

# The LUTHERAN CLARION



Lutheran Concerns Association  
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## Issues & Overtures for the 2013 Convention

LCMS Synodical President Emeritus Dr. Robert T. Kuhn prepared the following paper for the January 21, 2013, Conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The following are comments on subjects, issues, or matters that could, may, or might be considered by the delegates at the 65th convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in July, 2013. The exact direction a resolution may take at the convention will not be known until after the Floor Committees meet in May. Only subject matter is known at this time.

**CLOSE (CLOSED) COMMUNION.** During the 20 plus years that I had the privilege of serving as a parish pastor, in all the areas of doctrine or practice, I probably received more questions, and there seemed to be confusion, about the subject of Baptism. A subject on which our church has never, to my knowledge, changed its teaching or position, seemed to cause many questions from our people. Seems quite simple: apply water in the name of the Trinity; faith is started in the individual; forgiveness is real.

As a Synod meeting in convention I would venture an estimate that the same could be said of the subject of Close (closed) Communion. Perhaps not always did the matter get to the floor of the convention, but memorials in support of, or in opposition to, or questions concerning, seem to be a subject that many individuals like to keep before the church either to affirm the position or to raise doubt. The former is really unnecessary; it is written. The latter is improper.

I have personally never taught the concept that the communion rail is "closed" under any and all circumstances, without exception, to anyone who is not a "card carrying member of a congregation of the LCMS." Close communion places a great responsibility on the pastor, because he is a "steward of the mysteries of God." Excuses have been offered such as: "I don't like to judge anyone," or "this congregation is too large to handle such a practice." I don't find either of those excuses in the Scripture, but St. Paul does write of pastoral responsibility.

Is this a relatively new practice, or one peculiar to the LCMS since 1847? Hardly! Martin Luther wrote (St. L., XI, 615): ***"So Christ has done; the preaching (of the Gospel) He permitted to go to everyone in a heap, as afterwards also the apostles did, so that all heard it whether they were believers or unbelievers ... so also we must do. But we should not cast the Sacrament among the people in a heap. If I preach the Gospel, I do not know whom it strikes, but here I must be sure that it has struck him who goes to the Sacrament. So I must not be in doubt, but know assuredly that he to whom I give the Sacrament has***

***comprehended the Gospel and rightly believes.***" After listing this quote, J. T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, adds: ***"The doctrine of close communion must be maintained not only against the Reformed sects, but also against Lutheran errorists."*** (I know quoting J.T. Mueller dates me, but "in my day" we read, studied, and were tested on it.)

So, I ask the first Lutheran Question: What does (all) this mean? Close communion has been the practice in the LCMS. It has been taught in dogmatics and pastoral theology to its seminarians and pastors have taught it to God's people since the 1840's. It has been affirmed more than once by the LCMS in convention. Most important, it is in accord with the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and thus not contrary to them. I'm kind of an ordinary, some would say "simple," thinking individual, but on this subject: "That should be the end of it!" This is the practice of the LCMS. Some pastors and congregations choose a different path, but close communion is the practice of the LCMS.

**NEED FOR BETTER PASTORAL FORMATION.** Not having the opportunity to know the direction of thought on the part of the maker of the suggestion of a need for better pastoral formation, leaves the direction of discussion and comment wide open. From previous conventions I recall some of the thoughts expressed were that graduates need to be better equipped in the area of evangelism, or stewardship, or ability to relate to people, or... and the list could go on and on and on. The point of view of the critic or the specific needs in one location or another skews the thinking and suggestion of the comment or memorial maker. Subjectivity replaces objectivity; or putting it in another way, my point of view affects what I see.

Seminary education or training does not and cannot provide 100% of whatever any and every graduate will need in the specific ministry to which he will be called. During the years I had the privilege of serving on the Board of Regents of the seminary here in Ft. Wayne, I recall a wise administrator saying more than once that the seminary cannot teach everything a pastor ultimately will need to know, but it trains its graduates to learn how to think. In pastoral ministry think about the need or situation, evaluate it, and then think how to resolve it, or know where to go to get the necessary assistance to learn how to resolve it. Can the seminary provide a course of exe-

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getical study of every book of the Bible? Obviously, no! Can the seminary provide training for every possible situation that could occur in the area of pastoral care? Again, no!

