran volunteers.



Note to Readers: The below book review was published in the June 2013 issue of *The Clarion*; however after the issue went to press we discovered we did not have the complete article, so we are re-publishing the review in its entirety.

Book Review:

The Myth of Junk DNA

Jonathan Wells, Discovery Institute Press, 208 Columbia Street, Seattle, Washington 98102, 2011. 169 pages, paperback. \$15.00.

Jonathan Wells is a Senior Fellow with the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. He holds a PhD in Molecular and Cell Biology and also a PhD in Religious Studies.

Wells begins by pointing out that there is no hard scientific evidence that the small changes produced by mutations in existing species has ever produced a new species. Wells quotes the British bacteriologist Alan Linton who states that "No evidence exists in the literature that one species has ever been shown to evolve into another." (p. 12) Microevolution (change within a species) is well supported by the evidence, but Macroevolution (development of one species from another different species) remains an assumption.

To complicate matters Darwinists now face a new adversary; Intelligent Design. Developed in recent years, Intelligent Design proponents maintain that it is possible to infer from scientific evidence that the origin of living things can be better explained by an intelligent cause (a designer) than by unguided natural causes.

As a result, evolutionists have turned to a new argument. In 1953, English scientists James Watson and Francis Crick were studying how living organisms pass on their structure and traits from one generation to the next. They discovered what they called "the secret of life." They deciphered the molecular structure of deoxyribonucleic acid.

DNA is a huge molecule that carries all the secrets of how existing plants and animals create new generations. DNA con-

sists of subunits called "nucleotides." Each nucleotide consists of a sugar molecule attached to a phosphate group and one of four bases. The bases are named: Adenine, Thymine, Cytosine, and Guanine. These nucleotides are attached to each other and form a very long structure. Two of these wrapped around each other to form a helical shaped molecule. This is called deoxyribonucleic acid. Hundreds of millions of nucleotides are joined in one unit. Because of the varying order of the attached bases, it is a code for the synthesis of the various different proteins. The helical structure unwinds, a simpler molecule called Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) is formed, which is then translated into a protein.

It turns out that much of the DNA does not encode proteins. At first it appeared that the unused DNA had no function and was referred to as "Junk DNA." Darwinists seized upon this fact and claimed that here was evidence of evolution. It was thought that this Junk DNA had once been useful, but as evolution had proceeded it was replaced by new DNA. They were just vestigial genes. In 2007, Columbia Professor Philip Kicher, attacked Intelligent Design theory, writing "if you were designing the genomes of organisms, you would certainly not fill them up with junk." (p. 24)

Jonathan Wells, however, responds, writing, "A flood of recent evidence shows that they are mistaken. Much of the DNA they claim to be 'junk' actually performs important functions in living cells." In the chapters that follow, Wells surveys recent literature to support his claim. In the notes following each chapter he lists hundreds of research reports to back up his claim.

Here are some of the functions carried out by so called "Junk DNA."

- Evidence that many pseudogenes are transcribed into RNA began accumulating in the 1990s. Some of these pseudogene-encoded RNAs have characteristics that suggest they may be capable of being translated into protein.
- RNA from pseudogenes may play a role in regulating gene expression. They may provide an alternate target for enzymes that degrade messenger DNA.
- In 2008, a team of Norwegian and German biologists found evidence that a pseudogene (Junk DNA) assisted the expression of a functional gene. It seems that the RNA from a pseudo gene may serve as a decoy for molecules that would otherwise repress the protein coding genes.
- The Centromere is the region where the chromatin is attached to other structures in a cell. Centromeres are built upon long stretches of repetitive DNA that some biologists once regarded as junk DNA.
- Non-Protein coding DNA has been shown to function as a lens in mouse retinas.

Wells gives other examples of DNA once thought to be junk actually playing a role in the cells of living creatures. He closes the book by writing, "As recent discoveries have demonstrated, we are just beginning to unravel the mysteries of the genome." (p. 105). It is evident that the hypothesis of junk DNA is a myth.

