



Convention 2007 Report of the President-Part II

*Convention Floor Committee Meeting Weekend
May 18-21, 2007*

Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ, Savior of the world and Lord of the universe, through whom alone we receive forgiveness of sin, life and salvation!

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to this Floor Committee Meeting Weekend, in preparation for the 63rd Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. As you are well aware, convention activities will begin eight weeks from tomorrow. Many in the Synod are looking forward with great anticipation to this convention and I pray that is true of each of you, as well.

In my travels around the Synod and in communications from pastors, educators and lay people from throughout the Synod, I am greatly encouraged by the voluntarily and freely offered assurance that many, many people and many, many congregations are holding each of us, the entire Synod and our national convention in their private and public prayers. Although originally offered in a context of prayer for healing, the words of the apostle James seem fitting for our church body as well: “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16). It is my prayer that the prayers of the many who have been made righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, our Savior, will indeed be received with favor by God Himself and that His blessing will abound in our midst during the days, weeks, months and years ahead.

Floor Committee Selection Process and Assignment

There are several aspects of this Report of the President of the Synod, Part II. Before delving into specific areas of importance and concern, I believe it is important to say a few words about how and why each one of you has been selected to serve your God and your Synod as a member of a Convention Floor Committee. The Bylaws of our Synod address this important matter:

3.1.7 All reports and overtures accepted by the President in accordance with the foregoing paragraphs shall be referred by him to convention committees appointed by him in the name of the convention.

(a) Appointments will be made from among the voting delegates (Bylaw 3.1.2ff), advisory delegates (Bylaw 3.1.3ff), and advisory representatives (Bylaw 3.1.4ff).

(b) Ordained ministers, commissioned ministers, and laypersons shall be represented on all committees.

Those words describe in general how you got here. More specifically, in appointing each of you to your respective Floor Committee, I asked for and received assistance from your District President, who several months ago received information from my office regarding the process that would be followed in the selection of floor committee members.

Basically that process recognized the variation in numbers of convention voting delegates from each of the 35 districts of the Synod and created a formula for floor committee member recommendations in proportion to the number of voting delegates from each district. Essentially, the larger the number of voting delegates in a district, the greater the number of floor committee member recommendations that were received from that district for potential floor committee service. Resultantly, district representation across the whole of all the committees is generally proportionate in number to the size of the voting delegation and number of floor committee recommendations from each district, with a minimum of at least one floor committee member from each district in addition to the district president. Your district president was quite helpful in identifying the gifts, interests and experiences of the voting delegates from your district, from among whom you were chosen for this position.

Serving on a floor committee includes privilege, task and process, all briefly described in the remainder of Bylaw 3.1.7 and in Bylaw 3.1.8.1:

(e) If the President deems it advisable, he may convene any committees prior to the opening of the convention.

(f) After due consideration of the matters referred to it, each committee will report its findings and recommendations to the convention.

3.1.8.1 The first issue of *Today's Business* containing proposed resolutions shall be sent to all registered delegates of the convention and to each congregation of the Synod.

(a) Responses to the tentative resolutions contained in the first issue of *Today's Business* shall be submitted to the chairman of the appropriate floor committee at least one week prior to the convention.

(b) All floor committees shall meet at the convention site at a time prior to the opening of the convention to review such responses and reconsider their proposed resolutions accordingly.

Those of you who serve as floor committee chairmen and vice chairmen are well aware of the process by which you were selected by the Synod President. Essentially, a review was conducted of Synod conventions since 1980, providing objective information regarding how frequently and how recently each District has been privileged to offer the services of its district president as Floor Committee Chairman. In addition, consideration was given to gifts, interests and experiences of district presidents that would be compatible with the needs of each floor committee.

In all cases, the process of appointment of Floor Committee Chairmen and members was bathed in prayer and purposeful reflection. While others may have been chosen for the position you now hold, the fact remains that, in the words of the letter written by the apostles and elders in Acts 15 (the portion of Scripture, incidentally, that summarizes one of the two reasons for the forming of this “Synodical Union” we know and love as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” that each of you be appointed.

