

3. Theology and Church Relations

To Declare Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with the American Association of Lutheran Churches

RESOLUTION 3-01

Overture 3-01 (CW, p. 147), Appendix III (CW, pp. 416–419)

Preamble

The American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC) was established on November 6, 1987. It was organized by pastors and congregations, primarily from the American Lutheran Church, who were concerned over certain doctrinal positions adopted by the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC). The CNLC had been given the responsibility to bring into being a merger of three churches: the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). Of particular concern to the pastors and congregations that organized the AALC was the position the CNLC had taken on the doctrine of the authority of Scripture. (As a result of the CNLC's work, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America came into being on January 1, 1988.) As of February 15, 2007, the membership of the AALC is as follows: 79 congregations, 107 pastors (not including emeriti), 11,771 communicant members, and 14,137 baptized members.

Representatives from the AALC and the LCMS began meeting together in 1988. Between 1988 and 1998 five meetings were held for the purpose of sharing background information and exploring areas of agreement in official documents. The assistance of the LCMS was requested by the AALC in seminary training, military chaplaincies, and the area of social ministry. It was during this time that the AALC established a Builders for Christ organization, which was modeled after the LCMS's Laborers for Christ.

In March 2005, after a lapse of six years during which the AALC further clarified its doctrinal position and practice, representatives from both churches began meeting together once again. Both church bodies expressed interest at this time in holding doctrinal discussions for the purpose of moving toward altar and pulpit fellowship. In this and three subsequent meetings held in 2005 and 2006 the following topics were discussed in depth: the doctrine of Holy Scripture, the meaning of communion, inter-Christian relationships, the role of women in the church, and piety versus pietism. Later the issue of lodge membership was addressed. During the course of these discussions the AALC in June 2005 decided, upon the invitation of the LCMS, to move its seminary on to the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, a relationship that was effected in September 2006 as AALC began preparing men for the ministry at the LCMS seminary.

Representing the LCMS in these discussions were: President Gerald Kieschnick; Dr. Charles Arand, Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis and a member of the CTCR; Dr. William Diekelman, LCMS First Vice-President; Dr. Raymond Hartwig, Secretary of the LCMS; and Dr. Samuel Nafzger, Executive Director of the CTCR.

On the basis of these long-term discussions, the LCMS representatives have concluded, and reported to the President of the Synod, that doctrinal agreement exists between the AALC and the LCMS and that there is nothing that would prohibit the churches from entering into altar and pulpit fellowship with one another. In accordance with the procedures established by the Synod and set forth in its bylaws (3.9.6.2.2 [b], 2004 *Handbook*, p. 176), the Commission on Theology and Church Relations adopted unanimously a resolution at its February 15–16, 2007 meeting recommending that the LCMS enter into altar and pulpit fellowship with The American Association of Lutheran Churches.

WHEREAS, The American Association of Lutheran Churches was founded upon and has maintained a strong commitment to the Scriptures as the authoritative, inspired, and inerrant Word of God; and

WHEREAS, The AALC has from its inception sought discussions with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to explore ways in which the two church bodies might work with one another; and

WHEREAS, Five exploratory meetings were held between the AALC and the LCMS between 1988 and 1998; and

WHEREAS, Article III of the Synod's Constitution states that a first objective of the Synod is to "work through its official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies"; and

WHEREAS, The AALC and the LCMS in 2005 agreed to begin formal doctrinal discussions aimed at the establishment of altar and pulpit fellowship; and

WHEREAS, Formal theological discussions between representatives of the AALC and the LCMS have revealed that agreement in doctrine and practice exists between our churches; and

WHEREAS, Our partner churches in the International Lutheran Council have had the opportunity to meet with the presiding pastor of the AALC at the International Lutheran Council meeting in Berlin, Germany, August 27–September 2, 2005; and

WHEREAS, This proposal has been shared with the partner churches of the LCMS, their input has been requested, and respondents have expressed their approval of the LCMS declaring church fellowship with the AALC; and

WHEREAS, The AALC has expressed a desire to join together with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel upon the basis of the inerrant Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, The President of the Synod has expressed support for this resolution and has asked the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) to address the declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship in keeping with Bylaw 3.9.6.2.2 (b); and

WHEREAS, The CTCR has received comprehensive reports on these discussions and, in accordance with its bylaw responsibilities, has recommended the establishment of altar and pulpit fellowship between the LCMS and the AALC; therefore be it