Can the seminary provide training in the setting of a budget, or accounting, or boiler repair, or diagnosing illness? Are you kidding! (A bit facetious!) But, again, depending on circumstance, situation, or personalities, the graduate of the seminary can be looked at, evaluated, or even judged and determined to be ill-equipped because he can't do "all things well." The seminaries are then directed by a convention resolution that they need to add more courses to the required curriculum. Three years on a campus and one year of "on the job training" (vicarage), is the absolute maximum of training time. We cannot require more of students.

Since the fall in the Garden of Eden, perfection has been gone—even with pastors, and when there is a bad marriage between shepherd and sheep in a segment of the flock of Christ, the ministry suffers and there is setback in the Kingdom of God. We are imperfect people living in an imperfect world commissioned by a perfect God Who rightly expects perfection. Many thanks to Him for forgiveness through His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ—even for pastors for not being completely omniscient.

Could the product of the seminaries be improved? Yes, improvement is always possible.

Does time move forward? Not many clocks run backward. We can't do everything the same old way. Do circumstances in the lives of people change? Indeed. Our seminaries are some of the best in the world. Our seminary graduates need to be the best that can be produced. Guide the personnel of the seminaries, Lord, to continue to equip Your shepherds to be servants and leaders, and move the sheep to follow the shepherd you have respectively provided for them.

**SPECIFIC PASTORAL MINISTRY PASTORS.** The Specific Ministry Pastor concept and program are still very new in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Approval was granted for the program to move forward at the 2007 convention (Res. 5-01 b). When General Motors, or Chrysler, or Ford have a new vehicle on the drawing board and approval by the proper authority is received to move forward, by the time that vehicle is finally prototyped, tested, placed in production, further testing, and representatives trained, if some (many) feel it was not a wise decision to produce the vehicle, it takes quite some time before the decision ultimately is made to cease production and sales.

The SMP program has had supporters and detractors. Once again, where one stands affects what he sees. For some it is the "greatest thing since sliced bread;" while for others it is a program that should have never been started, and the sooner it ceases, the better.

At this juncture I am really neither a staunch supporter nor a detractor. I can see pros and cons. However, I do strongly feel that the program has not been in operation long enough to make an honest evaluation; the products are in the very early part of their history of serving the church; and, from what I hear, in many cases the new of-

fice is truly a blessing to the church and the local need, and to others the scale tips heavily to the negative.

When God created the world He used six days of time with His omnipotence and omniscience before He looked over the entire creation and declared it was very good. We are God's people in the church, but we are far from being omniscient or perfect. After six years I think we are not in a proper position to say in reference to SMP that it is "very good," nor to conclude that it is so bad and harmful it should be stopped. The seminaries have endorsed it and the convention has approved it. At least for now we need to move forward with it.

There are limitations placed on the individuals who hold and serve in this office in the church. I will not review them at this time; I don't think that is the purpose of our giving it consideration at this meeting. You can find them in the Proceedings of the 2010 convention and, especially, the 2007 convention.

With that said I am given to understand that, as with most temporal matters, including the church, there are and can be abuses. In many cases the matter of cost of personnel influences the decision in calling an SMP pastor or a seminary graduate. In the years when I had the privilege of serving as district president I would always personally meet with calling

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congregations for a pre-call meeting. I wanted the congregation to know about procedure and be comfortable in the calling process. There was always much time for questions and answers. In almost every case except if it were a large congregation calling an administrative pastor, the question would be asked: "What about a vicar? It would cost us much less."

Most probably an SMP pastor will receive a smaller salary than an M.Div. graduate or a pastor called from the field; however, the real question should be: which type would be the best possible candidate for the needs and circumstances of the location? Success in ministry is not determined by salary, but it can be affected by preparation and experience.