A Word of Prayer

With that introduction I invite you to join me in a word of prayer before we proceed.

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise and magnify your Holy Name. We thank you for the gift of the life, perfect obedience, suffering, death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Pour out upon us the gifts of your Holy Spirit, by whose working through Word and Sacrament we have become your children. Fill our hearts and our minds, our lips and our lives with the truth and the power that you alone can provide. May every word we speak and every deed we perform bring honor and glory to your Name, edification to your people and expansion to your Kingdom, in the Name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Convention Theme and Biblical Basis

In the Report of the President – Part I, printed in your Convention Workbook, I spent some time unpacking the theme of our convention, **One Message—Christ!** I believe it is important briefly to review this information.

The theme of this convention is the second part of the three-fold vision of One Mission-One Message-One People. Our theme is: **“One Message—Christ! His Love Is Here for You!”** Its scriptural basis is 1 John 4:9-11:

“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

Many passages of Holy Scripture articulate the truth that Jesus Christ alone is the Savior of the world. The apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, addresses the person and work of Christ from a personal perspective, focusing specifically and powerfully on the benefit of God's love, made known to mankind in the person of Christ, for each and every person in the world.

In addition, John clearly focuses his Spirit-given words on matters of great importance for us as Lutheran Christians, namely, a proper understanding of law and gospel. *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* Thus John also writes, in the 19th verse of this same chapter, *"We love because he first loved us."*

It is therefore true that any love that comes from us as human beings comes only as a result of the fact that God "first loved us." This is true in respect to the love we show to one another, as well as the love we demonstrate toward God himself. Our lives are lived to God's glory, in accord with our vocational calling as Christians, purely in response to God's love for us in Christ our Lord. The power of that love propels us to proclaim the light of Christ's love to all who live in the darkness of doubt and disbelief.

The sub-theme "His Love Is Here for You" has numerous applications:

- Christ's love is here, in God's Holy Word, for you!
- Christ's love is here, in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, for you!
- Christ's love is here, in the words of Holy Absolution, for you!
- Christ's love is here, in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, for you!
- Christ's love is here, in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, for you!

The non-believing people of the world, including many people here in our own country, are watching and waiting for the discovery of meaning and value in their lives. They also are wondering and wandering in their effort to find such meaning and value, often turning to movements or groups whose faith is based on principles or beliefs contrary to what we in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believe, teach, and confess.

From 160 years of biblical and confessional study, we in the LCMS have come to understand and firmly believe the truth of God's love for the world in Jesus Christ, expressed so clearly in the words of Jesus himself: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him"* (John 3:16-17).

That is the message we proclaim. We in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have **ONE Mission**—to be **ABLAZE!** in seeking the lost for Christ with the power and presence of the very Spirit of God in our lives, on our lips and in our labors! We proclaim **ONE Message**, that Jesus Christ alone is the only Savior of the world! We pursue the ONE Mission and proclaim the ONE Message as **ONE People**, united by God's love in Jesus Christ!

It is my prayer to our gracious God that this message will be the constant focus of this 63rd Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod! It is both my counsel to you and my prayer to God that every resolution you prepare for presentation to the convention of our Synod will reflect this theme and will enhance the mission connected to it, to the glory of God and for the salvation of many of the people of the world who do not now confess the Name of Jesus.

Report of the Convention Delegate Review Committee

Perhaps by now most if not all of you have received information regarding a document titled "Update on Circuit Exceptions for the 2007 LCMS Convention." The author was a plaintiff in the lawsuit filed in 2005 against the president and first vice president of the Synod and against the Synod itself. The document essentially resurrects the same issues contained in the lawsuit, having to do with requests for Bylaw allowed voting delegate exceptions to a Synod convention. Detailed information regarding the lawsuit is included in the Convention Workbook in a "Special Report of the President to the 2007 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod regarding the Lawsuit against the President and First Vice-President of the Synod and Against the Synod Itself."

