

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



Lutheran Concerns Association
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Political or Pastoral Viewpoint?

When President Kieschnick was elected to his first term in office in 2001, I was elected to the Synod's Board of Directors. Shortly thereafter, an event occurred which highlighted what appeared to me to be a sharp divide within Synod on doctrine and practice. Not knowing what the individual involved had done previously, I privately suggested to the President that perhaps he should request an apology and put the matter to rest. I did not know, and he did not disclose that he, as the individual's ecclesiastical supervisor, had given his prior approval to the action which had created the controversy. Only later did I learn why my simple solution was unacceptable to the President.

This controversy continued to escalate, and shortly thereafter it became a matter involving the Synod's Dispute Resolution. **One of the overarching principles of this reconciliation process was avoidance of publicity and the adversarial system practiced by society. President Kieschnick, who still had not disclosed his role in the event, and contrary to the reconciliation process, was publicly discussing and taking sides in the controversy.** Out of concern for the parties, the process, and the Synod, the Board of Directors adopted a resolution requesting all to refrain from publicizing this matter. However, President Kieschnick solicited an opinion of the Commission on Constitutional Matters, and quickly quashed this effort to allow the process to proceed decently and in good order. The President's action set in motion an adversarial relationship with the Board of Directors, which the President skillfully used to his advantage thereafter.

As the discord within the Church continued to mount, later in the triennium, I once again approached President Kieschnick privately with what I thought was a simple request: *Can you reach out, and be the President to the whole church?* His response was direct: *No, I can't. The people that support me think I am too lenient with you guys.*

Think about my question and his answer. I was asking the President to be pastoral, and his response was political. I was looking for a way to make peace, and he was looking for a way to maintain his political support.

But his response also invites further questions. Who are *his supporters?* Are they the people that he has appoint-

ed to a Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF)? *Are his supporters* those who wrote in the BRTF on Funding the Mission (July 2006): "We also recommend that **those members of this Synod that cannot embrace the convention**

See **Political** / p.2

President Kieschnick's Task Force Structure Proposals: *Now what do we do?*

The delegates to the 2010 Synodical Convention will be asked to make several decisions regarding the future structure of the Synod that could have long term and far reaching ramifications. President Kieschnick's Task Force on Structure has proposed significant Constitution and bylaw changes that, if adopted, would concentrate power in the President's Office, give extra voting influence to large congregations, increase Synod influence and control of the congregations, diminish the role of the congregation in the affairs of the Synod, and change the method by which convention delegates are elected. The general reaction across the Synod has not been positive.

It appears also that President Kieschnick's Task Force proposals go directly counter to recommendations of a "Confidential" Final Report of Bredholt & Co., a consulting firm paid several hundred thousand dollars to advise the Task Force. The Bredholt Report does not favor concentrating power in the President's Office. The Report concludes: "In our judgment, the centralization of function of the International Center seems to have little merit other than the surface appeal of the concept itself. It is also not

See **Now What?** / p.2

In this Issue of

The Lutheran Clarion

Political or Pastoral Viewpoint?	1
President's Proposals: Now what do we do?	1
Trashing Treasures or Treasuring the Word & Office ...	3
Women as College & University Presidents?	6
2010 Synodical Convention Voter's Guide	7
The Good Stewardship of Human Care Ministries	9

► **Political** | continued from p.1

mandated mission of our church should feel free to leave this fellowship with truth-filled integrity and find another association with whom they can partner?"

Are his supporters those who, in the Final Report of the BRTF on Structure and Governance (October 2009), recommend further consolidation of control and authority in the office and person of the President of Synod, and would diminish the role of pastors and of congregations? Or are his supporters those who the President appointed to the special floor committee to present those recommendations to the 2010 Synod Convention? And ultimately, what do these recommendations have to do with greater effectiveness in preaching the Gospel?

As a practical matter, **the President already controls most of what happens at the synodical convention.**

For example, he presides over the convention (Const. Art. XI (A) and (B), and controls almost every aspect of how it is conducted (Bylaw 3.1.9); he appoints the floor committees for the convention (Bylaw 3.17); he decides which matters will be accepted for presentation to and considered by the convention and published in the Convention Workbook (Bylaw 3.1.6.2(c) and Bylaw 3.1.8); and he even approves the draft of what appears in the Convention Proceedings before it is published by the Secretary of the Synod (Bylaw 3.3.1.3(h)).