Paul Zimmerman

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Concerns Facing the LCMS & Our Military Chaplains

During my career as a Navy chaplain, I had several opportunities to write about or speak on ministry in the military.¹ In times of conflict and in times of peace, the men and women of our Armed Forces face a multitude of distinctive challenges on a daily basis; and this may be especially so for those who serve as missionaries within this unique culture. From the service of Chaplain Friedrich Richmann, our first Missouri Synod military chaplain during the Civil War,² to approximately 70 active duty and 80 reserve or national guard chaplains who currently don the uniforms of our nation,³ our chaplains are constantly challenged in presenting a confessional witness. One does not have to be "at the tip of the spear" (in combat), to confront progressively growing assaults on articulating a clear Gospel witness and standing tall for the truth of God's Word.

Our chaplains today face the continuing pressure of "civic religion,"⁴ displacing a clear Christian witness in this very "public square" where church and state intersect regularly,⁵ particularly for the vocation of military chaplain. This is nothing new,⁶ but it continues to make steady in-roads. This can result in pressure to involve oneself in unionistic and syncretistic religious events. But, even when it is clearly a civic event with peripheral religious involvement (and therefore, not unionistic or syncretistic worship), there are other coercions to compromise. From chaplain school onward, there is uniform pressure (albeit with plausible deniability)⁷ to exclude the Name of Jesus in public prayers.⁸ This pressure can also involve fear of reading New Testament passages at public events, relying primarily on the more "neutral" Old Testament. Of course, this is not a problem for Jewish chaplains.

"With both the pressures of 'civic religion' and 'same sex' relationships, looms the ability of confessional Lutherans (and other conservative Christians as well) to be promoted and retained as chaplains in the military."

Meanwhile, Muslim chaplains are under no such pressure regarding use of the Koran in similar situations. Although not officially articulated, this pressure with respect to "civic religion" basically establishes a religion (contrary to the First Amendment of the Constitution) that is supposedly neutral and encompasses everything that involves the

use of chaplains within the military. Yet, it is a "civic religion" that exerts a one-sided double standard against Christians, particularly confessional Christian chaplains.

The contemporary issue of "same sex domestic partners" (i.e., practicing homosexuals) along with the redefining/overturning of "traditional" marriage in society is having a direct impact on LCMS chaplains in the military as well and should be of great concern for all of us. Only a few years ago, the long-standing policy often referred to as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was overthrown, allowing practicing homosexuals in the military to publicly acknowledge their "sexual preference." Now, the congressionally passed (September 21,

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1996) Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) may soon be overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court. Careful vigilance must be exercised by faith groups, including the LCMS, to maintain our chaplains' freedom of religious conviction in terms of counseling, preaching, and teaching. If DOMA is discarded and homosexual marriage is given the same status as heterosexual marriage in the military, what happens when a chaplain is in an isolated location and has no other chaplain to whom he can refer a same-sex couple? What if a chaplain from the LCMS is assigned to one of the military retreat centers, which offer marriage and pre-marriage retreats? Must a chaplain accept same-sex couples on the same basis as heterosexual couples? If DOMA falls, this issue comes to the forefront for our chaplains and they will need the support of all our congregational members in making our voices known to our elected government officials.

With both the pressures of "civic religion" and "same sex" relationships, looms the ability of confessional Lutherans (and other conservative Christians as well) to be promoted and retained as chaplains in the military. At least once a year, military members are evaluated and graded by their commanding officers. These evaluations are a major factor in promotion. The Navy Fitness Report includes grades in the following areas: professionalism, military bearing, teamwork, equal opportunity, and leadership. If a chaplain is construed as being less than a team player with respect to "civic religion" or less than in full compliance with equal opportunity standards regarding homosexual marriage or any other "social engineering" that may be inflicted upon the military, then that chaplain will be given lower grades in those areas. Lower grades result in failure for promotion, which also means the chaplain will not be retained for continued service in the military (military promotion structure is often characterized as "up or out"). The consequence is that we may have even fewer chaplains serving to provide Word and Sacrament ministry to our LCMS congregational members in the military and serving as missionaries in this fertile mission field.