From my point of view the most positive part of the SMP program is that it is under the influence, direction, and supervision of the seminaries. Each individual district does not determine and develop its own deacon program. The seminaries have been charged by the church with the responsibility of training its pastors. Let's let the seminaries carry out the responsibility given to them.

Evaluate the entire SMP program? Indeed! Measuring instruments are beneficial in all programs. Encourage men to be a part of it if they have special or peculiar circumstances? Certainly! Should congregations consider calling an SMP if needs and circumstances indicate doing so and if all phases of pastoral ministry in that place will be satisfied? Of course!

It is the Lord's church. His full time servants should be the best prepared and equipped for wherever they serve the

sheep of His pasture.

**INCREASE SYNOD SUPPORT FOR SEMINARIES.** The direction of such resolutions usually are for financial purposes, not merely having a positive feeling toward the seminaries, being positive in speaking about them, and refraining from suggesting the closure of either of them. There was a time, probably as recent as the 1960's, when the greatest percentage of support for the annual budgets of the seminaries came through the budget of the Synod which was supported in turn through districts supported primarily from Sunday morning offerings in local congregations. When I started seminary training in 1959 tuition (then referred to as fees) was about \$750 for the quarter. Inflation and cost of operation has caused the entire scene to change. I think it unnecessary for our purposes here to break down the sources of funding for the operation of the seminaries today.

This type of memorial and ultimate resolution, however seems to come to the floor of almost every convention I have attended since the 1970's (and probably before that). The makers of both memorial and resolution are sincerely concerned about these institutions where full-time pastors are trained. One cannot criticize their intent. However, with responsibility of the budget of the entire work of the Synod, it is most probably not realistic for officers and leaders of the Synod to be able to fulfill the intent of the resolution.

District support to the national church budget has been declining for many years and continues to decline. Non-designated giving has given way to designated giving by God's people. It is far from correct to think, much less say, that God's people are not supporting the church and thus the Synod. God's people are still supporting, but they are choosing how and where their offerings are to be used. Designated gifts must be used for donor designated needs and cannot be used as those with financial responsibility choose. The Board of Directors of both the districts and the Synod can decide on and approve a budget for their respective area of responsibility where undesignated gifts are concerned, but not so with designated gifts and offerings. Designated gifts must be used as the donor stipulates.

So, once again, the first Lutheran question applies: "What does this mean?" Our subject in this section is support for the seminaries. The convention may pass an "apple pie and Chevrolet" resolution directing more support for the seminaries. If the Treasurer and Board of Directors have fewer undesignated dollars each year than in the previous year, even well-meaning resolutions of the Synod in convention cannot be fulfilled. Intentions are only desires; receipts are real.

If a resolution from the convention directs the Board of Directors to provide more support for one particular part of the budget, e.g., the seminaries, it would be very helpful if the same resolution, in keeping with the bylaws, would also direct which particular part(s) should be shorted to make up the difference. Suggestions and recommendations allow the finance people and the Board of Directors to make budget decisions within their charged responsibilities. A direction from the convention requires it be followed; but sometimes the convention delegates do not know the "rest of the story." Sound, well-meaning intentions many times create problems

for officers to carry out total responsibilities.

**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM.** One of the many treasures and crown jewels of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is the Concordia University System. Few church bodies have as many post high school institutions, and even fewer have what we in the LCMS refer to as being a system. Our system is not perfect; it was not created directly by God. But what we know of today as the entire system of colleges, universities, and seminaries, has over the years trained and provided many workers for the church and trained many in a variety of other disciplines. It exists and functions at the envy of others.

As with all things designed and maintained by human beings, nothing is so good that it cannot be improved in any way. Positive critiquing and evaluating can lead the church to making even better that which is good. With that said I would be so bold as to suggest that the Synod in convention direct the President to appoint a Task Force to study the whole Concordia University System and make a report and recommendations to the President, to the CUS Board of Directors and if necessary, to the Synod at the 2016 convention. (A task force normally reports on its findings, but unless specifically given, has no authority to take action.) Depending on what information the delegates may choose to request or how the President may be led, some directives to the Task Force, among many others, could be:

- 1) Determine if all of the locations are maintaining a true Lutheran identity. The term "Lutheran" in the name of the institution should not just indicate its history, but true identity of what it is now.
- 2) Determine if there is a strong influence, encouragement, and thrust to produce full-time church workers which was the original intent of our colleges.
- 3) Determine if the respective disciplines prepare the graduates to be readily "marketable" and able to be competitive in the "market place" as they seek jobs and positions following graduation.

