

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



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

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How Confessional Congregations Can Call Traditional Pastors Even if their District Presidents Don't Like It

What's a Confessional/traditional congregation to do if they want to call a faithful, Confessional/traditional pastor? Many do not know that it is common practice with many LCMS district presidents to withhold information from congregations who specifically request information on specific pastors even though such actions are unbiblical intrusions into the process of issuing a divine call. If a congregation requests information on any specific pastor in good standing with The LCMS, the district president is obligated to provide the information which is sought. The LCMS' Constitution says it clearly enough:

"In relationship to its members the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation's right of self-government it is but an advisory body. Accordingly, no resolution of the Synod imposing any thing upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears to be inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned." (Article VII – Relation of the Synod to Its Members)

Sadly, sometimes requested information is withheld because some pastors are intent on being traditional Lutheran pastors! This means that they believe in:

- preaching solid Law-Gospel sermons.
- providing thorough instruction in the faith to both adults and youth.
- conducting the public worship of the congregation in accord with our Lutheran liturgies.
- refusing to participate in joint worship with those with whom we are not in publicly declared altar and pulpit fellowship.
- celebrating the Lord's Supper with the correct and biblical practice of closed communion (that is full doctrinal agreement in all articles of doctrine).

- teaching His people not only the truth of God's Word but also the errors of those who pretend to teach the truth in other denominations.
- understanding that the real mission of the Church is to teach the Word of God in all its truth and purity and to administer the Sacraments in accord with our Lord's institution and that the fulfillment of the "Great Commission" is what God does in response to the Church's doing of her mission.
- trusting God's appointed means of grace to accomplish the mission of the Church.
- understanding that faithfulness in preaching and teaching God's Word and the right administration of the Sacraments are the standards of "success," not necessarily numerical growth in every time and in every place.
- understanding that there is only one divinely appointed office of pastor and that while all believers are in God's royal priesthood, they do

Why would district presidents do such a thing? Because many desire pastors who are mistakenly described as being more "missional."

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not participate in the duties of the office of the pastor.

- teaching that there are specific biblical roles for men and women in accord with the Order of Creation in Holy Scripture and that in the public worship of a congregation and in the home that order should not be usurped.

Why would district presidents do such a thing? Because many desire pastors who are mistakenly described as being more “missional.” What is a missional pastor? These are pastors who:

- might preach “relevant” sermons on “how to” live like Christians often devoid of Gospel content.
- might prefer to be more “inclusive” and more “accepting” or “welcoming” to strangers at the communion rail and so may welcome those who do not agree with Lutheran doctrine in every article of our faith.
- might prefer to conduct “contemporary” or “blended” worship services rather than, or along side with, the historic liturgies of the Church.
- might shorten (even to an afternoon class or two) adult instruction in the faith.
- might believe that numerical growth is somehow a “mark” of the Church which should happen in every place and at every time, even if some doctrinal compromise is necessary to bring it about.
- might seek out opportunities to take part in some community joint worship events if they can be termed “civic” events.
- might like to use women in reading the lessons, or in the distribution of the Sacramental elements, despite the fact that this is the public proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacrament, which is the role of those pastors who are called for that purpose. (They might also think it is acceptable to have women serve as elders, congregational presidents or vice presidents even though this would necessitate the exercise of women having spiritual authority over men.)
- might well avoid saying that other denominations teach error in Bible classes or in sermons.
- might well avoid any discussion of the biblical role of women in the Church in accord with the Order of Creation.
- might well believe that the means of grace are in need of assistance from proper marketing techniques, or better technology if they are to be more “effective.”
- might well be more concerned with “keeping

people happy and peaceful” than with maintaining pure doctrine.

Some district presidents believe that those pastors in the first group above are a detriment to numerical growth and the accompanying increase in financial support which might come with larger numbers and hence discourage calling traditional pastors by withholding their Personal Information Form or PIF from congregations requesting their information. (See *The Lutheran Clarion*, July 2009 Issue, “The Strange Evaluation of Pastors.”)