Resolved, That we give thanks and praise to God for the faithfulness of our brothers and sisters in The American Association of Lutheran Churches to the Holy Scriptures and to Lutheran confessional theology and for their faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That we acknowledge with gratitude to God the unity of confession that He has given to our churches under the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod formally declare altar and pulpit fellowship with The American Association of Lutheran Churches; and be it further

Resolved, That the LCMS recognize The American Association of Lutheran Churches as a partner church and that the President of the Synod be responsible for implementing this relationship and for reconciliation; and be it further

Resolved, That we implore the Lord of the Church to continue to strengthen the bond of fellowship between our churches and that, ablaze with His Spirit, we may together be renewed in our commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ to all the world; and be it finally

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution we rise to sing the Common Doxology to the glory of God.

Action: Adopted (3)

(During extensive discussion, the following amendment to replace the second-last resolve with the following two resolves was not adopted: “*Resolved*, That the LCMS request the American Association of Lutheran Churches to make known publicly its positions with respect to Christians having membership in secret societies such as lodges and to Christians participating with heterodox congregations in worship; and be it further *Resolved*, That pastors of Missouri Synod congregations may exercise pastoral care with respect to altar and pulpit fellowship in the extraordinary circumstances of having a nearby AALC congregation that allows membership in secret societies such as lodges or that publicly worships with heterodox congregations.” An amendment to add the words “and for reconciliation” after the word “relationship” in the fourth resolve was adopted. The resolution was adopted as amended [Yes: 846; No: 345], after which the assembly stood to sing the Common Doxology to the glory of God.)

To Encourage Confessional Study in Preparation for 2017

RESOLUTION 3-02

Report 1-8, Part II (TB, pp. 14–25); Overtures 3-02, 3-04–05, 3-13, 3-29 (CW, pp. 147–149, 151, 156)

WHEREAS, The basic mission of the Christian Church is to preach and teach the Gospel in its truth and purity; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commits us to the “Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God”; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Confessions uniquely define our walk together, thereby forming a foundation for unity and trust; and

WHEREAS, It is not too soon to begin preparing for the worldwide celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017; therefore be it

Resolved, That in preparation for the celebration of this anniversary, the congregations and the called workers of the Synod be encouraged to conduct in-depth examination and study of the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran Confessions; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, in consultation with the International Lutheran Council, be directed to coordinate the preparation of study resources on the aforementioned documents; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod President be directed to support and encourage this renewal in the study of the Lutheran Confessions through the official periodicals of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That these resources be made available for widespread use in order to enhance the worldwide confessional celebration of this historic anniversary.

Action: Adopted (5)

(The resolution was adopted as presented by the committee without debate [Yes: 1,093; No: 38].)

To Request the CTCR to Develop a Plan for Confessional Leadership

RESOLUTION 3-03

Report 3-01, I, B, 2 (CW, p. 65); Overtures 2-24, 3-102–103 (CW, pp. 146, 187)

WHEREAS, The LCMS has been richly blessed with theological resources including two outstanding seminaries and a rich heritage and history of being confessionally strong; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS is blessed to work with other confessional Lutheran churches around the world through the work of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) and has increased opportunities to be a blessing to others through such programs as Committee Responsible for International Studies Program (CRISP), which offers scholarships for students and provides or exchanges professors at seminaries and universities; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS, which has been so abundantly blessed, has also been called to be a good steward of God's many gifts; and

WHEREAS, A new dogmatics text which involves the work of LCMS and partner church theologians is in the final stages of preparation (cf. 1986 Res. 3-11); and

WHEREAS, One of the express purposes of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) is to provide guidance to the Synod in matters of church relations; therefore be it

Resolved, That the CTCR, in consultation with the Office of the President and our seminaries, coordinate fundamentally constructive and intentionally supportive efforts such as theological symposia, conferences, and other opportunities for study of confessional Lutheran theology, to uphold and nurture confessional Lutheranism; and be it further

Resolved, That members of partner churches, members of the ILC, as well as other church bodies and individuals, be invited to participate in these programs; and be it further

Resolved, That Concordia Publishing House give the highest priority to the publication of the new dogmatics text; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR be encouraged to assist in encouraging the translating of the Lutheran Confessions into the languages of the world; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention request that in 2010 the CTCR report progress in furthering and nurturing confessional Lutheran theology at home and abroad to the Synod.