**We Need Your Help:  
The Lutheran Clarion to Publish  
Monthly March—July 2013**



With the March 2013 issue, **The Lutheran Clarion** begins monthly publication leading up to the 2013 LCMS Synodical convention. In order to address the wide range of issues and concerns facing the upcoming convention, it is necessary to increase the publication frequency from bi-monthly to monthly.

Whereas in a non-convention year we would have published four issues in the January to July time frame, in this convention year we will publish six issues. This means, of course, our costs of publication and mailing will increase proportionately. Accordingly, we would ask, you our readers, to increase your donations in support of this convention-year effort.

Please send checks to:  
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The Synod has carried what is known as the "CUS Debt" for many years, going back to the 1970's and perhaps even before that. Other than include payment and interest in the annual budget, we have done nothing intentional to liquidate it. That debt was down to about \$17 million until the recent merger of Concordia, Ann Arbor, and Concordia, Mequon. Now it is about \$19 million. The cost of servicing that debt, payment and interest, is about \$2.25 million annually which, of course, comes out of undesignated funds. That is an operating cost each year before we can decide to do any requested work as a Synod. With the continuing decline in district remittances to national Synod, it would seem expedient to take the necessary action to free up this annual payment for such an old debt. Special fund drives have been decided and authorized before for a whole variety purposes. Liquidating a debt seems not to be exciting when individual and familial credit card debt is totally out of control; however, the wisdom of the church to be continually operating with major debt servicing to the detriment of doing other ministry must be questioned. A special effort seems wise!

**FILLING VACANCIES BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**

The filling of vacancies that occur in the elected church structure is referred to in Bylaw 3.2.5 where we read:

"Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, vacancies that occur on elected boards or commissions of the Synod shall be filled by the Board of Directors of the Synod.

- (a) The Secretary of the Synod...
- (b) A list of at least three but no more than five candidates...
- (c) This list shall be determined by the chairman and two members of the Committee for Convention Nominations of the Synod as determined by the committee. The Synod's Director of Human Resources shall be consulted in developing the candidate list...
- (d) The appointing board may not amend the list of candidates."

While not having seen the memorial I would assume that the encouraged change is in reference to section (c), restricting the Board of Directors to work with only the list of nominees that come from the three members of the Nominating Committee.

Having served on the Board of Directors for a number of years I have experienced quite a number of these necessitated appointments being made. Obviously the appointment is only to fill the years or time left in the unexpired term, nothing beyond that.

Again, although I have not seen the "whereas" parts of the memorial or recommendation, I would consider it to be very beneficial. At the time that the appointment is to be made the circumstance and/or need of the respective position can vary or change from what it was at the time of the meetings of the Nominating Committee prior to the convention. Information discussed and shared at that time by the full committee can well no longer be applicable or current at the time of the appointment. For the members of the Board of Directors to be restricted to only the names coming from the small number of three (compared to the number of the entire committee) has been binding and imprudent. The delegates to

*Thank You*  
**Balance-Concord, Inc.**



Balance-Concord, Inc., has been a most faithful contributor to *The Lutheran Clarion* in honor of the sainted **Rev. Raymond Mueller** and the sainted **Rev. Edgar Rehwaldt**, both of whom faithfully served the Synod and Balance-Concord, Inc., for many years.

*The Clarion* is most appreciative of such continued support from Balance-Concord, Inc., as well as the wonderful support of our readers. These contributions make it possible to bring you substantive articles by respected and qualified authors on issues affecting YOUR Synod. Please continue your support. It is both appreciated and needed.

the convention do have the opportunity to amend the lists of nominees at the time of the respective election. Currently the members of the Board of Directors, acting on behalf and in place of the delegates to the convention do not have that opportunity or privilege.