In addition, the President already has the ability to control much of what the Synod does, through his authority over the officers, agencies, and program boards of Synod. For example, each chief executive and executive director is required to report on staff activities and recommendations, if the President so requests (Bylaw 1.4.6(d)). **Further, the chief executive or executive director of every agency of Synod or any synod-wide corporate entity can only be appointed with the concurrence of the President of Synod, and even interim appointments to those positions cannot occur unless approved by the President, nor can the interim continue beyond eighteen months without the concurrence of the President** (Bylaw 1.5.5.1). His concurrence is required for the appointment and re-appointment of the Synod's Chief Administrative Officer (Bylaw 3.4.3); and, he even gets to appoint the members of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (Bylaw 3.9.2.1.1).

President Kieschnick is, by his own admission a *bylaw guy*, but also by his own admission, he is not a *theologian*. The problem, as I see it, is that first and foremost, the President of Synod is required to supervise the doctrine taught and practiced in the Synod (Bylaw 3.3.1.1). **The Synod does not need, as ecclesiastical supervisor, a man who is more interested in maintaining his support through political maneuvering than he is in promoting concord. Nor does the Synod need a president who appoints supporters whose solutions to issues are go along or get out. Nor do we need to give the president more power.**

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod needs a president who has a pastor's heart, who is a theologian who will forthrightly engage the Church about the problems within our Church so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the pure grace afforded us through His death and resurrection, can be proclaimed throughout the world. It is time for a change.

David Hawk

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LCA Conference DVD's Available

DVDs of most of the superlative presentations at the Lutheran Concerns Association Conference held January 18, 2010, at Fort Wayne, IN, are expected to be available.

Requests for the DVD's should be sent to the LCA Secretary, Rev. Daniel Jastram, at the following address:

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► **Now What?** | continued from p.1

in keeping with the LCMS aversion to hierarchy." It further concludes: "In our judgment, based on the data, this is the wrong point of focus for change." Notwithstanding these conclusions of the highly-paid consultant, President Keischnick's Task Force has recommended dramatically increasing the power of the Synod President.

Bredholt also cautioned against giving larger congregations greater voting power: "If ever there were what politicians call a 'wedge issue' for the LCMS, this is it." President Keischnick's Task Force proposes going directly against this recommendation and pushing forward with this "wedge issue." Again the highly-paid consultant's recommendations were disregarded.

In its Report, Bredholt explains that "a case needs to be made for change." In other words, the members of the Synod do not see a need for such massive structural changes. The delegates will have to be sold on this idea. The Regional Gatherings were such an effort to sell the proposals of the Task Force. Undoubtedly, President Kieschnick's Floor Committee 8 will do the same in the resolutions it submits and during the first two days of the Convention.

President Kieschnick, through his Task Force, the Regional Meetings, his Floor Committee, and convention resolutions is working hard to sell the Synod on the new structure. And he will continue to do so while presiding during the hearings the first two days of the convention.

Resisting a high pressure sale is often difficult for convention delegates. But that is what should be done with the structure changes being proposed. And that is what several districts, circuits, and multiple congregations have urged in overtures (8-02 through 8-35) printed in the Convention Workbook. There are several options available to the delegates.

One option is for the delegates simply to vote down the resolutions submitted by Floor Committee 8. Defeating the resolutions is simple and direct. All it takes is a 50% vote for bylaw changes and even less than that for Constitution changes. If no other viable options develop, this is what the delegates should do. The proposed structure changes will not be good for the Synod, so it would be best not to adopt them. Most in the Synod agree some structure changes should be made, but not the changes proposed by President Kieschnick. My mother used to say, "Anything worth doing, is worth doing right." That is good advice for the Synod when it comes to structure.

"...the delegates must not allow themselves to be lured into some of the procedural maneuvering that took place at the last three Synodical Conventions."

But there are other options. Several districts, circuit forums, and congregations have recommended delaying consideration of the structure changes until the 2013 Synod Convention. This is a good alternative. What is the rush? The Task Force took over four years studying the issues. Shouldn't the members of the Synod be given the same opportunity? It has become increasingly apparent that the proposed structure changes will not accomplish what President Kieschnick claims. Further study will allow modifications that can better accomplish what is best for the Synod.

Another option is to refer the structure changes to a new committee for a "second opinion." Any one who is recommended to have significant surgery will at least consider obtaining a second opinion. We as Synod can do the same. We refer the structure changes to a new group for further study and a second opinion. This is a good option, particularly considering that President Keischnick's Task Force does not follow opinions of its own highly-paid consultant.

