

CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
QUARTERLY

CTQ

Volume 53, Numbers 1-2

JANUARY-APRIL 1989

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# Faculty Overtures

The faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary has adopted a number of overtures to the Fifty-Seventh Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which is to take place in Wichita (Kansas) in July of this year. All these proposals will, of course, appear in the forthcoming *Convention Workbook*. The editors of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* have chosen for publication in this forum several overtures of a particularly theological and academic nature.

## TO ENCOURAGE USE OF THE HISTORIC LITURGIES OF THE CHURCH

Whereas the Lutheran liturgy of the Gospel and the Sacraments is the primary means by which the church hands down its biblical and confessional faith from generation to generation and nurtures her members; and

Whereas the Lutheran liturgy of the Gospel and the Sacraments is the primary means by which the church shows confessional unity with the past and among congregations in the Synod; and

Whereas the Lutheran liturgy of the Gospel and the Sacraments is transforming of the culture and not *vice versa*; and

Whereas Article X of the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, entitled "The Ecclesiastical Rites that are Called Adiaphora or Things Indifferent," states: "We should not consider as matters of indifference, and we should avoid as forbidden by God, ceremonies which are basically contrary to the Word of God, even though they go under the name and guise of external adiaphora and are given a different color from their true one"; and

Whereas the preamble of the *Handbook* of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Article VI, entitled "Conditions of Membership," states that "conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod" include "exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school"; and

Whereas the bylaws of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (in the *Handbook* of the LCMS) on the Commission on Worship, "3.598 Functions and Duties," states "the commission shall...b. clear all literature related to corporate Christian

worship in liturgics and hymnology made available through the Synod's boards or through Concordia Publishing House; c. recommend worship materials to the church and advise and warn against the use of worship materials which are unworthy of use in the Christian worship of the Lutheran Church"; and

Whereas there is a proliferation of homemade liturgies cropping up in the church that reflect an unbiblical, unorthodox, and non-Lutheran perspective; and

Whereas there are liturgies from synodical commissions and boards that also reflect an unbiblical, unorthodox, and non-Lutheran perspective, and are sometimes even inane;

[Two examples are these:

1. A homemade liturgy from a recent service in an LCMS congregation on October 18, 1987, contained the following in the bulletin:

The Words of Institution (sung in unison)  
(Tune: "Blowin' in the Wind")

Jesus, our Lord, was betrayed on that night,  
The night when He broke bread with friends  
He broke from a loaf and He gave each a piece,  
Telling them all what it meant:  
This is My body which I give to you,  
Before I am broken in death.  
Eat it, my friends, remembering my death,  
Eat it, remembering my death.

Jesus, our Lord, at the close of the meal,  
Took hold of a cup filled with wine,  
He gave thanks to God, and He gave each a drink,  
Telling them all what it meant:  
This cup is a covenant sealed by My blood,  
To guarantee forgiveness for life.  
Drink it, my friends, remembering my death.  
Drink it, remembering my death.

2. A recent prayer from an evangelism service entitled "New Life, New Love," published by the Board for Evangelism Services, reads as follows:

Minister: There is so much for which to be thankful,  
Lord, that our hearts sometimes burst with  
the joy of all that You have given us.

People: We thank You for the briskness of a crisp morning, the brightness of a starry night, the shade of a tree under the hot sun.

Speech Chorus: We thank You for the bargain bought on sale, the thrill of a good golf swing, the satisfaction of a job well done, the love of someone special.]

therefore be it

Resolved that the Synod affirm its Lutheran liturgical heritage; and be it further

Resolved that for theological reasons as well as an exhibition of good churchmanship, the church discourage congregations from using homemade liturgies that do not reflect our Lutheran theological and liturgical traditions; and be it further

Resolved that all commissions of Synod which write liturgies on behalf of the church obtain prior approval from the Commission on Worship; and be it finally

Resolved that the church seek uniformity in its liturgical services to show confessional unity with the past and among congregations in the Synod.