As an aside, the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program may also impact the number of prospective candidates for service as LCMS military chaplains. In order for one to serve as a chaplain in the military, a Master of Divinity or its equivalent is a requisite. There are other requirements as well, including age restrictions for those entering as chaplains (currently age 40 or below, but before the Global War on Terrorism, the age restriction was 35) and physical fitness expectations. With more candidates for the pastoral office coming through SMP or other alternate routes, as well as

more second-career men coming to the seminary at a later age, there are fewer young pastors qualified to serve as military chaplains.

By God's grace, the LCMS has a long, distinguished history of chaplain service in the military. This unique mission field has always had its challenges, particularly with respect to maintaining a faithful, confessional witness to Jesus Christ. The LCMS also has a long, distinguished history of supporting those who serve as chaplains in the military. I, for one, am deeply grateful for the support that I received from the LCMS during my years of military service. It is my hope and prayer that the LCMS continues this support. "Our mission is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities and the world."⁹

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¹ John C. Wohlrahe, Jr., "Danger Close – Mission Essential: The LCMS Military Chaplaincy," *Affirm* 14 (April 1990): 9-11; "Needed: A Paradigm Shift in Missouri's Mission Outlook," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 64 (April 2000): 149-154; "Man Down!," *The Lutheran Witness* 119 (May 2000): 12-15; "Service to God in the Military," *Higher Things* 2 (Winter 2002): 6-7; "A Lutheran Chaplain's Mission Field," *Luther Academy Lutheran Lecture Series*, Salem Lutheran Church, Taylorsville, NC, October 31, 2009. This does not include the numerous LCMS congregations, LWML Rallies, circuit and district pastoral events where I had the privilege to talk about the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces.

² "Reports of Chaplain F.W. Richmann in *Der Lutheraner*," translated by Thomas Manteufel, *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, 85 (Winter 2012): 33-37.

³ *Lutheran Annual* 2013, p. 21.

⁴ This is not really "civil" as it has often been identified because of a growing implicit intolerance for anything distinctively Christian, while being blatantly open to anything that is non-Christian.

⁵ Military life, undoubtedly because of the close proximity to danger and death, has always involved many aspects of religion, not only in providing regular worship services for members, but in almost all aspects of its ceremonial traditions: change of commands, retirements, commissionings, decommissionings, promotions, evening prayers at sea, etc. For a thoughtful presentation of the intersection of church and state consider the following:

www.intersectionofchurchandstate.

⁶ Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *Religion in America*, George C. Bedell, Leo Sandon, Jr., and Charles T. Wellborn, eds. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), pp. 23-32.

⁷ Because of the First Amendment guarantees afforded in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution, the government and those who serve therein cannot direct specifically how one is to pray, worship, or engage in religious discourse. There have been efforts to do so on the part of both the Air Force and Navy Chiefs of Chaplains, which were quickly reversed. However, one is strongly "encouraged" to avoid "giving offense" by introducing specific Christian references, to include mentioning Jesus Christ, the Triune God, and even the use of passages from the New Testament. These "encouragements" begin at the basic course for chaplains, which all chaplains must attend.

⁸ Interestingly, this pressure is most often exerted by senior chaplains on junior chaplains and not commanding officers on their assigned chaplains.

⁹ www.lcms.org/

How Fares Concordia?