While there is the possibility of abuse in the system, and in trying to prevent that more than one group is involved in the process, so there is the possibility of abuse in the procedure as currently outlined and followed. The most important part in any election or appointment to an office is not to guard against the possibility of abuse, but to strive to place the best qualified individual in the position to serve the Lord and His church.

My experience with the members of the Board of Directors is to do just that. Accepting and trusting the guidance of the Lord, the task is accomplished. His wisdom is not always recognized immediately, but over time it is revealed.

**ENTITIES OF THE SYNOD AND PARTNER CHURCHES.**

By the grace of God the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been brought into partnership with churches throughout the world. Some of those partnerships came into existence after LCMS missionaries to distant lands shared the Word, proclaimed the Gospel, taught the people, and helped develop an indigenous church in that particular part of the world. As that church developed, grew, and went about the work of the Lord it became a partner of the LCMS, not a mission or daughter church of the LCMS.

In other cases existing church bodies, some even older than the LCMS, sought out the LCMS, or vice versa, and after doctrinal discussions, recommendations were made to the respective conventions to declare "Pulpit and Altar Fellowship" between the two. Thus, that church body and the LCMS have become partners. The administrative and mission leaders of the bodies developed and adopted Protocol Agreements indicating how they would relate to each other and how they could work together. One must be very cognizant in this type of relationship; there are differences in cultures, and what may or might be acceptable and/or proper in one, may not be so in the other. The matter of understanding is key and critical.

When people of a partner church refer to the LCMS they

think in terms of the church body, not the individual parts or individual persons. When some entity or part of the LCMS chooses to and does some type of work in one of these other cultures and indicates to the people they represent the LCMS, the thought is that these people are "official" representatives of the LCMS. Good intentions lead to great misunderstandings! It really is not fair to these other cultures for someone to function for, or in behalf of, the LCMS unless the person(s) sent is/are properly qualified to represent the LCMS. If an individual works in another culture totally on his/her own, that is one thing; but it is quite different to indicate he/she is from the LCMS.

Over the years difficult and embarrassing situations have developed because of parts of the LCMS not following the protocol agreements with other partners throughout the world. We are well aware of the chaos that develops if/when an individual chooses to not obey traffic laws and drive as he/she chooses. So also chaos develops between churches when an entity of one church (e.g. the LCMS), chooses to establish, set up, or develop ministry in another culture as a "part of" the LCMS without those having the responsibility for partner relations knowing anything about it. In the United States where there are many cultures, adaptability occurs and is accepted. In other parts of the world, the same is not true.

As parts of the LCMS we owe it to the church and to each other to function as we have agreed to do so.

In conclusion, the foregoing is only a "snap shot" of what will be discussed and considered in St. Louis in July. Brother Rossow will discuss other issues. Did you note on the agenda his part was listed as "Hot Button Synod Issues." Mine was the "drab" part. My intent was to help you begin thinking in a convention mode and look forward to our forth-coming convention.

To God be all the glory—because the LCMS is a part of His church and you and I, having been chosen by Him, are privileged to be His people.

**President Emeritus, Dr. Robert T. Kuhn**

Chairman, LCMS Board of Directors  
Oviedo, Florida



## What Does the Approaching Synodical Convention Mean for the Local Parish?

*Rev. Dr. Timothy Rossow gave the following presentation at the LCA Conference on January 21, 2013, in Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

### INTRODUCTION

You hear it from both sides, confessional and church-growthers, synod is irrelevant. That would mean that the approaching convention means little or nothing for the local parish. Walther thinks otherwise. In his essay titled *The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation Independent of the*

*State*, Walther lists the six duties of the church.<sup>1</sup> Both the fifth one, "the synodical principal duty" and the sixth one, "the kingdom growth duty," list multiple Scriptures that talk about how no congregation is an island and that all are accountable to join with other right-teaching parishes.