Action: Adopted (5)

(During discussion, the committee agreed to the addition of a new resolve prior to the final resolve: "*Resolved*, That the CTCR be encouraged to assist in encouraging the translating of the Lutheran Confessions into the languages of the world." An amendment to add "and the Synod will provide funding for this publication" at the end of the third resolve was not adopted. The committee agreed also to add the words "and our seminaries" after the word "President" in the first resolve, but an amendment to delete the entire third resolve failed. The resolution was adopted as changed [Yes: 959; No: 81].)

**To Call for Study of the Natural Knowledge of God
and Its Implications for Public Witness**

RESOLUTION 3-04A

Overtures 3-06–12, 3-18–28 (CW, pp. 149–156)

WHEREAS, We live in a society in which many are increasingly confused about the one true God and have been led to believe falsely that all religions lead to salvation; and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach that all people have a natural knowledge of God but such knowledge is not saving knowledge; and

WHEREAS, The Athanasian Creed clearly confesses, “The catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance,” and, “It is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ”; and

WHEREAS, An understanding of the natural knowledge of God can assist the members of the congregations of the LCMS in their witness; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention reaffirm its confession that there is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ and that it is impossible to worship the one true God in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23ff) apart from saving faith in Jesus Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention ask the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, in consultation with the seminary faculties, to prepare a study of the natural knowledge of God, and especially its implications for our public witness.

Action: Adopted (5)

(As discussion of the resolution began, a motion was introduced to amend the first resolve by deleting the phrase “in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23ff),” followed by a suggestion to insert “1 John 2:23” in place of the deleted phrase. After discussion, the amendment failed. After further debate, the resolution was adopted as presented by the committee [Yes: 980; No: 96].)

To Provide Further Discussion and Guidance on the Matter of Serial Prayer

RESOLUTION 3-05

Overtures 3-14–17 (CW, pp. 151–152)

WHEREAS, In 2004 Res. 3-06A, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commended for study *Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events*, a report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), “to help pastors, teachers, and church workers make decisions about participation in civic events” (2004 *Proceedings*, p. 131); and

WHEREAS, Congregations of the Synod have requested further clarification regarding serial prayer; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention assigns to the CTCR the task of providing further guidance for participation in civic events that includes the offering of serial prayer.

Action: Adopted (5)

(As discussion began, the following amendment was offered to replace the final whereas and the resolve: “WHEREAS, The CTCR report itself notes, ‘The members of the Commission disagree about the issue of so-called “serial” or “seriatim” prayers involving representatives of different religious (Christian and/or non-Christian) groups or churches’ (p. 19); and WHEREAS, Seven districts (Minnesota North, Southern Illinois, Missouri, South Dakota, Rocky Mountain, Pacific Southwest, and Northern Illinois), three congregations, one circuit forum, and one pastors conference have submitted overtures in the *Convention Workbook* which recognize this ambiguity as to serial prayer and call for further clarification or restudy or, in several cases, for the rescision of 2004 Res. 3-06A; therefore be it *Resolved*, That the Synod in convention withdraw its commendation of those *Guidelines*; and be it further *Resolved*, That the Synod assign to the CTCR and the seminary faculties the task of providing further guidance for participation in civic events that includes the offering of serial prayer.” After the chair ruled the amendment to be a substitute motion, the assembly voted not to consider it. When discussion returned to the committee’s resolution, a motion to amend the resolve by striking “CTCR” and replacing it with “President of the Synod” also failed. The resolution was adopted without amendment [Yes: 935; No: 163].)

To Assign CTCR to Address Environmental Issues

RESOLUTION 3-06

Overture 3-91 (*CW*, pp. 184–185)

WHEREAS, Ecological and environmental issues affect all citizens of the global community, including Christians; and

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions speak to responsible Christian stewardship of the earth; and

WHEREAS, There is a lack of resources in the LCMS addressing environmental issues in a scriptural and confessional way; and

WHEREAS, There is a need for study, for service, for responsible citizenship, and for concerted action on environmental issues based on an examination of biblical and confessional resources; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations be assigned to develop a biblical and confessional report on responsible Christian stewardship of the environment for use by Synod entities including our schools and churches as they develop resources for the church at large.

Action: Adopted (5)

(After debate was terminated without discussion, the resolution was adopted as presented by the committee [Yes: 831; No: 219].)