Whatever option selected, **the delegates must not allow themselves to be lured into some of the procedural maneuvering that took place at the last three Synodical Conventions.** These include early "calling the question" to cut off debate, last-minute significant changes by the Floor Committee, inordinate additional time given to the Floor Committee members to sell the proposals, comments from the Chair, and last-minute changes to the agenda. Whatever option the delegates select, it is important they are given the opportunity to make a fully in-

formed decision. If discussion and debate are stifled, it is best to avoid a mistake and vote no.

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Trashing Treasures or Treasuring the Word and Office of Holy Ministry

Any reasonably informed congregant in our Synod knows the high value Synod and congregants have placed on maintaining two orthodox residential seminaries and on well trained pastors. Synod and congregants must unequivocally be committed to maintaining their two seminaries as residential seminaries and the source of their pastors. Just as there is treasure in clay jars (2 Cor. 4:7), so is there treasure in our seminaries.

You may ask, "Why is this even mentioned?" If you care enough to send the best greeting card (Thank you, HALL-MARK.) surely you care more about having orthodox, well trained pastors. You must become concerned about what some in Synod have written or said recently regarding our treasured seminaries. It's bad news! It's time to wake up!

In LUTHERAN FORUM, Winter 2009, Rev. Paul Robert Sauer, citing the closing of a small parochial school asserted "...it may be time to close one of the seminaries of the LCMS though our history would tell us otherwise..." He also cited the infamous 1989 Wichita Resolution of Synod that licensed lay ministers for word and sacrament ministry in some circumstances, Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO) and the 2007 Houston Resolution establishing the Specific Ministry Program (SMP), an increasing number of congregations that are marginal in their ability to fund a full-time pastor and quoted St. Louis Seminary President Meyer as stating that 40% of its then current student body was

 **Our two seminaries trace their roots back to 1839 and 1844."**

made up by these nonresidential, nontraditional students. He said rumblings of closing one seminary had been heard for at least a decade and that one was Ft. Wayne. However he suggested a different possibility, namely St. Louis, because it has a higher value than Ft. Wayne. Then he proposed combining the faculties. Laity know there is no rational analogy between closing a seminary and closing a small parochial school for there is a vast difference between a small parochial school and a graduate school.

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Move to the 2009 Ohio District Convention where a Synodical Vice President suggested that neither seminary is needed for theological education of our pastors could be provided by our Concordia Universities. Our Concordia Universities have shown no real interest in training pastors. Nor can they begin to replicate the competence and expertise of our seminary professors or the library resources of the seminaries.

Also, examine the Spring 2009 CONCORDIA JOURNAL where Concordia Seminary President Meyer discussed that seminary and stated: "Personally, I don't see how we can continue to sustain two seminary campuses in the Midwest if current demographics, membership losses, and giving patterns continue. But combining the schools is not the answer. At the other extreme, some say we should increase the number of seminaries, dispersing the present faculties throughout the country so that we might be closer to areas outside the Midwest. But these smaller regional seminaries could never benefit the church in the way our two large seminaries do, and you need to know that in the world of ATS [Association of Theological Schools] our seminaries are large and strong..." Such thinking sadly fails to display a high and needed value of the Word and pastoral office.

Think next on the PASTORAL SUMMIT TWO held at Fort Wayne on November 4-5, 2009, where some of the attendees were Synodical President Kieschnick, the Boards of Regents, the Board for Pastoral Education, the seminary presidents etc. There were breakout groups that met. Group 7 included Rev. J. Braunersreuther, Synodical Vice President Buegler, Southeast District President Diefenthaler, Mr. Mike Louis, Rev. J. Pragman and Y. Mengsteab. It is said that Group 7 came back with a suggestion that both seminaries be sold and the money placed in an endowment to pay for pastoral formation that would take place through the Concordia University System. Reportedly, Group 7 also recommended:

1. Creation of a special task force to revise bylaws that consolidate governance of both seminaries into one group that reports to the Synod in Convention;
2. The Board for Pastoral Education should commission an assessment of the physical properties of the current two seminaries including appraisals of market values, deed restrictions, deferred maintenance etc.;
3. Identify five CUS institutions with the greatest potential for strong partnerships/satellites; and,
4. Create an endowment to support pastoral formation and theological education, determine what portion of the sale proceeds would be used for this endowment and determine what portion of the sale proceeds would be appropriate to reinvest in capital infrastructures--both in one central location and in satellite campuses.