Call it what you will, "synod," "district," "diocese," etc., some sort of expressed unity of right-teaching churches is Scriptural. As founder and editor of The Brothers of John the Steadfast (BJS) organization and blog, and in my work as a church consultant, I have had an unexpected look to see behind the scenes of several parishes and two LCMS administrations and I am here to tell you that I could be first in line to trash synod. But the fact of the matter is, some form of walking together is Scriptural and so the local congregation needs to take an interest in synodical matters.

I can get as frustrated as the next guy but we need to take some solace in the fact that in Matt Harrison we have what may be the best thing going in St. Louis for one, two, or even three and more generations. That's not to say that we may still need a realignment in confessional Lutheranism that makes for a new synod (we seem to be good at doing that), but either way, Scripture and Walther say we need to live together as orthodox parishes.

### I. NO CONGREGATION IS AN ISLAND - DETAILED SUPPORT FROM WALTHER'S PROPER FORM

Here is Walther's duty five:

10. It is the duty of the congregation to be diligent "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" also with all parts of the orthodox Church, Eph. 4:3; 1 Thess. 4:9,10; Rom. 15:26, 27; 2 Cor. 8:19.

*[4:1] I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, [3] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3 ESV)*

Here is his duty six:

11. It is also incumbent upon the congregation to do its part in building up and promoting the welfare of the Church at large. Amos 6:6; Acts 11:21-23 ("Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch," etc.); 15:18.

Here is one of the explanatory paragraphs for duty five:

53. As every true Ev. Lutheran local congregation has the same public confessions of faith with the entire Ev. Lutheran Church, so it should also give all diligence to be one with it in point of life and to "speak the same thing, in the same mind, and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. 1:10.

*[10] I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10 ESV)*

One of the dozens of Scripture that Walther quotes is the 1 Peter 5 text on oversight.

*[5:1] So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: [2] shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under*

*compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; [3] not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:1-3 ESV)*

This last Scripture quote is key. It reminds us of the duty to do the thing that we confessionals find most lacking in the church—oversight. But it also speaks of “the flock among you,” referring to the other congregations beyond Peter’s congregation. So, the flock is bigger than just my flock and we need to walk in synod with those from other right-teaching flocks.

Walther speaks very directly about how congregations are to walk together. Here is some more from duty five:

59. In grave cases a congregation should seek the advice of one or several sister congregations and, when asked for such advice, be ready to give it according to its ability. cf. Acts 15.

*[7] To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7 ESV)*

So according to Walther walking together is necessary so we might as well be prepared for the big steps that will be taken this summer and try to make them as confessional as possible. The LCA deserves a nod of thanks from us all for providing this forum.

## II. SPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS AND HOW THEY AFFECT THE LOCAL PARISH

The troubling issues of the LCMS are often summarized as matters of *Wine, Women and Song* (communion fellowship, the role of women and worship). Taking the pulse of the upcoming convention, I think we need to re-sketch that cartoon and add a few characters. I think it is shaping up these days to be more like *Wine, Women, Waiters, Missionaries and Song* (communion fellowship, the role of women, the office of the ministry, i.e. the stewards/waiters of the mysteries of God, the definition of mission and worship). Reverend Kuhn has covered some significant wine and waiter issues—so I will focus on women, mission, and song but I may throw in a thing or two about wine and waiters as well.

These are issues that we know from history and from a perusal of the synodical landscape, that will likely be submitted as resolutions and if our handicapping is off, should be submitted by you and your congregation. It always helps to double and triple up on resolution submission. It gives the floor committee more authority and confidence to bring good resolutions to the floor.

### WOMEN

The role of women in the LCMS for the last ten years or so has been like the proverbial frog in the kettle. In my church consulting travels and in my work with Brothers of John the Steadfast web site (<http://steadfastlutherans.org>), I run into all sorts of interesting things out there. I was in an LCMS congregation recently where a woman introduced herself as a “deacon.” That was startling enough but then I discovered that she assists with communion. Just last week someone sent me a link to an LCMS parish in the Southeastern District that has a woman preaching and whose Senior Pastor is mysteriously not listed in the LCMS roster as the pastor of the church and the Associate Pastor is not rostered.