## TO MAINTAIN THE PRACTICE OF CLOSE COMMUNION

Whereas the matter of open communion in pastoral practice in some quarters of the Synod continues to cause disquiet, confusion, and offense; and

Whereas our Synod in convention has pleaded “that pastors and congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, except in situations of emergency and in special cases of pastoral care, commune individuals of only those Lutheran Synods which are now in fellowship with us” (1967 Resolution 2-19; cf. also 1969 Resolution 3-18, 1977 Resolution 3-12, 1981 Resolution 3-01 and 3-04, 1986 Resolution 3-08), a resolution never rescinded but often reaffirmed; and

Whereas the Commission on Theology and Church Relations has responded definitively in response to Synod’s request to state reasons why close communion should be viewed as being in conformity with scriptural and confessional teaching

(cf. "Theology and Practice of the Lord's Supper," A Report of the CTCR, May 1983) and why such practice should be continued among us in the churches; and

Whereas fellowship at the altar continues to be the highest manifestation or expression of our being "one bread, one body," a confession of the intimate "communion" existing between the partakers of the Supper, united in faith and understanding of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament; and

Whereas the practice of close communion must not be perceived as unloving and insensitive separation of ourselves from other Christians, but as pastoral faithfulness (1 Cor.4: 1-2) motivated also by heartfelt loving care and concern for those who commune, that they may receive the Lord's body and blood for their salvation's sake and not for their hurt in failing to discern the Lord's body and blood; and

Whereas "by their exclusion from the celebration of the Holy Supper in communion with the Lutheran Church, members of erring communions are not being excommunicated, much less declared to be heretics and condemned, but they are merely being suspended until they shall have reconciled themselves with the orthodox church by renouncing the false communion (or fellowship) in which they stand" (C.F.W. Walther, "1870 Theses on Altar Fellowship with the Heterodox," *A Lutheran Witness Reprint*, 1988, p. 12); and

Whereas careful nurture and instruction on the nature, meaning, and salutary practice of the Lord's Supper need to be provided regularly in sermons, Bible classes, and other group meetings, not only for the sake of the youth but also for all members of the congregation; and

Whereas unionistic and careless practice in connection with individuals at our altars contributes to and opens doors to unionistic practice in a general way and to a spirit of indifferentism in matters of doctrine and practice in our congregations, districts, and Synod; therefore be it

Resolved that the congregations and pastors of our Synod continue to support the evangelical practice of close communion, mindful of the concerns previously expressed in behalf of pastoral care in exceptional cases; and be it further

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Resolved that pastors and congregations alike always honor and uphold their solemn mutual commitment to Synod's biblical and confessional "conditions of membership" (Constitution, Article VI) also as regards "renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description."

#### TO AFFIRM THE DIVINITY OF THE CALL

Whereas the church must continually define itself vis-a-vis its surrounding culture; and

Whereas the sacred truths of Holy Scripture must be appropriated afresh by each generation of faith; and

Whereas there is an increased tendency, whether conscious or unconscious, to view the office of the holy ministry in other than biblical and confessional categories; and

Whereas current practice of appointments to serve (contracts) terminable upon notice in as little as thirty days, yet construed as a "divine call," reflect more a corporate model than a churchly one; and

Whereas the divine call, so central to our theological confession, is distant from careerist, managerial, and contractual models of ministry—the very emphases of our culture; therefore be it

Resolved that the church affirm its historic confession concerning the doctrine of the holy ministry; and be it further

Resolved that secular models (e.g., employing and dismissing people at will) be consciously avoided; and be it finally

Resolved that the synodical practice in calling staff to synodical and district offices be brought into conformity with the Synod's historically-held biblical and confessional theology of the call by ceasing the current practice of issuing calls with such limited tenure.

#### TO SEEK AND DETERMINE ALTERNATE ROUTES INTO THE MINISTRY

Whereas there is increasing need for pastors to carry out the ministry of nurture and outreach both at home and abroad; and

Whereas the church has always insisted upon a thoroughly prepared clergy, both doctrinally sound and evangelical in practice; and

Whereas current training programs appear not to be providing sufficient numbers of men to enter the ordained ministry of the church; and

Whereas there is a substantial pool of consecrated laymen who, in spite of academic and professional experience, can only enter into the ordained ministry through the full Master of Divinity curriculum; and

Whereas the church over the years has in times of need employed various alternative routes into the pastoral office; and

Whereas another area of exploration may well be in the concepts, stages, or levels of preparation and readiness leading ultimately to full ordination; and

Whereas there may well be other routes into the pastoral ministry theologically sound and ecclesiastically acceptable; therefore be it

Resolved that the Standing Committee for Pastoral Ministry add to its agenda the whole matter of alternate routes into the pastoral office, always keeping Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession uppermost in mind; and be it further

Resolved that any such program involve the seminary faculties of the Synod to whom the Synod has entrusted the responsibility of preparing able ministers of the Gospel.