Notwithstanding Group 7's suggestions, the Summit attendees as a group supported retention of two seminaries. Face it, closure talk alone can produce problems such as affecting giving and enrollment.

Is your stomach still not churning? Go to Appendix 5 to the Final Report of the President Kieschnick appointed Blue Ribbon Task Force on Structure and Governance. At page 5.3, paragraph 3., the following appears: "Much of our task force's early discussion centered on the potential duplication that exists in our current synodical structure. The following is a direct quote from the FMTF [Funding The Mission Task Force] recommendations: 'Questions rose as to how many seminaries we need. Are two the right number? Should there be only one? Or should there be four or five? And how should they be structured?'"

The Concordia Seminary Board of Regents sought a meeting with President Kieschnick which was held on December 2, 2009. On December 15, 2009, Concordia Seminary President Dale Meyer issued a statement:

"In recent months speculation concerning the possible sale of one or both of the LCMS seminary campuses has taken place in public and private forums. This speculation has proven detrimental to the mission of our seminaries. The seminaries of our Synod are very important and highly valued institutions that cannot be closed, consolidated, relocated or sold without action by the Synod in convention. Such convention action would most certainly not occur unless preceded by broad consensus from Synod and seminary leaders, including the Board for Pastoral Education, Board of Directors, seminary boards of regents, and Council of Presidents. As responsible leaders, we wish to state clearly and publicly that such consensus is not under discussion and there is no plan or proposal being considered in any of the groups with which we are associated to sell one or both of the LCMS seminary campuses."

As the majority of the participants at the recent Pastoral Ministry Summit concluded, the LCMS seminaries should continue to serve as the hubs for theological education in

Will You Help Your Synod at a Time Such as This?

The time for our Synodical Convention in Houston is nearly upon us! All the critical decisions which will be made by the delegates attending the convention will either be decided by those who are well-informed regarding the issues before the convention or by those who really don't know about them. **The Lutheran Clarion** has been a voice for biblical, Confessional theology for which our Reformation and Synodical "Fathers" stood. Will you assist us to help every delegate be informed so that we do not lose our "Grandfather's Synod"?

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the LCMS. We desire that the speculation referenced above would end and that all in our Synod would continue to support our seminaries in Fort Wayne and St. Louis with prayer, prospective student referrals, and monetary offerings." Signatories were: Gerald Kieschnick, Donald Muchow, John Behrendt, James Ralls, Wayne Graumann, Larry Stoterau, Glen Thomas, Dale Meyer and Dean Wenthe. This December 2, 2009, statement is good news but follow through is a requirement.

Think! The December statement tells us what we already know from Synod's HANDBOOK about school closings. Do you remember that Concordia Oakland, CA; St. John's, Winfield, KS and St. Paul's, Concordia, MO were closed by Synodical Convention action? And President Kieschnick's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Structure and Governance would eliminate the Board for Pastoral Education and centralize power in the office of the Synodical president. Then think how this same Task Force would reconstitute the Synod's Board of Directors and that in 2007 the Synod materially changed Boards of Regents by adding four regents to such Boards who get chosen not by the Convention but by the Boards of Regents.

Analogize the noted meetings and attendees to similar actions by a government or a corporation and ask if in the real world a vice president publicly postulates major proposals without first checking with his superior or getting his approval.

Look back to the 1989 Synodical Convention at Wichita where lay ministers were approved followed by Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO) and ultimately Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) at Houston in 2007. Read Resolution 5-01B of Houston and you'll see there are now two classes of pastors and limitations on the one category which even has an asterisk on the name for we now have a regular route pastor without limitations and a Specific Ministry Pastor with limitations. God placed such a high value on the soul that His only Son suffered and died to redeem it...something we need to keep in front of us when we recruit, train, certify and place our pastors. If cancer is discovered, will I seek a doctor trained by distance learning or a doctor who went to a well-recognized medical school? The soul has far greater value plus eternal life. We proclaim the Good News of the Gospel and the Law as well. Certainly, every congregant should fully expect his pastor to be thoroughly trained in Exegetical, Systematic and Historical Theology as well as in the Lutheran Confessions and be proficient in Greek, Hebrew and Latin etc. We must disabuse ourselves of the concept of every person a "minister" or that a "Bible College" type pastor is to be produced by the Synod. Remember your Catechism and "What does this mean?"