So how can a traditional Lutheran congregation call a traditional Lutheran pastor if they don’t receive the cooperation of their district president? A few things to keep in mind:

1. The district president is only advisory to the congregation. They are not to select the pastor for the congregation and should not screen-out pastors whose information has been requested, but may only make suggestions and offer evaluations. Anything beyond these efforts is an unbiblical intrusion into the divine call.
2. If a district president refuses to release or obtain information on a requested pastor, the congregation has the right, (and perhaps even the obligation) to request information directly from the pastor in question. (Each pastor usually has completed a Self-Evaluation Tool or SET form. It is strongly recommended that every traditional pastor retain a copy of his own SET form in an MS Word, Word Perfect or PDF format for his own use and/or distribution.)
3. If a district president refuses to send or obtain information on a specific pastor, the congregation has the right to inquire as to the reason for his actions. (If he does not provide a reason, then the congregation should inquire of such information from the pastor himself.)
4. If a district president’s evaluation or PIF form is provided and the pastor is described in such terms as, “rigid” or “inflexible” or as “less evangelical,” it is more than likely that this is a pastor who is strictly liturgical and firm in his doctrine and practice. That is a good thing! (Once again, inquire directly of the pastor in question.)
5. If a pastor’s information is not provided or sounds negative, consult a trusted Confessional pastor from his area as to the pastor’s character and performance. (Ask a traditional pastor in your own area who he might recommend if you are not aware of who to ask.)

- 6. Understand that no district president can “order” a congregation not to call someone or to call someone! (I repeat, the Synod is only advisory to the congregation.)
- 7. If a congregation is concerned about being able to obtain names of good, solid, traditional Lutheran pastors, they should inquire of other traditional pastors they do know to obtain such names.
- 8. The congregation has a right to call whom it chooses to call as the Holy Spirit guides them through the call process.

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How we Lost Lutheran Education in the Missouri Synod

The perennial question for Lutherans is to what extent they should assimilate into the dominant religious culture. That is the issue for Lutheran theology, and it is also the issue for Lutheran education.

The Reformation and education went hand in hand. The Renaissance classical curriculum of the University of Wittenberg stressed the revival of the Greek language and going back to the original sources. This led to Luther’s fresh study of the ultimate original source, the Bible, which became the basis of the Reformation.

Since all Christians—laity as well as clergy, peasants as well as nobles, women as well as men— needed to

read God’s Word and since most of the population was illiterate, the Reformers opened schools. These were more than Bible reading schools. At Luther’s request, Philipp Melanchthon, one of the greatest Renaissance scholars, devised a classical education for everyone.

Melanchthon invented a special institution to train leaders for the church and the state. The “Gymnasium” offered a six-year program in the liberal arts (from the Latin word for “freedom,” designed to equip free citi-

“...in recent decades, the postmodern version of progressive education—which sees truth and morality as relative—undermines what children learn in their religion class.”

Retaining the Church of Our Grandfathers Requires Your Help!

It is clear that The LCMS is in very deep trouble today. Our Synod’s financial footing is bleeding red ink, our time-tested governance structures are about to be abandoned, our pastoral formation is being compromised, our God-given theology and practice are being jettisoned by many, and we are quickly becoming unrecognizable as a truly Lutheran church body. These are perilous times for the Lutheran faith in this nation!

It is only the solid, Lutheran pastors and laymen who (by God’s grace), can act to stop the degradation of our Synod. That takes both the distribution of good information, the election of truly Lutheran delegates to our next Synodical Convention, and it takes funding to make those things happen.

Would you please prayerfully consider the financial support of the Lutheran Concerns Association so that the pride we once rightly held for our faithful Synod can again be ours? Will you tell others about *The Lutheran Clarion* and give us U.S.P.S. mailing addresses so that this important information can get into the hands of our Lutheran people?

Please send your mailing address to: richardabolland@yahoo.com to place a new address on our mailing list.

Please send your tax-deductable donation to the Lutheran Concerns Association at:

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zens as opposed to the job-oriented “servile arts” given to slaves). At the conclusion of these six years, the graduate would go to university. The Gymnasium survives to this day in modern Germany, which sends students with the highest test scores to a Gymnasium, with the rest channeled into vocational high schools.

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This kind of classical education would be challenged, though, with the Enlightenment—which made scientific rationalism the only kind of truth—and the invention of the Prussian University model, which, by reducing all knowledge to scientific specializations required even theology to be “scientific.” One of its inventors was Friedrich Schleiermacher, the father of liberal theology, the champion of the higher criticism of Scripture, and the theological instigator of the Prussian Union, which provoked the founders of the LCMS to leave for America.