To Study CTCR Reports Relating to the Service of Women in the Church

RESOLUTION 3-07

Overtures 3-60–83 (CW, pp. 175–182); Appendix II (CW, pp. 405–406)

WHEREAS, Some overtures submitted to this convention have called for the reaffirmation of 2004 Res. 3-08A, some have called for its rescission, and some have called for further study of the Scriptures and issues like the order of creation, the order of redemption (e.g. Gal. 3:28), and the relationship of man and woman; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) discussed the biblical concept of the order of creation in its 1985 report *Women in the Church*, and has recently addressed the implications of the scriptural application of the order of creation in Section 3 of *CTCR Response to Expressions of Dissent (2004–2006)*; and

WHEREAS, At the request of the Synod convention, the CTCR, in collaboration with 16 consultants, including men and women and representation from the seminaries of the Synod, is working toward completion in 2008 of a comprehensive study on the scriptural relationship of man and woman, and it will provide further guidance on the meaning of the term “order of creation”; therefore be it

Resolved, That the convention commend Section 3 of *CTCR Response to Expressions of Dissent (2004–2006)* to the members of the Synod for widespread study and reflection; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod await the CTCR comprehensive report on the scriptural relationship of man and woman to be completed in 2008 and, upon its release, engage in a thorough, synodwide study of this report.

Action: Adopted (8)

(Upon the resolution’s introduction during Session 5, a substitute resolution was offered: “WHEREAS, At the 1995 LCMS convention, Synod declined to approve the 1994 CTCR document, *The Service of Women in the Congregational Offices*, citing a dissenting opinion by five theologians (CTCR members) which stated that the CTCR document lacked consideration of God’s order of creation; and WHEREAS, President Dr. Al Barry in 1994 published his ‘regret’ in the *Reporter* concerning both the content of this document and the manner in which the CTCR’s executive committee distributed the document; and WHEREAS, At the 1995 LCMS convention, the Synod (Res. 3-06A) directed the CTCR to continue to study this document along with dissenting opinions, and to do so ‘in consultation with the faculties of the seminaries;’ and WHEREAS, The CTCR has not reported to any succeeding convention any record of such communication with or from the seminaries on the topic of the role of women in the church, nor has any further report been issued; and WHEREAS, The 1994 report reappeared on the docket of the 2004 convention unchanged, without informing delegates as to the Synod’s previous mandate for the CTCR to seek seminary input; and WHEREAS, The 2004 LCMS convention approved Res. 3-08A by a vote of 576–520; and WHEREAS, This approved resolution (3-08A) may violate God’s order of creation and His instruction ‘to all congregations of the saints’ (1 Cor. 14:33b–38; 1 Tim. 2: 11–12); and WHEREAS, Seven (7) districts submitted overtures to this 2007 convention requesting that we rescind Res. 3-08A; therefore be it *Resolved*, That we praise God for creating us uniquely male and female, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10); and be it further *Resolved*, That we praise God for the more than 4,000 women serving in full-time church service in our Synod; and be it further *Resolved*, That 2004 Res. 3-08A be rescinded, along with any policies or administrative procedures that have stemmed from it; and be it further *Resolved*, That the CTCR complete the work mandated to it by the Synod (1995 Res. 3-06A), receiving input from the faculties of our two seminaries, and publish seminary input online; and be it finally *Resolved*, That the CTCR author a new document concerning the service of women in congregational offices to be presented for discussion and possible approval at the 2010 LCMS convention.” After the presenter and the floor committee were given opportunity to speak, the motion to introduce the substitute resolution failed. Later, during Session 8, a motion to amend the first whereas by deleting “on issues like the order of creation” and replacing those words with “of the Scriptures and issues like the order of creation, the order of redemption (e.g. Gal. 3:28)” was agreed to by the committee. After further discussion the resolution was adopted as changed [Yes: 870; No: 286].)