Look at Holy Scripture. There was hands-on-training of those who proclaimed the Word. Christ said, "Feed my sheep." A "good" shepherd needs to be able to distinguish good food from bad and that is learned from training that is thorough, intense and appropriate. If congregants

in the Synod carefully reflect, they will not permit certification of ill-equipped men for the Office of Holy Ministry regardless of goals of any Synodical administration. They will insist on keeping both of their seminaries as their residential seminaries and their source of pastors.

Our two seminaries trace their roots back to 1839 (St. Louis) and 1844 (Ft. Wayne). In the context of St. Louis, simply remember the 1960-s-1970's including the walkout of 1974. In SEMINARY IN CRISIS, Dr. Paul A. Zimmerman addressed lessons for the present AND the future. He is dead-center on target when he states:

"The first lesson is that the Church must have good leadership and its leaders must be willing to take action without paralyzing delays or simply hoping the problem will go away without any decisive action being taken..." "The second lesson is that we must continue to produce educated graduates..." "The third lesson is that **there is an absolute need of two seminaries to serve the synod.** Diversity is a fundamental principle in investing one's resources...The existence of a sister seminary was a great blessing for the church." (Emphasis supplied.) "The fourth lesson is one stressed by synodical President Preus during and after the Seminex crisis. He often spoke of the solid backing by the laity of the Synod that he received. This support for pure doctrine certainly had its roots in the thorough training in the Scriptures and Luther's Catechism that the laity had received..." "The fifth and by far the most important lesson is that the Church can always depend on the guidance and blessings of our gracious God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Examine our Synod's constitution, Article III, 3. where one objective is stated as, "Recruit and train pastors, teachers and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth." Early on Synod had the correct emphasis. In the Ft. Wayne FACEBOOK of 2008-2009, President Wenthe stated: "An early Rabbinic saying suggests that it was necessary for the student to live

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Six Interviews on the Blue Ribbon Task Force Proposals

Issues, Etc. interviewed Dr. Ken Schurb six times about the Blue Ribbon Task Force proposals. You can listen to the interviews at www.issuesetc.org. Click [Listen] then [On Demand / Archives]. In the search box on the right enter "Schurb" and you can find and listen to each of the six interviews. If you prefer to read the interviews they are at the same web site in PDF format. The interviews took place between August 2008 and November 2009.

If you have access to the Fall 2009 (Vol 82, No 3) issue of *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, you can also read Dr. Schurb's article "**The Service of Women in Congregational Offices 1969 to 2007**," page 147. Dr. Schurb states that his paper "...has a modest aim: to show that the Synod's theological position concerning women in the church actually changed in 2004, and to sketch the contours of this change..."

with the teacher. Why? So that the students can see the lived-out reality of the teaching in the life of the teacher. The disciple not only heard the truth in Christ's teaching, but they were privileged to see what the perfect and God-pleasing life looked like. They saw truth before their eyes. Morning, noon and night-day after day- they beheld in word and deed the life of God's Son."

Looking back at America AFTER Seminec, think of the conflict of the Southern Baptist Conference. One national weekly news magazine noted that the Southern Baptists were discovering what the Missouri Synod discovered in the 1970's, namely, that **as its seminaries go, so will the church body of which those seminaries are a part.** Ever hear of the divinity schools of Harvard, Yale, Princeton etc.? What do they represent today contrasted to when they began?

Let each of us constantly recognize that maintaining seminaries has a cost. In 1969-70, Ft. Wayne got 55.0% and St. Louis 62.5% of their Educational and General Expense from corporate Synod; in 1989-90 it had fallen to 38.1% and 32.1% respectively or in dollars, \$2,630,045 and \$1,127,039. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, Ft. Wayne had a budget of approximately \$11,782,000 and St. Louis \$18,166,000. Corporate Synod will provide Ft. Wayne about \$280,000 and St. Louis about \$350,000. With a vastly depreciated dollar today, each seminary receives direct from Synod less than 3% of its budget. When that consistently occurs, what might that say about how Missouri officialdom values its seminaries? Praise God that private donors are keeping the seminaries afloat. Significantly, one anonymous donor each year for a period of years has well exceeded in giving to each seminary what corporate Synod has given. Synod as a Synod needs to do much more. Also note that thinking corporate Synod will save significant dollars by closing one or both seminaries is simply not true.