The recession has weighed heavily on families, university boards, and governments as they have considered the cost and value of higher education in these financially troubled times.¹ Church-supported universities have felt the pinch as much, or more, than others. This fact is proven by the example of Concordia University-Ann Arbor, which "affiliated" in 2012 with Concordia University-Mequon in order to remain solvent.²

Some folks think that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (hereafter LCMS) shouldn't be involved in higher educa-

tion at all, or at least only to the extent to produce church workers. That was not the attitude of C.F.W. Walther, who wrote:

If we German Lutherans in America do not wish forever to play the role of "hewers of wood and drawers of water," as is said of the Gibeonites in Canaan (Joshua 9:21), but to contribute our share toward the general welfare of our new fatherland by means of the special talents which God has bestowed on us . . . we must also establish institutions above the level of our elementary schools . . . institutions that will equip our boys and young men for real proficiency in their occupations and business endeavors; for taking up any of the useful arts; for going into any of the professions; and for a capable, useful service in all kinds of public and civic positions; so that they may generally acquit themselves as thoroughly educated men in any calling or station of life.³

It should be noted that Walther thought that the purpose of LCMS church colleges was to serve German Lutheran youth. As late as 1905, President Francis Pieper could point with pride to the fact that 98% of the synod's elementary schools and colleges were bilingual in both German and English.⁴

How do the Concordia Universities fare today? This is a question that delegates at the 2013 synodical convention should ask, since there will be some significant resolutions dealing with both Lutheran identity and finances at those universities.⁵ We can look at this subject in terms of five attributes: doctrine, academics, finances, demographics, and the Concordia University System (hereafter CUS).

In the matter of **doctrine**, although I am not aware of any raving heretic rampant at a Concordia University, ignorance is not bliss. The synod elects Regents at its national convention in order to help ensure that LCMS doctrine is supported by university faculty and staff. Convention delegates need to pay close attention to these elections, to make sure that the Regents who are elected support the doctrine of our synod. Some resolutions at the convention will address this issue.⁶

The most important doctrinal decision that Regents face is the election of university presidents. In recent years, LCMS colleges have called presidents who have no graduate level theological training at an LCMS seminary, e.g., M.A. or M.Div. Half of the CUS university presidents today are not LCMS rostered clergy. The argument given by the colleges is that they need competent businessmen to lead colleges. That is true, but the main reason we have **Lutheran colleges** is so that **Lutheran theology and Lutheran perspectives**⁷ are taught there. How can the presidents supervise Lutheran theology and its related perspectives if they are not competent in Lutheran theology?

I know several very competent clergy who have both a master's level degree in divinity and at least a master's level degree in business. The Rev. Thomas K. Ries, recently-elected president of Concordia University-Saint Paul, and the Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy, Third Vice-President of the English District-Eastern Region, are two that come to mind immediately. I know there are more. I would think that CUS administrators would be keeping track of potential candidates among the LCMS clergy, and finding ways to get them

trained for this type of work with an M.B.A., or something similar. There is no excuse today for hiring a CUS university president who doesn't have graduate-level training at an LCMS seminary.

How are the CUS schools doing **academically**? *US News and World Report* (hereafter USNWR) has rankings which are based on academic prestige among educators and whose students have the highest academic

achievement. The rankings this year list all the CUS schools, because the intent of USNWR is to include all accredited four-year schools in their rankings or directory. The listings are classified as follows: National Universities, National Liberal Arts Colleges, Regional Universities in four regions, and Regional Colleges in four regions. All of our CUS schools are classified as either Regional Universities or Regional Colleges.

One special listing in the front of the USNWR publication for 2013 is titled "A Plus Schools for B Students."⁸ That listing includes two CUS schools, under "Regional Universities--Midwest." Those schools are CU-Seward and CU-Mequon. Our other CUS schools are not mentioned in that listing.

The 2013 USNWR rankings for the CUS "Regional Colleges" are (page numbers refer to *US News and World Report - Best Colleges Guidebook, 2013 Edition*):

- Bronxville (North region), 29th place out of 46 in the 1st tier (p. 103);
- Selma (South region), in "second tier" (p. 106);
- Ann Arbor (Midwest region), unranked (p. D-65).