In an April 17, 2007, memo to all district presidents, I addressed this matter in some detail, encouraging district presidents to share that memo with voting delegates from their districts. In addition, my May 8, 2007 memo to all voting delegates and district presidents stated:

"This memo is to inform you of my belief and testimony that all things regarding this matter have been done with integrity, transparency, and propriety, with no violations of either the spirit or the letter of Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, state or federal laws, lawsuit agreements, constitution, bylaws, resolutions, or other covenants of love by which all members of the Synod have agreed to work and walk together. All current and former district presidents in office prior to the Synod conventions in question (2001, 2004, and 2007) have also stated in writing their belief that nothing inappropriate has been done in their districts in connection with this process.

"However, to assure the Synod that all is in order regarding this matter, to honor and protect the integrity of the convention itself, and to assure each of you that your election to serve as a delegate to the 2007 LCMS convention is indeed valid and proper, I have asked seven national Synod leaders to confer together to review the procedure followed by district boards of directors and the president of the Synod regarding circuit electoral delegate exceptions to the 2007 convention. Their report is due to be completed by May 15 and will be sent to all voting delegates."

Their report is now complete, has been sent to all voting delegates, and is attached as Appendix I to this Report of the President. Summarily, the report stated that no evidence was found of collaboration between the Office of the President of the Synod and the presidents and boards of directors of the districts regarding the seating of delegates to the 2007 convention and that the 65 electoral circuit exceptions granted for the 2007 convention of the Synod were granted according to the provisions of Bylaw 3.1.2. The committee also "recognizes that a comprehensive study of concerns associated with the Synod's delegate representation process is needed" and is aware that the topic of fair representation at national conventions is included in the overall study currently underway by the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance.

The bottom line is that convention delegates and the Synod itself can rest assured that there was nothing improper or inappropriate that occurred in the process of requesting or granting approval of Bylaw allowed exceptions for circuit electoral delegates. All voting delegates to every Synod convention, including the 2007 convention, have been legitimately and properly elected and certified in accordance with the covenants of love by which we have all agreed to abide.

The concluding paragraph of my Special Report regarding the lawsuit (written March 10, 2007) states:

At the time of writing of this report, some of the original participants and plaintiffs in the lawsuit are engaged in an effort to communicate to delegates to this convention concerning topics in the lawsuit in a way that misrepresents the truth and casts aspersions on the integrity and motives of district boards of directors and officers of the Synod. I truly hope and fervently pray that God's Spirit will touch the hearts of those involved in this endeavor, that all would work and walk together in a way that builds harmony and peace in our Synod, not divisiveness and contention.

That remains my hope and prayer.

Suggestions for Floor Committee Consideration

As has been the custom for many years, I believe it is appropriate to offer general recommendations for Floor Committee consideration. This has been the precedent set by Synod presidents in the past. I follow this precedent with the assurance of my absolute trust and complete confidence in you, the leaders and members of the floor committees entrusted with the responsibility of forming and fashioning the resolutions to be presented to the convention of our Synod in the weeks ahead.

Here are a few general comments and recommendations for your consideration as you undertake this significant responsibility.

• **Floor Committee 1 – Missions**

Many in our Synod share with me a deep concern about the decline in baptized membership of the congregations of the Synod over the past thirty-five or more years. This trend sounds an alarm of the corresponding plight of many, many people who are dying every day without saving faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Simultaneously, it remains God's desire for "all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." The clearly stated mission of the LCMS, "vigorously to make known the love of Christ," is intent on God's purpose. It is the heartbeat of our existence and gives direction for our life as a church body. The formidable fiscal, spiritual and human resources of our Synod must be focused on God's mission as we address the regrettable and unacceptable decline in baptized members in the congregations of our Synod. For this decline is a manifestation of more people leaving the Synod through death or defection than those who join our congregations through infant and adult baptisms, adult confirmations and professions of faith. Most important is our concern about the horrifying dilemma that some of the people who leave our congregations represent souls lost for all eternity. So we faithfully pursue the many opportunities for mission that exist in our country and world that we "might win some" for Christ.

Numerous individuals, congregations, districts, entities, institutions, auxiliaries, recognized service organizations, and mission societies of the Synod are involved in intentional mission efforts of many kinds, including global mission endeavors, some but not all in partnership with LCMS World Mission. Many are experiencing direct, hands-on mission involvement, primarily through short-term mission events, both locally and globally.