It is time for Missourians to face facts and get on their knees praying to God that HIS church and SYNOD will realize what is really involved in perpetuating a well trained clergy, that congregants do NOT fall for bureaucratic lingo about affordability of two residential seminaries and that **the Word of God and the Office of Holy Ministry will not be marginalized.** Tell your acquaintances what is going on and that it is time to reinforce and build up the seminaries---not talk about consolidation or much less, closure and that DELTO and SMP need to be terminated.

Mr. Walter Dissen

Served 12 years on the Board of Regents of St. Louis, 12 years on the Board of Regents of Ft. Wayne and 12 years on Synod's Commission of Appeals. He is a retired corporate attorney.



Should Women Be Eligible to Serve as LCMS College and University Presidents?

The LCMS Board for University Education thinks they should. This Board is submitting to the forthcoming Synodical Convention a memorial to delete the present Synodical Bylaw describing the nature, function, and authority of LCMS college and university presidents (Bylaw 3.8.3.7 – Pages 150-152 of the 2007 Handbook). In its stead the Board for University Education is proposing a short, less detailed version which, among other things, authorizes the selection of a woman to be president of a Synodical college or university.

There are strong reasons for rejecting this overture in its entirety and preserving the present wording which has served well over the years. First of all it should be observed that the reasons submitted for making the change are weak and faulty. The Board states that the present Bylaw reflects an era when the colleges enrolled only a few hundred students. However the record indicates that some of Synod's colleges enjoyed sizeable enrollments for many years. For example, The 1983 Convention Workbook of the Synod reported that Concordia College, River Forest, Illinois enrolled 1,803 students and Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska enrolled 1,218. It is true that some of Synod's universities are larger today. But for decades presidents have delegated responsibilities and functioned in a manner no different than what is required today.

A more serious problem presented by the proposed change in the Bylaw is that the Board for University Education proposes that the language which presently indicates that the president "shall serve as the spiritual, academic, and administrative head of the institution" and other similar phrases be deleted and supplanted by the weak sentence "The president ensures that spiritual care is provided to the campus community." The Board for University Education then concludes that since the president is not "directly responsible for carrying out the official functions of the pastoral office" there is no reason why the president could not be a woman.

In fact the spiritual care aspect of the president's office is much more than seeing to it that there are chapel services and spiritual counseling available to the students. The spiritual intent and purpose should be first and foremost in engaging any faculty member and considering course content. When evolution, theistic evolution and the higher-critical method of biblical interpretation become virtually endemic in so-called Christian higher education a president who is a man trained and dedicated to Lutheran theology indeed **is** a necessity and not an option. The current Bylaw specifying presidential duties lists spiritual headship before academic or administrative headship and this is not merely a titular heading. Unlike other institutions of higher education our schools operate with spiritual intent and purpose. The Synod might ask itself why it

would even bother to operate these schools and invest resources in them if they have no spiritual purpose.

Over the years our colleges and universities have taught the Word of God in class, chapel, devotional life, and extra-curricular activities. The teaching of other subjects also needs to be integrated with God's word. It would be a tragedy to lose this blessing! A man trained in and dedicated to Lutheran theology is a necessity.

The overture of the Board for University Education should be rejected by the delegates at the forthcoming LCMS convention!



The 2010 Synodical Convention: A Voter's Guide

Being a delegate to a Synodical convention is a great privilege to strengthen and shape our Synod's future, but it can be a daunting challenge! First, there is the virtual mountain of materials for the diligent delegate to review prior to traveling to Houston. If I might plagiarize the motto of the Boy Scouts of America, "Be Prepared!"

Keep in mind, everything you've read in the *Convention Workbook*, while helpful as a reference during the convention, is essentially pre-empted by the publication of *Today's Business* (the first edition of which you should receive shortly prior to the convention), in which the convention floor committees (all appointed by the Synodical President), present, combine, condense, or discard (by means of omnibus resolutions to decline consideration of many of the submitted overtures) all the memorials printed in the *Workbook*.

There is the challenge of just being at the convention! It is a grueling eight day sit! It is also a good time to be prepared for last minute parliamentary maneuvers by the convention floor committees which also determine when their committee presents a resolution to the convention. You'll quickly discover that some of the more controversial matters will be put off until the last minute so that convention-weary delegates will just pass them to "get the business done."

There is also the challenge of being a delegate at one of the most watershed conventions our Synod has ever held! Despite denials to the contrary, our Synod is on the cusp of a real division. At this convention, we will discover whether that division will actually take place or whether the battle to keep our Synod faithful to its theological and historical roots will continue for a while longer. There has never been a more important time in the last two decades to be a delegate to the Synodical convention of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod!