The 2013 USNWR rankings for the CU "Regional Universities" are:

- Seward (Midwest region), 54th place out of 107, first tier (p. 94);
- Irvine (West region), 66th place out of 100, first tier (p. 100);
- Mequon (Midwest region), 70th place out of 107, first tier (p. 94);
- Chicago (Midwest region), 80th place out of 107, first tier (p. 96);
- St. Paul (Midwest region), 93rd place out of 107, first tier (p. 96);
- Portland (West region), in "second tier" (p. 101); and,
- Austin (West region), in "second tier" (p. 101).

A very useful tool for evaluating college academics has been made available online by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (hereafter ACTA). This online ranking is based on to what degree the institution has a solid "core curriculum" in seven required subjects: Composition, Literature, Foreign Language, U.S. Government or History, Economics, Mathematics, and Natural or Physical Science. Letter grades are given, from A to F, analogous to the common system of school grading of students.

For 2012-13, the ACTA website titled "What Will They Learn?"⁹ gives the following grades to the CUS schools:

CU-Irvine = B;	CU-Mequon = B;	CU-Seward = B;
CU-Saint Paul = B;	CU-Austin = B;	CU-Chicago = C;
CU-Portland = C.		

"...[should] synodical capital-asset-resources and donations...be benefitting non-Lutheran students to the same degree as Lutheran students[?]"

The CUS schools at Selma, Ann Arbor, and Bronxville were not evaluated. Valparaiso University, not part of the CUS but attended by many LCMS students, was given a "D" by the ACTA assessment.

How are the CUS schools doing **financially**? Overall, things are not looking great. The LCMS Treasurer noted in his official report to the synod that "When the Concordia University System (CUS) was formed, it was not specifically provided with any funding mechanism to allow it to accomplish the last of its goals (i.e., capitalizing the schools and the System)."¹¹ He also reported that in fiscal year 2012 "about 17% of all of Synod's unrestricted resources were 'granted' to CUS Inc. to pay the principal and interest due on this historic CUS debt."¹² The "Report and Recommendations of the 4-04A Task Force" rightly highlights the financial problems of the CUS and urges the synod to liquidate the "historic CUS debt."¹³ But delegates need to ask whether the recurrent cause of this debt is being addressed.

How are the CUS schools doing **demographically** in terms of enrollment? The *2013 Convention Workbook* reports a total enrollment of 29,597 students in the CUS for Fall 2012.¹³ It reports that of these students, 1,654 are in church vocations, which is 5.6% of the student population. It also reports that out of the total enrollment, there are 6,336 students who indicate that they are Lutheran. This is 21% of the population in those schools. For comparison's sake, in 1992 when the CUS was formed, total enrollment in the ten colleges was 10,167 students, with 2,367 of these in church vocations, which was 23% of the student population.¹⁴ In 1992, out of the total enrollment, 4,991 indicated they were Lutheran, which was 49% of the student population.¹⁵

What do these figures mean? The percentage of church vocation students and Lutheran students varies at each campus, which is to be expected considering the history of each campus and the percentage of Lutheran populations in the region which each campus serves. Overall there are more Lutherans attending the CUS schools in 2013 compared to 1992, but fewer church vocation students by 30%.

The **percentage** of Lutheran students and church vocations in the CUS population has declined significantly overall.

This raises the question of whether synodical capital-asset-resources and donations should be benefitting non-Lutheran students to the same degree as Lutheran students. This is especially a concern today when many church vocation students graduate with significant debt that they will not be able to repay without assistance, because the schools and congregations they will serve do not offer adequate salaries.

What about the CUS, i.e., the synod-wide corporate entity that is supposed to oversee all ten universities from the synodical offices in Saint Louis? According to the 1992 convention overture that created the CUS, it was established as a synod-wide corporate entity in order to address these serious problems:

- 1) financial difficulties;
- 2) overlapping responsibilities for fiscal affairs;
- 3) high fixed costs and rising costs of operations;
- 4) relatively low enrollment;
- 5) reduced federal aid for students; and,
- 6) the need to offer a variety of programs and services.¹⁶

In order to reduce the high fixed costs, the CUS intended to:

