

## 6. Human Care

### To Give Thanks for Disaster Relief and Support

#### RESOLUTION 6-01

##### Overture 6-01 (CW, p. 227)

WHEREAS, The past triennium has been a period of unprecedented natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, These disasters brought horrific damage and devastation and the displacement of families, along with loss of employment, schools, and stability; and

WHEREAS, The people of God in the LCMS have opened their hearts and have offered substantial time, talents, and generous material and spiritual assistance; and

WHEREAS, Every national entity of this Synod and every district answered the cries of distress from their neighbors; and

WHEREAS, It is impossible to give thanks properly to all the individuals and organizations that have so faithfully, mercifully, and effectively responded to these disasters; and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther says in the Smalcald Articles, “Therefore the Church can never be better governed and preserved than if we all live under one head, Christ, and all the bishops equal in office (although they be unequal in gifts), be diligently joined in unity of doctrine, faith, Sacraments, prayer, and works of love” (II.4.9); therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the people of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod give thanks to the Lord for the good work He has done among us through the untold numbers of people and organizations; and be it further

*Resolved*, That we pray that this historic display of compassion and unity serve to embolden our future witness of the saving grace of Christ in Word and deed. *Soli Deo Gloria*

**Action:** Adopted (4)

(After a lengthy introduction by the committee and brief discussion, the resolution was adopted as presented [Yes: 1,177; No: 4].)

## To State LCMS Position on Stem Cell Research

### RESOLUTION 6-02

#### Overture 6-06 (*CW*, pp. 228–231)

WHEREAS, Medical research continues to generate new advances that create ethical questions which prior generations did not have to face; and

WHEREAS, Stem cell research, in particular, offers the promise of delivering cures to debilitating diseases; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS is not opposed to all stem cell research as a means of seeking alleviation for disease; and

WHEREAS, The pro-life position supports adult stem cell research, which does not involve the destruction of human life and has been utilized in treatment of maladies such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, sickle cell anemia, stroke, limb gangrene, corneal regeneration, heart damage, Parkinson's disease, and spinal cord injury; and

WHEREAS, The pro-life position opposes embryonic stem cell research (ESCR), which destroys human life in order to obtain embryonic stem cells for research and has so far shown no success for treatment in humans even though touted in the media as the source of great cures in the future; and

WHEREAS, There are calls across the nation by many for state and federal funding of ESCR; and

WHEREAS, Voters in the state of Missouri faced such a campaign in the November 2006 election, which passed by a narrow margin in support of ESCR, now allowing this type of research in that state; and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures are replete with references showing that God cares for and defends the weak and the fatherless (Deut. 10:18; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 10:14) and, furthermore, that we are to "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Prov. 31:8–9 NIV); and

WHEREAS, Christians are to let their light shine in this dark world regarding this type of ethical dilemma, and since the LCMS takes a strong and clear pro-life position; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That in our preaching and teaching we emphasize that it is God alone who gives life and who is to take human life; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Synod urges its members to give public witness against the destruction of human life in embryonic stem cell research; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the 2007 LCMS convention make known its support of adult stem cell research and its opposition to ESCR which involves the taking of a human life.

**Action:** Adopted (4)

(During discussion, an amendment to add "embryonic" before "stem cell research" in the second-last resolve was agreed to by the committee. An amendment to delete "and has so far shown no success for treatment in humans even though touted in the media as the source of great cures in the future" from the fifth whereas paragraph failed. After further discussion, the resolution was adopted as changed [Yes: 1,165; No: 41].)

**To Care for Foster and Adoptive Children in a Pure and Undeclared Way  
by Not Placing Children in Morally Ambiguous Contexts**

**RESOLUTION 6-03A**

**Overture 6-04 (CW, p. 228)**

WHEREAS, Even though the Scriptures do not directly address social and political questions concerning the adoption (or foster care) of children, they do call for Christians to care for orphans in a pure and undeclared way; and

WHEREAS, All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and no sin is intrinsically more sinful than another, yet the Bible does clearly teach that sexual relations outside of marriage, including homosexual practice, are intrinsically sinful (see 1973 Res. 2-04); and