**To Encourage Use of CTCR's Web Resource
on "Religious Organizations and Movements"
and to Express Appreciation to Dr. Jerald Joersz for His 30 Years of Service**

RESOLUTION 3-08

Report 3-01, III (CW, p. 73)

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has been given the responsibility since 2001 for assisting pastors and congregations of the Synod regarding religious organizations and movements; and

WHEREAS, The commission has developed a Web resource (see www.lcms.org) that provides evaluations, from a Lutheran theological perspective, on a broad range of both Christian and non-Christian religious organizations and movements; and

WHEREAS, In the last triennium the commission has prepared 30 evaluations on organizations such as the Cursillo Movement, the Jehovah Witnesses, Satanism, Vineyard Ministries, Yoga, etc.; and

WHEREAS, The development of these evaluations has been prepared under the leadership of Dr. Jerald Joersz who will be retiring at the end of this year after 30 years of serving on the staff of the CTCR; therefore be it

Resolved, That the commission be commended for its leadership in providing guidance to the Synod in its preparation of these materials; and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR be encouraged to prepare additional evaluations of religious organizations and movements in our society; and be it further

Resolved, That these evaluations be commended for use to those who have questions regarding these issues; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod thank Dr. Jerald Joersz for his work in preparation of these materials and his 30 years of service.

Action: Adopted (5)

(During discussion, a suggestion by a delegate to add "and to Express Appreciation to Dr. Jerald Joersz for His 30 Years of Service" to the title of the resolution was agreed to by the chair and committee. The resolution was adopted as changed [Yes: 1,001; No: 17].)

To Address Administration of the Lord's Supper

RESOLUTION 3-09

Overtures 3-38–41, 3-44–45, 3-48 (CW, pp. 166–168, 170)

WHEREAS, The Synod has consistently encouraged its pastors and congregations to continue to abide by the practice of close(d) communion, which includes the necessity of exercising responsible pastoral care in extraordinary situations and circumstances; and

WHEREAS, Social and cultural changes in recent decades have presented new challenges for pastors and congregations as they seek to administer the Sacrament in faithfulness to biblical principles and norms and in a way that communicates the loving and pastoral care that informs this practice; and

WHEREAS, The 1995 Synod convention recommended for guidance a “Communion Card Statement” prepared by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (1995 Res. 3-08), which was also included in the 1999 report, *Admission to the Lord's Supper* (p. 48); and

WHEREAS, The contemporary application of our historic position necessitates continued practical guidance for the faithful administration of the Sacrament; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod commend the 1999 report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations on *Admission to the Lord's Supper* and the resolutions adopted on this topic to all congregations, pastors, and circuit and district pastors' conferences for study and guidance; and be it further

Resolved, That all pastors and congregations who have established and practice communion fellowship contrary to the Word of God and the Lutheran confessions be encouraged by the 2007 LCMS convention to immediately cease such practice and return to a faithful practice and administration of the sacrament of Holy Communion by practicing close(d) communion; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, in consultation with the seminaries and Council of Presidents, continue to provide practical guidance for responsible pastoral care in the administration of the Sacrament of the Altar, especially at the parish level, to the end that we might remain faithful to the Scriptures and give witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its fullness.

Action: Adopted (8)

(During discussion, a motion to amend the resolution by adding a new second resolve was agreed to by the committee: “*Resolved*, That all pastors and congregations who have established and practice communion fellowship contrary to the Word of God and the Lutheran confessions be encouraged by the 2007 LCMS convention to immediately cease such practice and return to a faithful practice and administration of the sacrament of Holy Communion; and be it further.” An additional amendment adding “by practicing close(d) communion” to the end of the new resolve was also agreed to by the committee. When an amendment was introduced to insert into the first resolve the words “and 1995 convention Res. 3-08” after the word “*Supper*,” the committee suggested the wording “and the resolutions of the Synod adopted on this topic.” With all parties agreeing to these changes, the resolution was adopted as changed [Yes: 986; No: 177].)

To Encourage Publication of Theological Literature

RESOLUTION 3-10

Report 3-01 I, C, 2 (CW, p. 66), Overtures 3-02, 3-04–05 (CW, pp. 147–149)

WHEREAS, There is a need for theological literature that serves the whole church; and

WHEREAS, Concordia Publishing House is to be commended for its commitment “to serve the Synod and its agencies by developing, providing, producing, marketing, and distributing products for use by members of the Synod, other Christians, and the public in general” (Bylaw 3.6.3, 2004 *Handbook*, p. 116); and

WHEREAS, The church was well served in the past by a Commission on Church Literature and various committees on church literature (cf. *Convention Workbook*, 1979–1989); and

WHEREAS, The 1986 convention directed the appointment of an Advisory Committee on Church Literature that assisted “in determining the theological resources and publications...needed by the church” (1986 Res. 5-10A); and