## TO CLARIFY STATUS WITH THE ELCA AND WELCOME CONFSSIONAL PASTORS OF THE ELCA

### A.

Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America practices "interim eucharistic sharing" with the Episcopal Church; and

Whereas *An Invitation to Action: The Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue, Series III, 1981-1983* (Fortress Press, 1984) is predicated on the claim that "the Reformed Confessions have always taught and still teach the real presence of Christ in the

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Eucharist” and that the difference is simply about the “mode” of this presence and should not divide the churches; and

Whereas such claims directly contradict the Formula of Concord (see especially SD VII, 2-8); and

Whereas altar and pulpit fellowship with Reformed churches was already implemented by antecedent bodies of the ELCA on the basis of *Invitation to Action* [“Acceptance of this dialogue report, *An Invitation to Action*, was uneven. Nevertheless all three uniting churches made commitments to fuller relationships with the Reformed churches in 1986, and left this as a challenge to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” (*Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Proposed Statement for the First Assembly with Study Guide*, p. 5)]; and

Whereas by its non-protesting membership in the Lutheran World Federation the ELCA is, according to the LWF’s 1984 constitution, in full pulpit and altar fellowship with all other members of that federation; and

Whereas many member churches of the Lutheran World Federation are in pulpit and altar fellowship with Reformed churches on the basis of the Leuenberg Concord, thus denying the sacramental teaching of Holy Scripture as faithfully confessed in the Book of Concord; and

Whereas the ELCA, in opposition to the apostolic-prophetic Scriptures of God, purports to ordain women into the sacred ministry of Word and Sacrament; and

Whereas the ELCA’s leading dogmatics textbook, used in the education of its clergy, is so dominated by historical-critical thinking, that our Lord’s eternally pre-existent divine nature is mocked as “Jesus’ metaphysical double” and the Holy Trinity “re-interpreted” as “simply the Father and the man Jesus and their Spirit as the Spirit of the believing community” (Braaten and Jenson, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p. 155); and

Whereas these facts lend renewed urgency in our region of the world to the question, “Will Lutheranism everywhere become merely a viewpoint within church bodies that are not in fact Lutheran?” (H. Sasse, *We Confess the Church*, p. 42); therefore be it



Resolved that, apart from local protests amounting to a genuine "state of confession," the LCMS cannot regard or treat the pulpits and altars of the ELCA as confessionally Lutheran, in the sense of the Book of Concord, but must recognize them as heterodox, union pulpits and altars; and be it finally

Resolved that the LCMS earnestly urge its entire membership, and especially the public ministers of the Gospel, never to take for granted the evangelical treasures of the Book of Concord, but diligently to study, cherish, confess, and apply them, in the face of all pressures for unchurchly novelties.

#### B.

Whereas the LCMS recognizes and respects the deep personal crisis in which the spiritual heirs of confessionally faithful Lutheran teachers like Charles Porterfield Krauth find themselves in the ELCA; therefore be it

Resolved that the Colloquy Board together with the Council of Presidents and the seminaries, in the case of experienced ELCA pastors seeking entry into the LCMS on conscientious grounds and whose orthodoxy and general suitability are fully established, at their discretion adjust the colloquy requirements to ease entry of such men into the ministerium of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and be it further

Resolved that the managers of the Concordia Plans be instructed to seek an agreement with their counterparts in the ELCA which would allow pastors and teachers who change churches from *bona fide* conviction in either direction to do so without loss of pension.

#### TO REJECT "RENEWAL IN MISSOURI"

Whereas "Renewal in Missouri," issued chiefly by pastors of the LCMS, seeks to make the Charismatic Movement acceptable to the LCMS; and

Whereas the CTCR has in its Convention Report found "Renewal in Missouri" to be at odds with the doctrinal position of the LCMS; and

Whereas *Welcome, Holy Spirit*, edited by Larry Christenson (Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), was co-authored also by founding members of "Renewal in Missouri" and is promoted by "Renewal in Missouri"; and

Whereas *Welcome, Holy Spirit* seriously misleads the church about the nature and sources of true renewal and unity, by identifying such renewal and unity with the progress of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement and its distinctive features, while relativizing the orthodox church and confession; and