WHEREAS, The God-given union of husband and wife in marriage “is the only proper context for human procreation” (1983 Res. 3-14) and therefore the divinely intended context for raising children; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) has stated, “On the basis of the clear teaching of Scripture regarding homosexual behavior and about God’s will and design for marriage and the family as foundational units for society as a whole, it is the opinion of the CTCR that a policy of placing adopted or foster children into homosexual contexts would stand in opposition to the official doctrinal position of the LCMS” (May 2, 2006); and

WHEREAS, Christ died for the sins of all people and forgives repentant people and calls for them to live sanctified lives in accord with His natural law; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod commit themselves to pray for wisdom and guidance for those charged with placing adopted or foster children in light of the challenging circumstances presented to us by a fallen society; and be it further

*Resolved*, That LCMS World Relief and Human Care be commended for its faithful witness and be encouraged to continue dealing evangelically with this delicate issue; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Synod express its deepest appreciation for the faithful service of its recognized service organizations in this area; and be it further

*Resolved*, That LCMS World Relief and Human Care, in consultation with the CTCR, be directed to have ongoing conversation with LCMS recognized service organizations as they continue faithfully to care for children in these difficult situations; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That LCMS organizations and LCMS recognized service organizations may not knowingly place adopted or foster children into any intrinsically sinful situations where individuals and families are not living in accordance with the Lord’s natural and revealed law (Bylaw 6.2.1).

**Action:** Adopted (8)

(During discussion, the committee agreed to add “and revealed” after “natural” in the final resolve. The resolution was adopted as changed [Yes: 1,017; No: 52].)

**To Encourage and Assist Congregations to Respond  
to the Ministry Needs of the Immigrants in their Midst**

**RESOLUTION 6-04A**

**Overture 6-02 (CW, p. 227)**

WHEREAS, The President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, and the Executive Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, Rev. Matthew Harrison, have issued a joint statement (June 2, 2006) urging compassionate mercy on undocumented immigrants living in our communities, according to our scriptural conviction to love one another as God, in Jesus Christ, loves us (1 John 4:22); and

WHEREAS, An increasing number of our LCMS congregations are being set *Ablaze!* by the power of the Holy Spirit to reach out to documented and undocumented immigrant souls living in their respective geographical areas in the clear and powerful name of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, Our LCMS congregations, compelled by vibrant faith in the reconciling love of Christ for all sinners (Eph. 2:8–9, 13–17; 2 Cor. 5:18–20) have included in their outreach ministries a concern for both body and soul, assisting documented and undocumented immigrants with legal and counseling services, helping them to identify and realize God-pleasing goals; and

WHEREAS, It is important for congregations compassionately to address the sinfulness of illegal activity through the application of Law and Gospel; and

WHEREAS, Our LCMS pastors and congregations, as a matter of conscience and conviction, take seriously the scriptural mandate to welcome the stranger in our midst:

Deut. 10:18–19: “He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are alien, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.”

Lev. 19:33–34: “When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

Heb. 13:2: “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Matt. 25:40: “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.’”

and

WHEREAS, The United States of America is a country governed by law; and

WHEREAS, Immigration reform may open opportunities for our LCMS congregations, in partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services Affiliate agencies, to assist undocumented immigrants to become residents and citizens; and

WHEREAS, Legal documentation will open opportunities for immigrants and their families now living in our communities to enhance their God-given dignity and self-respect, becoming increasingly productive and vital participants in our American society and LCMS congregations; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Synod in convention:

1. Thank President Gerald Kieschnick and Rev. Matthew Harrison for their joint statement urging the church’s compassionate mercy on documented and undocumented immigrants.

2. Encourage our LCMS members to pray for the resolution of this issue facing our nation and local congregations, and as conscience and faith conviction leads them, to contact their congressmen and senators encouraging them to address this issue with compassionate mercy.
3. Encourage the Board for Human Care Ministries to assist congregations by providing information regarding legal and counseling services possibly needed by undocumented immigrants responding to legislation enabling them to become residents and citizens.

**Action:** Adopted (10)

(During discussion, the committee agreed to change #3 of the resolve to read: “3. Encourage Board for Human Care Ministries to provide legal and counseling services to undocumented immigrants responding to legislation enabling them to become residents and citizens.” After a motion was introduced to amend the resolution by striking #3 in the resolve, new wording was again proposed: “3. Encourage the Board for Human Care Ministries to assist congregations by providing information regarding legal and counseling services possibly needed by undocumented immigrants responding to legislation enabling them to become residents and citizens.” After the motion to delete #3 failed, the resolution with the newest wording for #3 was adopted [Yes: 744; No: 204].)