What follows is a brief list of suggestions for delegates to consider if they wish to retain the theology, practice, and

traditions of our Synod. **This is a guide for retaining our Grandfather's Church.**

The Elections:

We believe that a change in leadership is now essential to retaining our Synod as a truly Confessional Lutheran church body. Therefore we recommend for the praesidium the following candidates who will work to retain our faith and heritage:

President of the Synod:

Rev. Matthew Harrison, St Louis, MO

First Vice President:

Rev. Herbert Mueller, Waterloo, IL

Other Synodical Vice Presidents:

Rev. Dr. John Wohlrabe of Geneseo, IL

Rev. Daniel Preus, St. Louis, MO

Rev. Dr. David Adams, St. Louis, MO

Rev. Dr. Scott Murray, Houston, TX

Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz, St. Louis, MO

The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synodical Structure and Governance:

What is being put forward as "streamlining," "clarifying," "cost-saving" and "amplifying" is actually a wholesale abandonment of our previous way of working together as God's people. If passed, the BRTFSSG proposals will radically and likely permanently change the relationship between member congregations, and pastors of the LCMS will lose many of their rights while the corporate Synod will issue directives to the congregations instead of being "advisory" as in the past. We have been told that if we do not ratify these proposals, that there is an impending financial crisis that essentially could destroy the Synod and that if we do not make these radical changes that the mission of saving souls for Christ will be ignored. Neither of these things are actually true. **The BRTFSSG proposals need to be completely and entirely defeated!**

Other Critical Matters of Concern:

1. Worship

For several years now a certain faction of our Synod has put forward the idea that the biblical, historic liturgical worship of our Lutheran Church has become a detriment to evangelism. In order to enhance our outreach toward unbelievers, some have attempted to accommodate our worship to the expectations of the unbelieving world. Unfortunately, the result of these efforts has only succeeded in making our worship more worldly. In reality, we need not be ashamed of whom we are as Lutherans, nor do we need to apologize for our liturgical worship which has stood the test of time since the Old Testament days. As a result of such worship conflicts many LCMS congregations have been divided over this issue regarding the primary function of the Church which ought to be uniting us for doing our work together. All the Church does flows from our worship and if we are divided in our worship, then division cascades to all other tasks of the Church.

Watch for any and all resolutions to the convention which seek to open up our worship to more and more diversity in worship “styles” no matter how much language is employed about being faithful to our Lutheran theology at the same time. Frankly, that faithfulness has not worked out in reality in many, many cases. What our Synod needs is what was originally desired by our Synodical founding fathers: **We need to strive for uniformity in our worship, not more diversity!**

2. Congregational Property

Since its inception, the LCMS has made it very clear in its Constitution that membership in the Synod gives no equity in the property of any member congregation. Watch out for any overt or subtle change in language or in any action taken by the Synod which infringes on that principle.

3. Women’s Role In the Church

Since the Feminist movement of the 1960’s the Synod has slowly, incrementally taken our Synod farther and farther down the feminist path toward greater and greater involvement of women in what were formerly pastoral duties to which pastors alone are exclusively called. In our past there would never have been women serving as Elders, congregational presidents and vice presidents, nor would women have engaged in the public proclamation of God’s Word as many female lectors now do, and never would women have been participating in the public administration of the Lord’s Supper by assisting the pastor in the distribution of the elements as now happens.

Watch for any resolutions coming to the convention floor which seek the advancement of the next incremental “step” toward the unbiblical goal of women’s ordination. Notice that memorials sent to the Synod seeking the correction of the already existing errors in this matter may not be permitted to be considered on the floor. Support any move to actually address these issues so that those charged with ecclesiastical supervision over those who support such unbiblical goals will do their rightful job.

4. Beware of the “We’ve been working hard on these proposals and you need to trust the brothers and sisters who’ve done such good work.” line of argument.

Proposals need to be judged on their own merits, not on blind trust in those who are often very selectively appointed to bring proposals forward. Lots of people work very hard on all kinds of things that are dead wrong!

Judge each and every resolution, recommendation, and proposal only on their own merits and ask yourself if what is being proposed:

- a. Helps retain our “bottom-up” congregational church polity,

- b. Seeks to decentralize political power rather than promote centralization into fewer and fewer hands,
 - c. Defends pure doctrine and the right administration of the sacraments, and
 - d. Seeks to conform the structure of the Synod to the biblical model of Pastor + People = The Church.
- Using these four criteria will certainly go a long way toward sifting through the many papers and speeches you will receive and hear at a Synodical convention.