Whereas true renewal in the church must be sought not in man-made schemes but in faithful evangelical preaching and in the Holy Sacraments (Augsburg Confession V, VI, XIII, XX); and

Whereas the proper criteria by which all claims of unity and reunification must be tested and judged are the marks of the church, the purely preached Gospel and the rightly administered Sacraments of Christ (Augsburg Confession VII; compare Formula of Concord, SD X, 31); therefore be it

Resolved that Synod hold that neither the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement in general nor the attempted "Lutheranization" of it by "Renewal in Missouri" in particular is compatible with the biblical-evangelical teaching and sobriety of the Book of Concord; and be it further

Resolved that district and synodical officials responsible for doctrinal discipline draw the appropriate conclusions, proceeding always with the utmost consideration for the individuals concerned, but also with true evangelical and confessional decisiveness; and be it finally

Resolved that congregations and synodical entities, as a matter of confession in time of crisis (Formula of Concord X), be requested to avoid Pentecostal-Charismatic "styles" of worship, because these do not express the substance of the Lutheran confession but suggest, promote, and encourage an alien and unchurchly confession.

#### TO RESIST THE INTRUSION OF FEMINIST THEOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

Whereas the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has stated on several occasions its position that the ordination of women as pastors is contrary to the written Word of God; and

Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has continued to persist in such ordinations; and

Whereas the ordination of women as pastors has reached

crisis proportions with eighty-four American Christian denominations having women pastors (including the American Baptists, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the United Methodists, and the United Church of Christ); and

Whereas the percentage of women pastors is increasing to the point that within ten years nearly half of all pastors in these churches, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will be women; and

Whereas the feminization of theology which accompanies the ordination of women speaks of God in non-biblical terms such as Mother and finds the biblical revelation of God as Father-Son-Holy Spirit unacceptable without a feministic corrective, such as "Creator-Redeemer-Comforter"; therefore be it

Resolved that the LCMS affirm that any church which ordains women as pastors has offended against the specific prohibitions of Saint Paul and is not apostolic in the terms set forth in these New Testament references; and be it further

Resolved that all purported ordinations of women into the pastoral office are contrary to the Word of God and therefore invalid, so that all their official acts are done by laymen; and be it further

Resolved that the president of the LCMS make this resolution and the confession which it makes available immediately to all churches with which it has been in dialogue or fellowship negotiations, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

Resolved that the LCMS continue to refer to God only in the terms set forth in the Holy Scriptures, according to the controlling models contained in those Scriptures, and that no adjustment of these terms be made to satisfy any movement, including feminist theology (V. Eller, *The Language of Canaan and the Grammar of Feminism*, 1982); and be it finally

Resolved that LCMS editors be instructed to resist the imposition on synodical publications of "femspeak" (objection to generic "man," "mankind," "chairman," etc.), which is open to serious objections on both theological and linguistic grounds (V. Eller, *The Language of Canaan and the Grammar of Feminism*, 1982; and M. Vetterling-Braggin, *Sexist Language*, 1981, *passim*).

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TO FUND THE ASSOCIATION OF CONFESSIONAL  
LUTHERAN SEMINARIES

Whereas the Association of Confessional Lutheran Seminaries (ACLS) was founded in 1980 for and by the seminaries and theological institutions of the International Lutheran Conference (ILC), of which the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) is a member; and

Whereas the ACLS has as its charter purpose the mutual edification of its member seminaries through the exchange of professors and students and theological journals and general information about staffing and other activities; and

Whereas the ACLS meets from time to time (Oberursel, Cambridge, Saint Catharines) to further its goal of theological exchange in the presentation and defense of our Lutheran Confessions; and

Whereas the ACLS has been supported by the LCMS and other churches in the ILC for conducting these meetings; and

Whereas the ACLS had to cancel its proposed 1988 meeting (in River Forest) for lack of funding; and

Whereas the autonomy of the ACLS as confessional witness is dependent upon funding from the parent bodies of its members; therefore be it

Resolved that the LCMS recognize and provide financial support for ACLS for its meetings, correspondence, and publication services through the necessary budget allowances made for the Commission on Theology and Church Relations; and be it further

Resolved that seminaries send representatives to meetings of the ACLS according to the procedures of each of the member seminaries; and be it further

Resolved that the ACLS address theological and seminary issues as its members and parent bodies offer them for consideration by the ACLS.

The Faculty  
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