## To Develop Domestic and Child Abuse Education Materials and Programs

### RESOLUTION 6-06

#### Overture L6-07 (TB, pp. 47–48)

WHEREAS, Domestic violence in this country has reached epidemic proportions, with 31% of women experiencing physical assault from a partner<sup>1</sup>, and 40% of teenage girls age 14–17 report knowing someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, Synod President Dr. Alvin Barry recognized the gravity of this issue and convened the President's Commission on Women to look into the problem of domestic violence in the church; and

WHEREAS, Although in 2001 this commission produced and distributed to pastors two booklets entitled, *Never Will I Leave You/A Pastor's Handbook on Domestic Violence* and *Has God Abandoned Me?/A Christian Woman's Guide to Domestic Violence*, these booklets are no longer in print; and

WHEREAS, Child abuse in this country has also reached epidemic proportions, with 2.5 million cases of child abuse reported each year<sup>3</sup> and the actual incidence estimated at three times that amount<sup>4</sup>, with one in three girls and one in seven boys sexually abused prior to the age of 18<sup>5</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Due to advances in technology via the Internet, pornography is more readily available than ever before and pedophilia attempts are escalating at an alarming rate; and

WHEREAS, Clergy sexual misconduct constitutes a portion of the abuse problem and each congregation has a responsibility to monitor these situations and to protect parishioners from this type of misconduct; and

WHEREAS, Domestic violence is primarily perpetrated against females<sup>6</sup>, child abuse affects both males and females equally, so that in all cases, churches need to equip themselves to deal with both female and male victims and perpetrators; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Synod direct the Board for Human Care Ministries to appoint a committee to examine these issues and provide materials and trained individuals to assist districts, congregations, and schools in addressing abuse and ministering to the spiritual needs of those struggling with the effects of abuse; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Synod make these same materials and training available to seminary and professional church worker students; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the Board for Human Care Ministries, in consultation with the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), examine these issues and comment specifically on the topics of forgiveness, repentance, and reconciliation in the context of abuse situations.

1 The Commonwealth Fund, *Health Concerns Across a Woman's Lifespan: 1998 Survey of Women's Health*, May 1999.

2 Children Now/Kaiser Permanente poll, December 1995.

3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Child Maltreatment 2001* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2003). Online summary of findings: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cm01/outcover.htm>.

4 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. *Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report (NIS-3)* (Washington, DC.: Government Printing Office, September 1996).

5 From the Faith Trust Institute Web site: [http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/index.php?p=Q\\_%26\\_A&s=49](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/index.php?p=Q_%26_A&s=49).

6 Bureau of Justice Statistics Selected Findings: *Violence Between Intimates* (NCJ-149259), November 1994, and *A Report of the Violence against Women Research Strategic Planning Workshop* sponsored by the National Institute of Justice in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human services, 1995.

**Action:** Adopted (8)

(During discussion, a motion to delete the words “recognized the gravity of this issue and” in the second whereas prompted the chair to advise that the resolution be referred back to the committee to resolve concerns with wording. The committee attempted to resolve the concerns by changing “sexual misconduct” to “domestic violence” in the second whereas. Additional amendments adding “and professional church worker” after “seminary” in the second resolve and changing the title by inserting “Domestic and Child” before “Abuse” were agreed to by the committee. A motion to amend the resolution by deleting the sixth whereas led to a motion to recommit the resolution to the committee because the meaning of the motion had been changed. The motion to recommit failed as did the motion to amend. After continued discussion, the resolution was adopted as changed [Yes: 1,027; No: 48].)

## To Include People with Disabilities in All Aspects of the Church's Life

### RESOLUTION 6-07

#### Report 6-01 (CW, pp. 91–96)

WHEREAS, 2004 LCMS convention Res. 6-09 directed the LCMS Board for Human Care Ministries to address the following:

1. a mission statement for this ministry with and to people with disabilities;
2. a congregational self-assessment tool to assess the needs of people with disabilities;
3. plans and guidelines to address physical and attitudinal barriers in churches;
4. suggestions whereby people with disabilities can be involved in the life and ministry of a congregation; and
5. congregational outreach to people with disabilities to achieve participation in the life and ministry of the congregation;

and

WHEREAS, The Board for Human Care Ministries established the Disability Ministry Task Force, which began meeting in September 2005 under the mission statement: "To facilitate the full participation of people with disabilities in the life of Christ's Church"; and