My counsel is for Floor Committee 1 to consider resolutions that would

- Affirm the priority of mission involvement in coordination with LCMS World Mission.
- Explore ways and means of expanding our worldwide mission impact in fiscally prudent and biblically acceptable avenues.
- Encourage mission planting in the United States by "covenant congregations" in collaboration with district mission leaders.
- Encourage the objectives of congregation revitalization toward the goal of every LCMS congregation as a "mission outpost."
- Affirm the role of the priesthood of all believers in partnership with pastors and other church leaders in the mission of our Synod.

• Floor Committee 2 – District and Congregational Services

A primary focus of Committee 2 will most likely be provision of proper and adequate resources to congregations and professional church workers of the LCMS by the national Synod and its districts. Close and careful coordination of work currently accomplished at the district and national Synod level is necessary for faithful stewardship of the precious resources entrusted to our care. Many of our pastors and educators are inadequately compensated, some living at or near poverty levels. They serve in the midst of people who are richly blessed and, under most circumstances, are eager to be of service and in mission with their people in meaningful ways.

My counsel is for Floor Committee 2 to consider resolutions that would

- Encourage creative cooperation between lay leaders and professional church workers in congregational life, mission, and ministry.
- Encourage proper compensation for professional church workers.
- Expedite provision of doctrinally pure material for use in non-traditional worship.
- Implement recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Hispanic Ministry.
- Initiate planning for and celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.
- Express appreciation and support for the National Youth Gathering.

• Floor Committee 3 – Theology and Church Relations

Our first constitutional objective is, “The Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall—

1. Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3–6; 1 Cor. 1:10), work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy;” (LCMS Constitution Article III).

This is no small task in a pluralistic, postmodern, multicultural society. But the enormity of the task makes it even more imperative that we address it, seeking our God’s leading, guiding and directing in this vital area of our life together in the Synod.

My counsel is for Floor Committee 3 to consider resolutions that would

- Establish Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with The American Association of Lutheran Churches.
- Explore faithful ways and means for the LCMS to “work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies ...” (LCMS Constitution Article III) and faithful ways and means of relating to “other Christian church bodies” with which altar and pulpit fellowship has not yet been established.

- Encourage appropriate LCMS theological leadership around the world.
- Encourage renewed study of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.
- Address requests for clarity of 2004 Resolution 3-06A re participation in civic events.
- Address requests for clarity of 2004 Resolution 3-08A re service of women, the order of creation, etc.
- Address or refer for clarification the distinctions between doctrinal resolutions and doctrinal statements of the LCMS.

• **Floor Committee 4 – Program and Finance**

Great concern exists in many circles for adequate funding of the mission of the Synod at all levels. When aware of the need, the people of the LCMS will support a church focused on faithful Gospel proclamation through Word and Sacraments, with a passion for mission. In recent decades gifts designated for a specific mission field or ministry endeavor have flourished while undesignated gifts have languished. In times of economic difficulty, both designated and undesignated gifts have decreased, regrettably resulting in reductions in all areas of national Synod ministry, including the mission field. We must continue to address the questions of in what ways, to what extent and with what resources we will continue to ask the national Synod to be involved in leadership in mission and ministry.

My counsel is for Floor Committee 4 to consider resolutions that would

- Affirm and encourage implementation of recommendations from the report of the 2004 convention-mandated Blue Ribbon Task Force on Funding the Mission.
- Emphasize the importance of stewardship education at all levels in the Synod and urge our congregations, districts, colleges and seminaries collaboratively to promote and lead a “stewardship renaissance” in the LCMS.
- Encourage continuation of greater communication and collaboration between districts and national Synod to consider ways and means of maintaining or increasing current levels of financial support and continued cooperative sharing of existing fiscal and human resources.
- Encourage continual evaluation and prudent stewardship of assets of districts and national Synod.
- Encourage creative ways and means of prioritizing professional church worker education funding.