WHEREAS, There is still a need for a regular, formalized vehicle for communication and cooperation between the Synod, Synod’s institutions of theological education, and Concordia Publishing House, as recommended by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CW, p. 66); therefore be it

Resolved, That the President of the Synod appoint a task force, in consultation with the President and Chief Executive Officer of Concordia Publishing House, to include professors from both seminaries and the Concordia University System, to establish a new Committee on Church Literature by June 2008, “...for the purpose of providing meaningful input to Concordia Publishing House in identifying, promoting, and facilitating the publication of theological literature...” (CW, p. 66) for use by members of the Synod, other Christians, and the public in general; and be it further

Resolved, That this Committee on Church Literature report to the 2010 convention of the Synod.

Action: Adopted (8)

(During discussion, a motion to amend the resolution by adding “orthodox” before “theological literature” in the title and first whereas failed. The resolution was adopted as presented by the committee [Yes: 947; No: 210].)

To Endeavor to Keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace

RESOLUTION 3-11

Report 1-8, Parts I and II (CW, p. 5; TB, pp. 14–25); Report 3-01, I, A, 7 and I, B, 1 (CW, p. 65); Overtures 3-31–37 (CW, pp. 157–166)

WHEREAS, The Scriptures tell us it is good and blessed when we live together in unity (Ps. 133:1); and

WHEREAS, From the founding of our Synod 160 years ago we have been blessed with the gift of unity in our common confession and the articles of our shared faith, such as the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, original sin, baptismal regeneration, the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament, the inerrancy of Scripture, and many others; and

WHEREAS, We desire to build upon the foundation of the faith once delivered to the saints; therefore be it

Resolved, That the pastors of the Synod provide leadership in celebrating and strengthening this unity by their full participation in their circuit pastoral conferences as places for theological dialogue and for the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren; and be it further

Resolved, That our circuit conferences be encouraged to use the Bible studies prepared by the Praesidium of the Synod (*Faithful and Afire*) as a means to facilitate discussion and consideration of our life and work together; and be it further

Resolved, That we ask the Praesidium of the Synod to take into account such articles of faith as those listed above as a basis for the Bible studies for the 2008–2009 program year; and be it finally

Resolved, That the joint committee of representatives of the Council of Presidents and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations seek feedback from the circuit Bible studies as it makes and implements recommendations for district and/or Synod gatherings for theological conversation and reflection.

Action: Adopted (8)

(During discussion of the resolution, an amendment to insert a new third whereas, "WHEREAS, Our Synod in recent years has shown signs of theological disunity in many areas; and," failed, as did motions to amend by deleting "unity" in the second whereas and replacing it with "concord," and to amend by adding "and taking attendance" in the first resolve after "participation." The resolution was adopted as presented by the committee [Yes: 1,018; No: 112].)

To Respectfully Decline Overtures

RESOLUTION 3-13

WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons, that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it

Resolved, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ov. 3-42	Request Supervision and Discipline in Practice of Close(d) Communion	Covered in Bylaws 4.4.4 (e), 4.4.5 and 4.4.6
Ov. 3-43	Require Supervision and Discipline in the Practice of Close(d) Communion	Covered in Bylaws 4.4.4 (e), 4.4.5 and 4.4.6
Ov. 3-46	Direct District Presidents to Visit Congregations re Closed Communion	Covered in Bylaws 4.4.4 (e), 4.4.5 and 4.4.6
Ov. 3-47	Identify Congregations Practicing Open Communion	Covered in Bylaws 4.4.4 (e), 4.4.5 and 4.4.6
Ov. 3-87	List Qualifications for Commission on Theology and Church Relations Membership	Current process of electing or appointing people to be members of CTCR already evaluates their qualifications (cf. Bylaw 3.9.6.1.1)
Ov. 3-92	Declare Opposition to Women Serving in Combat	Covered in May 2003 <i>Lutheran Witness</i> "Point/Counterpoint" article requested by CTCR and prefaced by Executive Director of CTCR

Action: Adopted (8)

(As the committee introduced the resolution, it was noted that wording needed to be added to form a proper resolution: "WHEREAS, The floor committee has considered all overtures assigned to it and has concluded, for various reasons, that certain overtures should be declined; therefore be it *Resolved*, That the following overtures be respectfully declined for the reasons given." Debate was ended prior to discussion, and the resolution was adopted as changed [Yes: 919; No: 167].)