Here those founders faced a different educational challenge: an educational system designed primarily to assimilate immigrants. Instead of teaching foreign languages and Western civilization, these little red schoolhouses would focus on English and on instilling the values of “Americanism.” This included the propagation of a “civil religion,” with a generic, ecumenical, national deity and the teaching of moralism rather than salvation.

In response, the founders of the LCMS started parochial schools, which were solidly Lutheran and classical. For further education, they founded Gymnasiums, which is the original form of most of the Concordia Colleges today.

Then came John Dewey and “progressive education.” A socialist and an atheist who believed that education should replace religion, Dewey dismissed the knowledge of the past in favor of modern pragmatism. To train workers for modern industrialism, Dewey urged schools to downplay content in favor of processes. Dewey believed that teaching is a science, leading to the establishment of teacher colleges.

The LCMS largely accepted progressive education, opening teacher colleges of its own, requiring state licensing for parochial teachers, and bringing progressive techniques into its classrooms. Eventually, the Concordias were re-organized according to the Prussian university model to conform with the rest of American higher education.

The new goal of LCMS schools was to give students the same kind of education as in the public schools, but adding instruction in the Christian faith. This approach arguably worked for awhile, since the secular curriculum did not directly undermine Christianity. But in recent decades, the postmodern version of progressive education—which sees truth and morality as relative—undermines what children learn in their religion class.

This relativist curriculum has also led to an academic collapse. If there is no truth, what is there to learn? If there is no goodness, how can teachers enforce discipline? This crisis has led to a search for alternatives, including homeschooling and the founding of evangelical schools. Some of these emulate traditional American education (including its limitations). Others, though, are going back further, rediscovering the classical education that has given us Western civilization.

Among these are Lutherans bringing back the Lutheran heritage of education. A number of parochial schools have gone classical and in doing so have both improved their academics and strengthened their theological integrity. Check out the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education--www.ccle.org—for the most promising developments in Lutheran education today.

Dr. Gene Edward Veith

Provost and Professor of Literature
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The Convictions of a Layman on the Biblical Teachings of Creation

The issue of “Creation vs. Evolution” has again come to the forefront in public discourse in view of the bicentennial of Charles Darwin (1809-82) and the sesquicentennial of his 1859 publication of *The Origin of Species*. As a professing Christian layman, how do I view this issue?

First, I do not begin with the teachings of science (1 Tim. 6:20). Instead, I start with the Bible, the teachings of creation in Scripture (Gen. 1:1). For if I cannot rely upon the truth of Scripture, which is God’s Word, then my salvation would be in doubt and my faith futile and vain (1 Cor. 15:17). As a Christian layman, I do not pick and chose from Scripture only those things which I am able to understand but, rather, I rely upon Scripture in its *entirety*, including the Genesis account of creation, because “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16), “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35), and “thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The prophets and apostles, and Christ himself confirmed the *truth* of Scripture (Is. 66:2; Mark 10:6, 12:26; Luke 16:29, 24:27; John 1:3,

5:46-47; Acts 7:50). Who am I to doubt, refute or revise these sayings? God forbid that I should add unto or take away from the words of Scripture (Rev. 22:18-19), which include the words of the Genesis account of creation.

By *faith* I firmly believe that God created “all things” (John 1:3) in six ordinary days, for Moses wrote that “In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them” (Ex. 20:11). Scripture forbids us to interpret

these days as *long periods* of time, for it divides each of these six days into “evening and morning.” Thus, after the first day of creation, Scripture says “And the evening and morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5). The word “days” means ordinary days as the Israelites

“Divine creation of man on the sixth day of creation and man’s subsequent fall into sin is fundamental to my belief in the necessity of a Savior for all people.”

knew them when Moses wrote them, as days of twenty-four hours. The origin of mankind clearly fits a literal, and supernatural creation week of six days, for on the sixth day God created Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:26-27), not by descent from another creature or as the result of a sequence of many changes over long periods of time, but by Divine command. Divine creation of man on the sixth day of creation and man’s subsequent fall into sin is fundamental to my belief in the necessity of a Savior for all people.