• Floor Committee 5 – Seminary and University Education

Concern about and support for the recruitment and training of our Synod's professional church workers remains one of our highest priorities. The fields are ripe for the harvest! Workers must be identified and equipped for mission and ministry in a culture largely indifferent or even hostile to Christianity. To strengthen our institutions, significant overtures have been proposed to amend the structure, selection of members, and governance of the Boards of Regents of our seminaries, colleges, and universities.

My counsel is for Floor Committee 5 to consider resolutions that would

- Affirm the recommendations of the Board for Pastoral Education, our two seminaries, the Council of Presidents, and the Board of Directors, to establish the position of Pastor-Specific Ministry.
- Strengthen LCMS seminaries and universities by implementing recommendations regarding membership on boards responsible for seminary and university education.
- Clarify Bylaw provisions regarding seminary and university administrative matters.
- Encourage commitment to continuing education for professional church workers.

• Floor Committee 6 – Human Care

The expression of Christ's love through human care and world relief, especially in times of national or world catastrophe, remains an important objective of our Synod. This was demonstrated during the past triennium in remarkable ways in response to the tsunami in South Asia, and to numerous hurricanes along the Gulf Coast, most notably Katrina and Rita. We are called to continue faithfully and generously to address ways and means of sharing the love of Christ with those in need, particularly in ways that clearly demonstrate the source of such faithfulness and generosity. "The love of Christ constrains us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

My counsel is for Floor Committee 6 to consider resolutions that would

- Thank God for the creative, generous, tireless support of the Synod, its individual members, congregations, districts, institutions, and organizations for congregations, schools, and individuals in the Southern, Florida-Georgia, and Texas districts who suffered damage, destruction, and devastation from hurricanes during the past triennium.
- Assist congregations to respond to undocumented immigrants and, in consultation with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, provide practical and theological guidance re immigration and ministry to immigrants.

- Articulate the position of the LCMS regarding stem cell research, referencing the statements released by the Office of the President of the Synod, prepared in consultation with the CTCR.
- Address the issue of placement of children in same gender/homosexual contexts, referencing the CTCR opinion on this question.
- Encourage continued and expanded ministry to armed forces personnel and their families.
- Encourage implementation of professional church worker sabbatical guidelines.

• Floor Committee 7 – Planning and Administration

Planning and administration should enhance and not inhibit the mission of the church. At the same time, proper and diligent concern for Biblical principles, balance of power, reduction of bureaucracy and facilitation of mission and ministry are vital for responsible and accountable functioning of the church.

My counsel is for Floor Committee 7 to consider resolutions that would

- Provide a specific Bylaw process for removal of officers, board and commission members “if circumstances require it ... in accordance with Christian procedure” (LCMS Constitution Article XI A).
- Implement recommendations of the Commission on Structure regarding various Bylaw amendments.
- Amend Bylaws regarding the doctrinal review process.
- Address recommendations regarding convention voting delegate representation.
- Address concerns regarding various convention procedures and Bylaws.
- Address inequality of terms of office, authority, and voting rights of members of boards and commissions, including officers of the Synod.

• Floor Committee 8 – Synod Structure and Governance

The complex, complicated, and even sometimes seemingly convoluted system of church structure and governance with and under which we operate in our lives together in the Synod is currently in a process of review by the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance, which I appointed during the past triennium. The interim report of the BRTFSSG is included in the *Convention Workbook*. Any amendments to the structure and governance of the LCMS must be accomplished with proper and diligent concern for Biblical principles, balance of power, reduction of bureaucracy and facilitation of mission and ministry.

Of particular note is the report of the committee created by Resolution 7-02A of the 2004 convention, which all voting delegates received in a separate mailing from the committee. The report speaks for itself and was adopted unanimously by a committee of representatives from the board of directors, district presidents, corporate Synod executives, and the office of the president of Synod, following consultation with the Council of Presidents and the Commission on Constitutional Matters.