WHEREAS, The Disability Ministry Task Force has identified the disabilities that fall under its oversight, namely:

1. Blindness
2. Deafness
3. Developmental disabilities
4. Learning disabilities
5. Mental illness
6. Physical disabilities

and

WHEREAS, People with disabilities and their families represent millions of people in the United States and around the world, 90% of whom do not attend church, many unaware of the Good News of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, The Disability Ministry Task Force has developed a Web site, a disability awareness DVD, a Bible study, a congregational assessment tool, and other resources for use by national and district Synod and by local congregations; and

WHEREAS, The Disability Ministry Task Force has gathered resources from agencies and organizations supporting people with the disabilities under its oversight and has placed those resources and Web sites on the Disability Ministry Web site; and

WHEREAS, The church is called to reach out to all people (Matt. 28:16–20) so that they may believe in Christ and have eternal life (John 3:16), and the outreach includes people with disabilities (Acts 10:34); therefore be it

*Resolved*, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, through its national and district offices and local congregations, utilize the resources at its disposal to educate congregations and to encourage and facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities and their families in the life of Christ's church, including service as church work professionals; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the seminaries and universities of Synod be commended and encouraged in their effort to educate church work students for ministry with people with disabilities, and that workers, schools, universities and congregations partner with agencies and organizations that support people with disabilities, such as Bethesda Lutheran Homes and the Board for Human Care Ministries; and be it finally



*Resolved*, That Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod entities and individual members advocate for people with disabilities within Synod and in the community-at-large, and support people with disabilities in advocating for themselves.

**Action:** Adopted (10)

(After discussion, the resolution was adopted as presented by the committee [Yes: 926; No: 13].)

## To Encourage Congregations to Provide Professional Church Worker Sabbaticals

### RESOLUTION 6-08

#### Overture 6-06 (*CW*, p. 228)

WHEREAS, Nourishing one's soul and regaining perspective requires a change of pace and place—a pilgrimage. We can be recharged by walking with Jesus during an extended time of reflection, spiritual encounter, and community; and

WHEREAS, A sabbatical typically includes time for study, rest, prayer, spiritual enrichment, and experiencing different cultures; and

WHEREAS, A sabbatical is a time to receive, to be nurtured, and to reflect on one's relationship with God so that one may be renewed, refreshed, and revitalized for a life of service to others; and

WHEREAS, Sabbaticals are beneficial to congregations and church workers and their families as well as the Church at large; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the concept and the use of sabbaticals be encouraged among the congregations and agencies of the LCMS as it pertains to their professional church workers; and be it further

*Resolved*, That congregations be encouraged to consider resources for developing sabbatical guidelines such as Wheat Ridge, Thrivent Financial, Louisville Institute, Lilly Foundation, as well as several of our LCMS districts which have existing sabbatical guidelines; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support be charged with developing model Synod guidelines for use in the Synod.

**Action:** Adopted (10)

(After brief discussion, the resolution was adopted as presented by the committee [Yes: 680; No: 59].)

## To Encourage Ministry to Armed Forces Personnel and Families

### RESOLUTION 6-09

#### Overture 6-05 (CW, p. 228)

WHEREAS, United States Armed Forces continue to serve around the world, and many of these service members are on their second and third deployments; and

WHEREAS, The stress of deployments in a war zone is tremendous, not only on the service member but also their families; and

WHEREAS, Many of these service members and their families are members of LCMS congregations; and

WHEREAS, The Ministry to the Armed Forces of the LCMS can only reach so many of these service members and their families; and

WHEREAS, The Northwest District of the LCMS through its Ministry to Military Personnel, Families, and Congregations Task Force has developed an intentional and comprehensive plan for ministry to this specific area of need; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the LCMS in convention encourage all of its districts to develop intentional and specific ministry plans for reaching out to the specific needs of service members and their families; and be it further

*Resolved*, That we thank the Ministry to the Armed Forces of the LCMS for its outstanding leadership and ministry and request that it identify guidelines for districts in this vital area of need.

**Action:** Adopted (10)

(The resolution was adopted as presented by the committee without discussion [Yes: 715; No: 10].)