By *faith* I firmly believe that God created all the “kinds” of creatures in the creation week (Gen. 1:20-25, 28-30). These “kinds” (Hebrew: *Min*) did not develop from a common ancestor but were created as distinct and complete creatures, which God commanded to be fruitful and multiply “after their kind” (Gen. 1:21-22). A created “kind” is different from the modern biologist’s “species” which can be crossbred with fertility within a created “kind.” Species variations do not contradict Divine creation of “kinds” and provide no support to Darwinian evolution.

In conclusion, the Word of God given to us in the Bible makes certain my firm conviction of the truth of the entire Genesis account of creation as historical fact and foundational to my Christian belief.

Scott J. Meyer, BS, MBA, JD

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LCA to Hold Annual Conference at Fort Wayne January 18, 2010

With the need to address concerns building to a climax as we approach the 2010 Synodical Convention, the Lutheran Concerns Association will hold a preparatory conference on Monday, January 18, 2010, at Don Hall’s Guest House, 1313 West Washington Center Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana (260-489-2524). Choosing such a date should permit maximum attendance of LCA members and other Confessional Lutherans. Such timing also provides the time for effective communication with congregations and delegates well before the Synodical Convention.

Plans are still being formulated as to the content of the LCA conference. It is anticipated that the agenda will include recognized speakers on issues that likely will be addressed at the Synodical Convention in July, 2010. Come! Learn! Communicate!

This will be a wonderful opportunity for you to become better informed on likely convention issues and make a difference in the direction of our beloved Synod. Watch the next issue of *The Lutheran Clarion* and the on-line edition at our website: <http://lutheranclarion.org/home.html> for more details.

The Numbers Game

A lot of numbers have been floating around the LCMS lately. I’m not sure what they all mean to us. Numbers aren’t bad, in and of themselves, but sometimes it’s what can be done with the numbers that can make them either good or bad

Number 1: Reach 100 Million by the Year 2017

The LCMS website on August 6, 2009, stated that there have been 10,472,217 people that are unreached or uncommitted who have been reportedly talked to about the Gospel. What does this mean? We should ask this as Lutherans. It is good to share and confess our faith with others. “Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is within you” (1 Peter 3:15b). We, as Lutherans should not be ashamed of the Gospel. God placed us in our vocations to be

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where we're planted to serve our neighbors. We live our lives knowing we are covered by Christ through our baptism, but we usually don't try to keep count of how many people we mention the name of Jesus to each day. When we keep count, we start looking inwardly at ourselves and what we do, not outwardly at what Jesus did for us, and at our neighbor, whom God wants us to serve. Could we become boastful of the number or could we fall into despair thinking we're not "doing" enough? Anyway, God is in control of who, when, and how the Gospel message will reach them. His timing is always perfect. "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

Number 2: 2,000 New Mission Starts by 2017 (Current Number 498)

Some of these new mission starts have something in common. Some lack the name Lutheran. They include Jefferson Hills Church near St Louis, MO, that made the TV news during Lent 2008 with their infamous "Satan" themed billboards; then there's Epic Church in Michigan with its Lenten sex series and Star Wars series the year before. These churches don't seem Lutheran in their practice at all. These are just two examples of 498, but there are others that don't have the name Lutheran in their name. When we see these examples, we wonder what percentage of the mission starts that we are supporting financially are even Lutheran?

Number 3: The Blue Ribbon Task Force Report. Congregations with over 1,000 Members Get Extra Delegates.

Now, on the outside this may seem more representative of the people in our synod, but God says "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them" (Matthew 18:20). Our congregations and called ministers are members of our synod, not laymen. Each congregation is special. Wherever the Word and Sacraments are properly taught and administered there is the church. Could it be too tempting for people whose churches are close to the number line to either weaken their theology in order to get a few more numbers in the pews, or to not go through their membership rosters to eliminate people that haven't been at their church to worship in years? Then they could keep their extra vote, or gain another vote. Either way, we sinners don't need more with which to be tempted.

There are certainly more number games being played, but these are the ones that came to mind. They show that playing the numbers is not the best way God would have us operate as a church. May the Lord have mercy on us all!