My counsel is for Floor Committee 8 to consider resolutions that would

- Accept and implement the recommendations in the 7-02A Committee report.
- Declare dispute resolution via lawsuits as contrary to our Synod agreements and encourage use of Synod's dispute resolution process to resolve differences among us.
- Address concerns regarding the process for dispute resolution and expulsion.
- Address concerns and affirmations regarding various CCM opinions.
- Address concerns regarding the inclusion in congregational constitutions of certain terms descriptive of Holy Scripture.
- Call for a special convention to amend Synod structure and governance.

Overtures Not Approved for Inclusion in Convention Workbook

A word is in order at this point regarding overtures submitted to the Synod that do not appear in the Convention Workbook. Part of the responsibility of the office of the Synod President in the procedure and process of overture review is dictated in the Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. One such dictate is outlined in Bylaw 3.1.6.2 of the 2004 Handbook. This bylaw reads, in part:

(c) The President of the Synod shall determine if any overture contains information which is materially in error or contains any apparent misrepresentation of truth or of character. He shall not approve inclusion of any such overture in the *Convention Workbook* and shall refer any such overture to the district president who has ecclesiastical supervision over the entity submitting the overture for action. If any published overture or resolution is found to be materially in error or contains a misrepresentation of truth or of character, it shall be withdrawn from convention consideration and referred by the President of the Synod to the appropriate district president for action.

In reviewing the overtures submitted for convention consideration, it was determined that some overtures contained "*information... materially in error or... apparent misrepresentation of truth or of character.*" In accordance with this bylaw, those overtures were referred to the respective district president

who “has ecclesiastical supervision over the entity submitting the overture for action.” I did not thereby suggest any specific action on the part of the district president, but only referred the overtures to the district president’s office in fulfillment of this bylaw requirement.

In further accordance with the bylaw directive, these overtures were not approved for inclusion in the *Convention Workbook*. My office communicated to the district president and congregation or other entity submitting it the specific objectionable feature(s) of the overture. Some of the congregations and entities resubmitted revisions of those overtures with the objectionable components revised or removed for consideration as late overtures. The resubmitted overtures that were subsequently approved, along with the other approved late overtures, will be submitted to you for your consideration and work this weekend and will also be printed in the first issue of *Today’s Business*.

In all cases, in an effort to honor what I perceive to be a genuine concern on the part of the congregation or other entity submitting overtures containing objectionable features, I decided to forward the unprinted overtures in question to the proper floor committee for whatever action it may deem appropriate. Similarly, the late overture submissions not approved for inclusion in *Today’s Business* will be forwarded to the proper floor committee for apt consideration.

The action of reviewing all the overtures submitted for consideration was undertaken in the spirit of the Scriptural exhortations, as well as in light of the resolves of 2001 Convention Resolution 7-04A, a copy of which is included as Appendix II to this report. It is my prayer that all our actions be guided continually by the inspired words of the Apostle (quoted in Resolution 7-04A), who wrote, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:1-2).

In Conclusion

Notwithstanding the areas and expressions of concern that must be addressed at the 63rd Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through the actions and decisions of the delegates in response to the resolutions you will present, I do not hesitate whatsoever in saying to you that I am highly encouraged and hugely excited about the future of our Synod!

- We have much for which to be thankful throughout the 160 years of our existence!
- We have been and remain faithful to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions!
- We have been aggressive and progressive in mission endeavors for more than 100 of those years!

- We have the respect of many church bodies throughout the world, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran!
- Our counsel, resources and support are frequently and regularly sought by Christians across the face of the globe, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran!
- Our most productive years of mission and ministry are just ahead!

These are obviously optimistic observations and positive projections that will not automatically, instantly or easily be achieved. Why might this be the case? Sometimes I perceive that we in the LCMS are our own worst enemy and that our mission and ministry endeavors are limited and perhaps even stymied primarily by our seemingly incessant inability to live together in peace and harmony. Surely that is the evil intention of Satan himself, who would love nothing more than to see our congregations, professional church workers, and people embroiled in internal bickering, un-Christian backbiting and unflattering bellyaching about and with one another. My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, these things simply should not be!