- 1) eliminate program duplication;
- 2) link the universities by technological means;
- 3) promote inter-institutional educational efforts.¹⁷

Other fiscal goals included:

- 4) reducing the debt burden of the universities;
- 5) increasing endowments; and
- 6) properly maintaining the buildings and facilities.¹⁸

To increase student enrollments, the CUS intended to:

- 7) step-up marketing efforts; and
- 8) augment scholarship assistance.¹⁹

In order to increase the quality of leadership at the schools, the CUS intended to offer training programs and financial encouragement for potential academic administrators and faculty.²⁰

In order to accomplish these goals, the CUS was organized with a board known as the Board of Higher Education (aka BHE; later the "Board for University Education," aka BUE) and the CUS Council of Members. The BHE/BUE was responsible for drafting and approving bylaws, recruitment, marketing, fund-raising, producing consolidated financial statements for borrowing purposes, extending lines of credit for individual schools, administering fund-drives for capital campaigns, planning and administering capital development, and the development and delivery of cooperative services.²¹ The CUS Council of Members was responsible for reviewing campus master plans, reviewing all policy, reviewing all cooperative services, approving bylaw changes in the CUS, and being an "ambassador" for the CUS.²² All of these duties were consolidated into the CUS Board of Directors in the 2010 general restructuring of the national synod offices.²³

How is the CUS doing in its assigned tasks today? In January 2013 the *Reporter* told the synod that CUS was being reorganized as "CUS 2.0 – a plan that would enhance the responsibilities of the CUS board and involve CUS presidents."²⁴ I could not find any reference to "CUS 2.0" in the *2013 Convention Workbook*, either in the report section²⁵ or in the overtures section, so I don't know if this reorganization is still in the works. Perhaps the most useful recent discussion about how the CUS is faring is the "Report and Recommendations: 4-04A Task Force, January 2013."²⁶ I encourage the synodical delegates to read that report in preparation for the convention.

In my opinion, the formation of the CUS in 1992 was a good thing and only made sense. Whether it has been **effective** in its implementation is a more difficult question to answer. We can agree that the LCMS needs Lutheran universities for church vocations and so that our Lutheran youth are not doomed to being "hewers of wood and drawers of water." How best to accomplish that will be debated at this summer's convention in Saint Louis.

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1 For recent discussions about U.S. higher education in general, see "Not what it used to be," *The Economist* 405 #8813 (December 1, 2012): 29-30; Laura Fitzpatrick, "Can Community Colleges Save the U.S. Economy?" *Time* 174#2 (July 20, 2009): 47-51; "Staying on board" *The Economist* 392 #8638 (July 4,

2009):65-67; Amanda Ripley, "College is Dead. Long Live College!" *Time* 180 #18 (October 29, 2012):33-41; Gene D. Block, "The Debt Crisis in Higher Ed," *Time* 180 #18 (October 29, 2012):44-51; Louis Menand, "Live and Learn: Why We Have College," *The New Yorker* 87 #16 (June 6, 2011):74-79; Andrew Ferguson, "The Book that Drove Them Crazy: Allan Bloom's 'Closing of the American Mind' 25 Years Later" *The Weekly Standard* 17 #29 (April 9 & 16, 2012):28-33; and Joseph Epstein, "Who Killed the Liberal Arts? And Why We Should Care" *The Weekly Standard* 18 #1 (September 17, 2012):23-29.

2 See Paula Schlueter Ross, "Parties pose 'creative solution' to save Ann Arbor," *Reporter* 38 #6 (June 2012):1 & 7; also <http://reporter.lcms.org/pages/page.asp?NavID=20023>, accessed April 30, 2013.

3 C.F.W. Walther, article in *Der Lutheraner* 22 (August 1, 1866):181; translated in August C. Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (Saint Louis: CPH, 1963), 113-114. See also C.F.W. Walther, article in *Der Lutheraner* 25 (October 1, 1868):17-19; translated in Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, 114-115.