For these and other serious reasons, Resolution 3-08A, approved by the convention in 2004, which allowed women to serve in any office in the church including chair and elder, which is the poster child for the frog in the kettle syndrome on this matter, will most likely come to the floor again in an attempt to reverse it.

By the way, speaking of the convention floor and the floor committees that serve there, President Harrison, as you may know, gets to appoint those committees. This is huge. This will help guarantee that decent resolutions will be entertained and that the resolutions that make it to the floor will be substantive and confessional. Sadly, the cat is already out of the bag on this one. If it is overturned, it will require firm oversight and church discipline to get a congregation to retire its women elders and chairwoman. Lord have mercy!

Our review of the quintuplets of *Wine, Women, Waiters, Missionaries and Song* leads us next to *Missionaries*.

### MISSIONARIES

There is a lot of equivocating going on with the word “missions” in the LCMS these days. I can hardly even bring myself to vocalize that new made up word called “missional.”

The solution to the mission mish mash is rather easy. We simply need to put the “missionary” back into mission. When I was growing up the word mission was only used to describe the work overseas of administering the means of grace, which of course was referring to “missionaries.” (There was that nasty little experiment with the “Mission Life” Sunday School curriculum but thankfully that was a blip on the radar screen.)

One of the many problems that needs to be addressed is that in the Kieschnick years the notion of mission was so broadened that it came to be almost meaningless and the meaning it did find was in all the wrong places—*The Purpose Driven Life*, *missional* as a buzz word for outreach at all costs, and the term *leadership* replacing the notion of vocation. (It is no longer enough now for everyone to be a minister but now it is “everyone is a leader, i.e. a courageous and bold minister.”)

The mission equivocation mess will also most likely result in resolutions to curtail or even eradicate the various revitalization programs such as TCN (Transforming Churches Network). I was shocked to learn that TCN is a Recognized Service Organization of the Synod. Our friend and moderator Scott Diekmann has written much by way of critique of TCN. In a few words, TCN lives and breathes the language and notions of the culture and not of the church and the Scriptures. They speak of a “safe zone” where pastors can learn how to be a leader and an agent of change. (Of course we all know, the safe zone is intended to protect them from us mean and narrow-minded confessionals and the occasional, stray, rogue, laymen in their congregations who reads BJS.) They speak of “inspiring worship, community outreach, empowered leaders and vision casting.” None of those are Scriptural ways of talking.

There will be plenty of resolutions on mission no matter how you parse the word—from the highest, most abstract level supporting the mission construct of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* (which has affected our parish directly since we have

patterned the work of our three pastors after these themes), all the way to the need for increasing the number of ordained missionaries. The notion of missions affects the local parish seriously in the LCMS. As the synod thinks about the mission, or role of the local parish, so think many of the middle of the road congregations. The mushy middle will follow the leader. That's the beauty of the bully pulpit. We need to support the "Mustached Bully" in St. Louis by sending his floor committees some good memorials on missions.

The mission field of resolutions for 2013 should also include orthodox resolutions encouraging church plants, the nature of missionary work and the like. Please have your congregation or circuit or pastoral region write and submit such.

Next up on *Wine, Women, Waiters, Missionaries and Song* is the *Song* of the Church.

### SONG

Where does one start with the worship wars in the LCMS. They affect the local parish because people will jump from parish to parish until they find the worship style they like whether it is good for them or not. I left my worship experiments behind 20 years ago through the *anfechtung* (trial) of undesired consequences. I thought I was above the errors that might come with contemporary worship so I earned the trust of the lay leaders and started a contemporary service in one of the most conservative congregations in synod—Emmanuel, Dearborn, Michigan. But then all of the sudden charismatics started popping up in the congregation, like little whitehead zits, and they started bringing their friends. Oops! Until others have those same trials—and many practitioners of contemporary worship would not recognize them as trials, we will be stuck with those in our midst who think worship is a matter of touching the heart with the latest pop fads.