Most respectfully and quite sincerely, I invite and encourage each and every one of you to join me in a godly crusade to alter the rapidly diminishing but still existent negativity and lack of basic Christian demeanor that too often attempts and frequently succeeds in defining the culture of our Synod, beginning with this Floor Committee Meeting Weekend and continuing through and beyond the 63rd Regular Convention of the LCMS. I do so with painful cognizance of my own sinfulness and daily awareness of my own imperfection. I also do so with joyful assurance of the grace of God in my life, made new each day with the reminder that I am a baptized child of God, redeemed from sin and Satan by the blood of Jesus Christ, my Lord. And I boldly and happily remind you of the same eternal blessings that are yours through that very same grace of God in Jesus Christ, your Lord.

As individually and together we ***“... vigorously make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities and the world,”*** we will, by the grace of God, see **One Message—Christ!** as the message for our life and the reason for our existence! May God grant it to be so, in the Name of Jesus! His Love Is Here for You!

Appendix I

REPORT

CONVENTION DELEGATE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Appointed by the President of the Synod

May 14, 2007

The Convention Delegate Review Committee has been asked by the President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod “to take whatever steps it deems appropriate in the process of assuring the Synod that [the 2007 convention delegate selection process] has been done properly, decently, in good order, and in accordance with the covenants of love by which we in the LCMS have agreed to work together.”

The undersigned committee met via telephone conference call on May 3, 2007, to determine the steps it would take to carry out its assignment. It was agreed that a three-member subcommittee would meet at the Synod’s International Center on May 7 and 8 to review the 2007 convention delegate records. The subcommittee’s findings were then discussed by the full committee during telephone conference calls on May 10 and May 14. The committee submits the following report to the Synod.

I. No evidence was found of collaboration between the Office of the President of the Synod and the presidents and boards of directors of the districts regarding the seating of delegates to the 2007 convention.

- Cases identified by Frederic Baue in his “Update on Circuit Exceptions for the 2007 LCMS Convention” as problematic and requiring additional exceptions were found to have reasonable explanations as a result of data provided during the delegate certification process.
- The official records provided by the President’s Office offered no indication of collaboration between the President’s Office and district officials. Because all other related communication was oral in nature, no additional records were available for review.

II. The 65 electoral circuit exceptions granted for the 2007 convention of the Synod were granted according to the provisions of Bylaw 3.1.2.

- Records in support of the exceptions granted were found to be in good order, in every case including all appropriate documentation of district board actions requesting exceptions and the granting of exceptions by the President.
- All electoral circuit exceptions were granted within the parameters established by Bylaw 3.1.2, which provides no limitations on the number of exceptions that may be granted.

- Limitations self-imposed by the President were announced repeatedly in his reports to the Council of Presidents and were generally followed. The President provided reasonable explanations for three exceptions to those limitations upon request of the subcommittee.

III. The pertinent paragraph in the Agreement that accompanied the settlement of the recent lawsuit was honored in the process used to grant electoral circuit exceptions for the 2007 convention.

- The requirements provided in Bylaw 3.1.2 for the granting of exceptions were followed, and evidence demonstrates that districts were repeatedly encouraged to realign circuits to avoid the need to request electoral circuit exceptions.
- A written reminder was offered to the Council of Presidents on at least one occasion (and the President reported numerous oral reminders on other occasions) calling attention to the provision in Bylaw 3.1.2 that advocates the joining together of adjacent visitation circuits to form an electoral circuit when electoral circuit requirements cannot be met by one or both visitation circuits.
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IV. The Convention Delegate Review Committee did not have time or opportunity to review the circumstances surrounding the extensive realigning of circuits that went on during the triennium to verify that all such alignments were done properly.

- Districts may only realign circuits by convention action unless such authority has been specifically delegated to their boards of directors (CCM Opinion 03-2368).
- These realignments have often only minimally met (and at times have even fallen short of) Bylaw 3.1.2 requirements, resulting in an increase in the number of delegates to the 2007 convention despite a reduction from 88 (2004) to 65 (2007) in the number of electoral circuit exceptions requested and granted.

V. The Convention Delegate Review Committee recognizes that a comprehensive study of concerns associated with the Synod's delegate representation process is needed, such as is included in the overall study currently underway by the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synodical Structure and Governance. A number of general observations surfaced during the committee's research that beg further attention by the task force in the interest of fair representation at national conventions.