4 See Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, 311-312.

5 One overture that addresses both Lutheran identity and finances is Overture 5 -01 (p. 207) in: *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures, 65th Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Saint Louis, Missouri, July 20-25, 2013* (hereafter *2013 Convention Workbook*) (Saint Louis, MO: LCMS, 2013). Other overtures that address aspects of Lutheran identity include: 5-02 (p. 207), 5-06 (p. 215-216), 5-12 (pp. 221-222), 5-14 (pp. 222-223), and 5-15 (p. 223). The *2013 Convention Workbook* is available online for free at: www.lcms.org/convention; accessed April 30, 2013.

6 See *2013 Convention Workbook*, Overtures 5-03 (pp. 207-208) and 5-06 (pp. 215-216).

7 For what I mean by the term "Lutheran perspectives," see my article: Martin R. Noland, "The Lutheran Mind and Its University" *LOGIA: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 17 #4 (Reformation 2008): 45-52. That issue of LOGIA is available for a small fee here: <http://www.shop.logia.org/17-4dl-Reformation-2008-electronic-download-17-4dl.htm> for download; and here: <http://www.shop.logia.org/17-4pdfCD-Reformation-2008-PDF-on-CD-17-4pdfCD.htm> on CD; accessed April 30, 2013. An excellent example of "Lutheran perspectives" in science can be found in: Angus J. L. Menuge, *Reading God's World: The Scientific Vocation* (St Louis: CPH, 2004).

8 *US News and World Report—Best Colleges Guidebook, 2013 Edition* (Washington D.C.: U.S. News and World Report L.P., 2013), 25-27.

9 See <http://www.whatwilltheylearn.com>; accessed April 30, 2013.

10 See "Official Notice: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Inc, Financial Position of the Synod (FY 2012)," *Reporter* 38 #11 (November 2012): 8. The same report was published in *Lutheran Witness* 131 #11 (November 2010): 24; also online at: <http://reporter.lcms.org/pages/rpage.asp?NavID=20511>; accessed April 30, 2013.

11 "Official Notice: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Inc, Financial Position of the Synod (FY 2012)," *Reporter* 38 #11 (November 2012): 8. Cf. Jerald C. Wulf, "How Can I Go?" *Lutheran Witness* 132 #9 (September 2012): 18-20, especially the pie chart on page 19.

12 See *2013 Convention Workbook*, Report 5-02 (pp. 98-99).

13 See *2013 Convention Workbook*, p. 89, for the three enrollment figures in this paragraph. The full report for the CUS is found on pp. 89-98 of the *2013 Convention Workbook*.

14 These figures are based on statistics reported in the *1992 Statistical Yearbook* (St Louis: LCMS, 1993), 12-13.

15 These figures are based on statistics reported in *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures, 58th Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Pittsburgh, PA, July 10-17, 1992* (hereafter *1992 Convention Workbook*), 118-119.

16 See *1992 Convention Workbook*, Overture 6-01 (p. 265). The convention adopted this overture in revised form as Resolution 6-04, see *Convention Proceedings, 58th Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Pittsburgh, PA, July 10-17, 1992*, 160-161.

17 See *1992 Convention Workbook*, p. 265.

18 See *1992 Convention Workbook*, p. 266.

19 See *1992 Convention Workbook*, p. 266.

20 See *1992 Convention Workbook*, p. 266.

21 See *1992 Convention Workbook*, p. 267.

22 See *1992 Convention Workbook*, p. 267.

23 See *Convention Proceedings, 64th Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Houston, TX, July 10-17, 2010* (St Louis: LCMS, 2010), Resolution 8-08A (pp. 161-163).

24 See Joe Isenhower Jr., "Synod Board endorses plans to strengthen CUS schools," *Reporter* 39 #1 (January 2013): 2; also online at: <http://blogs.lcms.org/2012/synod-board-endorses-plans-to-strengthen-cus-schools>; accessed April 30, 2013.

25 See *2013 Convention Workbook*, pp. 89-99.

26 See *2013 Convention Workbook*, pp. 98-99.



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