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# **Two Resolutions from the Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne, Indiana**

## **Regarding Lutheran Identity**

WHEREAS when two or more churches accept mutual pulpit and altar fellowship, they thereby become one church; and

WHEREAS the ELCA in 1997 formally declared pulpit and altar fellowship with the Presbyterian Church USA, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ, all of which belong to the Calvinist/Reformed tradition and confession; and

WHEREAS the ELCA formally accepted a Joint Declaration on Justification with the Roman Catholic Church; and

WHEREAS the Reformed churches have historically affirmed an understanding of the Lord's Supper which denies the real presence of the body and the blood of Jesus in the sacrament (see FC VII); and

WHEREAS Roman Catholic understandings of justification continue to confuse Law and Gospel; and

WHEREAS this tragedy for American Lutheranism has a complex background and global implications (for sample documentation see overtures in LCMS Convention Workbook 1977:112-113; 1979:113; 1981:177-178, 188; 1983:116, 120-121; 1986:128, 133-134; 1989:178-179); and

WHEREAS these actions by the ELCA raise fundamental questions about the Lutheran character of the ELCA and about the appropriate relationship which the LCMS should have with the ELCA at local, district, and national levels; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the LCMS in convention express its deep regret that the ELCA through these actions has ceased clearly and unambiguously to confess the two most central confessional Lutheran distinctives (justification and the sacramental presence); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the President of the Synod be requested to take all appropriate steps to lead the Synod at all levels in a careful study of the nature of Lutheran confessional identity, and to do so in the closest possible union with our sister churches throughout the world.

### Regarding Close(d) Communion

WHEREAS the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has maintained and still maintains, in continuity with the ancient church, the historic practice of closed or close communion (see W. Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries*); and

WHEREAS the Holy Supper expresses the participants' deep union, through Christ's body and blood, with God and with each other (1 Cor. 10:16-17); and

WHEREAS joint participation in the Supper of the Lord expresses agreement in the apostolic faith and doctrine, including, of course, the confession that the bread and wine in this supper are the actual body and blood of the Lord (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16-17); and

WHEREAS the ancient church and the church of the Lutheran Reformation saw the promiscuous observance of the Holy Supper with members of churches which opposed the full apostolic truth of the Gospel in any article, as a desecration of this most holy Sacrament (see Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 10:18; 11:26-29; Gal. 1:6-9; Heb. 13:10); and

WHEREAS advocates of "open communion" often argue that "denominational differences" are "man-made" and should not divide communicants at the Lord's altar; but

WHEREAS unlike details of "denomination" (name, designation) or organization, the solemn confession of the apostolic truth against all counterfeits is divinely instituted and mandated in the very foundation of the church (St. Mt. 10:32-33; 16:16-18; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 2:20; 4:5; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:2-5; Titus 1:9-11; 2 Jn. 10-11; Jude 3); and

WHEREAS to receive the Sacrament at the altar of another confession, or to give it to communicants of another confession, is to deny or compromise one's own confession; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod requires its President, District Presidents, Circuit Counselors, and other officials to give high priority, in their work of encouragement and supervision, to the maintenance of confessional integrity in the practice of closed or close communion.