The place I would explore as a possible solution is another example of the frog in the kettle. Over the years, the old line in the synod constitution about using exclusively synodically approved worship materials has been slowly eroded to now say "encourage congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice"<sup>2</sup> and "exclusive use of doctrinally pure hymnbooks..."<sup>3</sup> Unless we specifically spell out what hymnbooks are allowable, we will never address this matter sufficiently.

### WINE AND WAITERS

I must say a word about wine and those who wait upon us with the wine. These issues not only affect the local parish, they plague them.

The SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) waiters are really not what they are claimed to be. They are not specific. They were supposed to arise from need in specific situations where there was no one to wait the tables with the Lord's body and blood but instead, they have simply become a small army of technocrats that can be moved wherever and whenever two or more district presidents gather in the Lord's name.

Say what you will doctrinally about the SMP program, which would be about half what you could say doctrinally about a Master of Divinity student, the program just does not pass the logic smell test. Why do we want to confuse the synod

on what a pastor is? Once you have said that there are two different sets of components with which to build the same thing and then you call them the same thing, you have lost touch with reality. To put it another way, let's use the image of the waiter. One of the finer things in life is being waited upon by an experienced, dressed-in-classic-black-and-white, waiter at a fine steak house like Smith and Wollensky, Ruth's Chris or Chicago's own Morton's. It is such a far cry from the gum-snapping teeny bopper who waits on you at the corner malt shop. Training, experience, knowledge, wisdom and a whole lot of ritual is the difference. Certainly the body and blood of the Lord at His Supper are worthy of being served up by the experienced, dressed-in-classic-black-and-white, waiter.

And speaking of the supper, it is not ya'll come, but is re-served for the family members who can discern the body and the blood. It will help all parishes if as a whole, the synod in convention can approve some clear and firm rules about closing the rail—such as a requirement in all bulletins that those not confirmed in the LCMS must speak to the pastor.

### CONCLUSION

Wine, Women, Waiters, Missionaries and Song—it will be a heavy duty convention. We have won the presidency. Now it is time to secure the platform on these five fronts and then some.<sup>4</sup>

### Rev. Dr. Timothy A. Rossow

Senior Pastor, Bethany Lutheran Church, Naperville, Illinois

- 1 If you get nothing else out of this presentation than to order Walther's *Proper Form...* from CPH or download it online at <http://www.lutherquest.org/walther/articles/cfw00005.htm>, it will be a successful presentation.
- 2 Handbook of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, 2010, Article III, Objective 7, p. 14.
- 3 *Ibid*, p. Article IV, 4, p. 15.
- 4 We have not said anything about elections. It is crucial that we win the St. Louis seminary Board of Regents and our share of the regional presidencies as well as all boards and offices.

### A Foreign Mission Effort Worthy of Your Support

Once again, *Clarion* readers are encouraged to provide financial support for a worthy endeavor. Rev. Jeffrey Horn, a CTS graduate who served Zion Lutheran Church in Garrett, Indiana, from 2003-2012, and his wife Lora, will serve the Lord in Papua, New Guinea, as missionaries. Rev. Horn will teach at Timothy Lutheran Seminary and will look for ways to strengthen the education there.



There is one catch: While the LCMS is willing to "send" him and his family, it is up to Rev. Horn himself to raise the funds. Funding of \$164,000 is needed. [Rev. Dr. William Weinrich of CTS endorses this most worthy project.]

Pilgrim Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Bend, Wisconsin, through its Horizon Fund, will match the first \$500 received.

*Clarion* readers, please send checks payable to:

**Lutheran Concerns Association**  
1320 Hartford Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55116-1623

Mark the memo line of your check "New Guinea Mission Project." LCA will see to it the funds are mailed in and specifically earmarked for the mission of Rev. Jeffrey Horn.

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Faithful Lutheran individuals who are members of LCMS congregations are invited to submit articles of approximately 500 words for consideration. Inquiries are welcome. Manuscripts will be edited. Please send to: Mr. Walter Dissen

509 Las Gaviotas Blvd, Chesapeake, VA 23322  
(757-436-2049; wdissen@aol.com)

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