- Delegate exceptions are at times being used to alleviate other concerns, including "adequate representation" for ethnic and other interests at national conventions. Exceptions requested for such purposes appear to elevate other concerns above the clear interest of Bylaw 3.1.2 in equitable representation based solely upon numbers of congregations and confirmed members.

- The provision of Bylaw 3.1.2 advocating the combining of adjacent visitation circuits to form electoral circuits is not being given first attention as the to-be-preferred remedy when one or both of the visitation circuits do not meet requirements for an electoral circuit. This is evidenced by the fact that 65 electoral circuit exceptions were requested and granted for the 2007 Synod convention compared to only 16 times that adjacent visitation circuits were combined to form an appropriate electoral circuit. The granting of exceptions over the years has in reality become the rule, while the rule provided by the bylaw (to join adjacent visitation circuits) has in reality become the exception.
- Statistics demonstrate that, in general, districts with already greater-than-average per-communicant representation at Synod conventions are also the districts that have been requesting and receiving the greatest number of exceptions, thereby further increasing their delegate representation advantage.

It is this committee's hope and prayer that its efforts and this report will help to assure the Synod in general and the delegates to the 2007 convention in particular that the delegate body that will meet in Houston this summer has been selected "in accordance with the covenants of love by which we in the LCMS have agreed to work together."

Dr. William Hoesman, President, Michigan District; Chairman, Council of Presidents
 Dr. Larry Stoterau, President, PSW District; Vice Chairman, Council of Presidents
 Dr. Robert Kuhn, LCMS President Emeritus; Chairman, LCMS Board of Directors
 Rev. James Fandrey, Luth. Heritage Foundation; Vice Chairman, LCMS Board of Directors
 Dr. Raymond Hartwig, LCMS Secretary
 Dr. Thomas Kuchta, LCMS Vice-President – Finance—Treasurer
 Dr. Albert Marcis, SELC District President Emeritus; Chairman, LCMS Commission on
 Constitutional Matters.

Appendix II

2001 Convention Proceedings

To Promote Truth and Integrity in Convention Overtures

RESOLUTION 7-04A

Overture 7-126 (CW, pp. 282–83)

WHEREAS, St. Paul says in Eph 4:17 – 5:2, “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther says in his explanation of the Eighth Commandment, “We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way”; and

WHEREAS, The convention manual is published under the editorship of the Secretary of the Synod, subject to the approval of the President of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Misleading and untrue material has appeared in synodical overtures; and

WHEREAS, The inclusion of such untrue and misleading information can do irreparable harm and is a sin against God, individuals, and entities of the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That those who submit convention overtures assume complete responsibility for the truthfulness of information contained therein; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.19 c be amended as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

Overtures with reference to a case in which a member has been suspended or expelled and which is at present in the process of or subject to appeal, as well as overtures which, upon advice of legal counsel, may subject the Synod or the corporate officers of the Synod to civil action for libel or slander, or which contain libel or slander, shall not be accepted for convention consideration; and be it further

Resolved, That Bylaw 3.19 be amended to add:

PROPOSED WORDING

The synodical President shall determine if any overture contains information which is materially in error, or contains any apparent misrepresentation of truth or of character. He shall not approve inclusion of any such overture in the convention manual and shall refer any such overture to the District President who has ecclesiastical supervision over the entity submitting the overture for action. If any published overture or resolution is found to be materially in error or contains any misrepresentation of truth or of character, it shall be withdrawn from convention consideration and referred by the President of the Synod to the appropriate District President for action;

and be it further

Resolved, That the other provisions of Bylaw (3.19) be relettered; and be it finally

Resolved, That all action taken in this resolution shall be used to help carry out “The Great Commission” and shall not in any way detract or distract from the primary mission of God’s Kingdom here on Earth. We will remember 1-02!

Action: Adopted (10)

(The resolution was adopted without amendment [yes: 746; no: 303]. The final resolve is added as required by Res. 1-02, adopted by the convention in an earlier session.)