5. Finally, beware of an erroneous definition of “Missions” and its misuse in order to justify radical change in our Synod.

The Church’s mission is NOT making disciples nor giving a faithful witness at some “critical event”! As wonderful as these things are they are the result of the Church doing her rightful mission, not the mission itself! **What is the mission of the Church? It is to proclaim the Word of God in all its truth and purity and to administer the Sacraments in accord with Christ’s institution.** This is precisely what our Lord tells us in Matthew 28:19-20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, [how?] baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (ESV - Emphasis added.) Word (teaching) and Sacrament (baptizing) are the mission of the Church and result in making disciples which is what God does, not us!

Many proposals to completely restructure our Synod on the rationale that we need to put mission first are forgetting that we need to get the Gospel message straight before we get it out! Doctrine and missions do not oppose each other, but complement each other. Proposals which seek to restructure our Synod should be based as they are in the current LCMS Constitution:

- “1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith...” and then,
- “2. Strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God...” (Article III – Objectives of the Synod)

Here the order is right and so is the theology. What comes first is important!

May the Lord bless all your efforts to be faithful delegates to our Synod’s Convention!

Rev. Richard A. Bolland, Senior Pastor
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Kansas City, MO



The Good Stewardship of our Synod's Human Care Ministries

Since 2004 I have served on the Board for Human Care Ministries. This is one of the program boards of the Synod along with the Board of World Missions. These boards consist of members either elected by the Synod convention or appointed by the Synod Board of Directors. The program boards set the policies for and provide oversight of the activities of their respective departments.

Speaking from my experience with the Board for Human Care, there have been changes in the make up of the board during that time but every board member has contributed to the success of Human Care Ministries and supported the staff in the day to day activities of Human Care and World Relief. The Board provides perspectives from various parts of the synod and from various backgrounds.

One of the most significant roles the Board plays is to be the watchdog for proper stewardship of the funds Human Care Ministries receives. Every year the Board and staff develop and approve a budget. This budget is also submitted to the Synod Board of Directors for approval. In addition to the annual operating budget for normal ongoing human care programs, we also manage and disburse disaster relief funds during times of national and international disasters. These funds are significant and in a time of a large international or national disaster such as Hurricane Katrina or the Tsunami that hit Sri Lanka and Indonesia, the funds the staff and board administer can double or triple the operating budget in a single year.

Human Care Ministries adheres to the accounting and internal control policies and procedures of the Synod as well as adopting its own specific policies and procedures for the proper stewardship of the funds that God has entrusted us with. One of the concerns the Board of any charitable organization should monitor is the amount that is spent on administration versus the amount spent on the actual programs of the organization. We monitor our administration and fundraising costs by comparing them to the recommended levels from the Charities Review Council and the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance. Additionally, Human Care Ministries has been audited by the Synods Internal Audit Department twice in the last four or five

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years. While the auditors have made recommendations for improvements in procedures, no significant issues have been raised.

Human Care Ministries receives 100% of its funding from churches and members through God's guidance. No Synod dollars are provided to Human Care Ministries. When contributions are received they may be designated for a specific purpose such as disaster relief for the Haitian Earthquake or they may be designated for the general support of Human Care Ministries. These funds can only be used for Human Care or the purpose the donor has designated. These funds cannot be transferred to the general funds of Synod.

In any organization, the philosophy, ethics, stewardship of resources, and the direction are driven by the example of the leaders at the top of the organization. Rev. Matthew Harrison is the executive Director of LCMS Human Care Ministries. In the past nine years he has taken the organization from one that primarily raised money and passed it through to other inter-Lutheran agencies to one that has built internal capacity to respond to national and international disasters, provide self-help assistance to our partner churches around the world, and better address human care needs within our church itself. The work of Human Care Ministries is accomplished by the staff led by Matt Harrison through God's guidance. Working with the Staff for the past six years has demonstrated to me the stewardship of the God given resources with which we are entrusted.

John Edson, CPA/ABV, CMA, CVA, CFF
Partner – Blanski, Peter, Kronlage & Zook, Minneapolis, MN
Vice Chairman, Board for Human Care Ministries (2004-2010)

Thank You

To our Faithful Supporters

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

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