Kari Anderson
Laywoman
Alexandria, MN



Consolidation of Power is the Main Thrust of Task Force Proposals

If one needed a term to sum up the current proposals of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synodical Structure and Governance, it would be "consolidation of power." The Task Force was asked by President Kjeschnick to streamline the structure of Synod and they are proposing this through a dramatic restructuring of synodical power and oversight. This is a brief article, so it will only focus on a few of the major proposed changes. But each relates to the other, so try to keep each in mind as you read.

Currently, Synodical members subscribe solely to Scripture and the Confessions. The changes proposed to Article VI of the Synod's Constitution add subscription to the Constitution itself. Article VII then adds wording which expects members of Synod to uphold the Bylaws, the convention resolutions, and the mission endeavors of Synod, as well as to promise to dissent only through appropriate channels.

So, if all changes were ratified, members of Synod would have to adhere to all of the above to remain in good standing with the Synod.

In other words, a member, whether a minister or a congregation, could be expelled from the Synod if in disagreement with any of the above. The specific wording of many of these changes is imprecise and lacking definition, which compounds the problem. This could lead, orig-

"...in their goal of streamlining the Synod they have asserted proposals which drastically change the Synod's ecclesiastical authority as well as other changes affecting the power of national conventions..."

inal sin being what it is, to ambiguity and selective enforcement of these many subscriptions.

Added to this, the Task Force desires to abolish most boards in Synod and consolidate their power into the Office of the President and Synod's Board of Directors. The structure of this board would consist of eleven elected members, the President, and five other members chosen by the elected members themselves. The rest of the work in Synod would be done through commissions, which are appointed by the President and the Board of Directors. Such commissioned work includes missions, most of the oversight of our educational system, and other important duties. Eleven people would control most of the Synod's direction and could enforce much of that through the new Constitutional mandates.

This space is insufficient to cover the Task Force proposals in detail. A word on their side: they have been charged with an elephantine responsibility. But in their goal of streamlining the Synod they have asserted proposals which drastically change the Synod's ecclesiastical authority as well as other changes affecting the power of national conventions, the voice of individual congregations in the Synod, and our understanding of the Divine Call.

I hope that this brief article encourages you to examine these issues further for yourself. Go to the Synod's website, download, and read and study the slide show and the handouts for the district conventions as well as the proposed changes to the Constitution. Also pray for God's wisdom and guidance upon our Synod during this time. Changing how we function and, to an extent, who we are, is a weighty undertaking that members of Synod and its congregations cannot afford to ignore.

Rev. Jon C. Furgeson
Associate Pastor
Peace Lutheran Church
St. Louis County, MO

“...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” Jude 1:3b

**Recommendation for Nomination
for LCMS Convention 2010**
(please type or print)

Nominee I recommend the following person:
Name: _____
Street: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone Number: _____

Position for the following office, board, or commission:
(PLEASE FILL OUT SEPARATE FORMS IF NOMINATING FOR MORE THAN ONE POSITION)
 Secretary LCMS Board of Directors Board for District and Congregational Services
 Board for Mission Services Board for Pastoral Education Board for University Education
 Commission on Theology & Church Relations Concordia Publishing House Board of Directors
 Lutheran Church Extension Fund Board of Directors

Board of Regents — Ann Arbor Austin Bronxville Fort Wayne Irvine Mequon
 Portland River Forest St. Louis St. Paul Selma Seward

Information about nominee He/She is an ordained minister a commissioned minister a layperson
His/Her home congregation is: _____
His/Her pastor is: _____
Street: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Synod District: _____
Circuit Counselor: _____
Address: _____

References Other references for evaluation and sources of information, including mailing addresses:
Name: _____
Street: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Name: _____
Street: _____
City, State, Zip: _____

About myself I am an ordained minister a commissioned minister a layperson
Name: _____
Street: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone Number: _____

Mail to Return as soon as possible to:
Committee for Convention Nominations
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
1333 South Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

Please feel free to reproduce this form.

Call for 2010 Convention Nominations

The deadline is **October 10, 2009**, for submitting nominations for vacancies on Synod boards, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and Boards of Regents at the Concordia Universities.

Please use the above form and/or see <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=13531> for more copies of the nomination form and a complete list of vacancies.

The Lutheran Clarion

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

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

1320 Hartford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116

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

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

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

The Board of Directors for the LCA:

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Lutheran Concerns Association

