

Christian education, especially counseling that the most effective education agencies available to the church for equipping children and youth for ministry are the full-time Lutheran elementary and secondary schools, so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may become even more effective in the life of the individual Christian and of the congregation.”

Action: Adopted (6)

To Build Consensus on Worship

RESOLUTION 2-10

Report R2-02 (CW pp. 28-29); Overtures 2-01-10, 2-15-17, 2-20-25 (CW pp. 127-29, 131-34)

Preamble

Our Lutheran Confessions state that “the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness” (AP IV 310). It is through the Word of God and the Sacraments that our Lord delivers this forgiveness and grace, thus nourishing and sustaining His church (Acts 2:42; AC V). Through His commands to baptize and teach (Matt. 28:19-20) and to “do this” in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25), Jesus has revealed what is absolutely necessary for the church’s worship, namely that “the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly” (AC VII 1).

Beyond these divinely mandated means of grace, God has not commanded additional rites that must be observed (Gal. 5:1; Acts 15:10-11; Col. 2:16-17, 20-23; Matt. 15:8-9). The Lutheran Confessions reiterate this point, especially rejecting the opinion that human rites and ceremonies are necessary for salvation (AC XV 2-4; AP XV 5, 10-11; etc.). Furthermore, they state that the unity of the Church is not dependent on a similarity of rites (AC VII 3; AP VII/VIII 33a).

Because the Word of God and the Sacraments cannot be delivered to the people of God in a vacuum, some form of rites and ceremonies will be necessary. Through the centuries, the church has instituted various rites for this very purpose. Our confessions acknowledge the usefulness of these rites, especially in so far as they promote good order and tranquility in the church and aid in the discipline and instruction of God’s people (AC XV 1; AP XV 13, 20-21, 38; FC SD X 7; c.f., 1 Cor. 14:33a, 40). Likewise, the Confessions encourage the use of the church’s rites and ceremonies for the sake of love, especially for the weak in faith (AP XV 51; AP XXVIII 17; AC XXVIII 55). The church’s common rites and ceremonies not only set apart the church from the world, but also serve as a unifying force within the church, allowing Christians from every land and race to join together with one voice to praise their Maker and Redeemer.

The synodical Constitution recognizes the balanced approach of our confessional understanding. On the one hand, Article VI lists as a condition of membership the “exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school” (Article VI, 4). This requirement is not intended as the imposition of a new law on congregations, but is, rather, an agreement we have voluntarily made with one another for the sake of good order in our

walk together. On the other hand, Article III encourages “congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice, but also to develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith” (Art. III, 7).

Recent synodical conventions have addressed concerns related to worship (e.g., 1992, Res. 2-02 and 3-16; 1995, Res. 2-06 and 2-07). A number of overtures have again highlighted both the concern of divergence in practice and the reminder of our freedom in Christ. In order to express our God-given unity in the Gospel, and to exhibit our love for one another, as we work toward a consensus, therefore be it

Resolved, That we rejoice in the gift of God’s grace received through the proclamation of the Gospel and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks for the opportunity provided in the worship assembly to thank, praise, sing, and petition in response to God’s grace; and be it further

Resolved, That we give thanks to God for the freedom in the Gospel that is ours in Christ; and be it further

Resolved, That we acknowledge that there is no one rite or ceremony that alone gives expression to the truth of the Gospel; and be it further

Resolved, That we acknowledge the blessings that have and continue to come to us through the rites and ceremonies of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That we remind one another of the promise we have made to use “doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms,” both to preserve the truth and for the sake of good order; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission on Worship bring together a forum representing the diversity of practices within the Synod (including representatives from such entities as the President’s office; the Council of Presidents; the Board for Congregational Services; the Board for Black Ministry Services; North American Missions; the colleges/universities and seminaries; conferences of congregations such as those for growing, mission, ethnic, and large churches; parish pastors; church musicians; and others) for the purposes of increasing understanding, building consensus in our doctrine and practice of worship, and providing input to the Commission on Worship as it develops guidelines for worship; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission on Worship enable a process by which songs and liturgical materials from sources other than LCMS publications might be reviewed for acceptability so that congregations may be assisted in their goal of using doctrinally pure worship materials; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission on Worship issue regular progress reports in a variety of ways and at many levels prior to a full progress report at the 2001 synodical convention; and be it finally

Resolved, That everyone heed the advice of Dr. Martin Luther who, in writing to the Christians in Livonia, penned words that speak directly to our time and place:

I pray all of you, my dear sirs, let each one surrender his own opinions and get together in a friendly way

and come to a common decision about these external matters, so that there will be one uniform practice throughout your district instead of disorder (*Luther's Works*, 53, 47).

Action: Adopted as amended (4)

(By amendment the eighth resolve was added. An effort to substitute Ov. 2-09 for the resolution was declined. An amendment calling for a change of title as well as substituting *in our doctrine as clearly revealed by the Holy Scriptures and in the historic practices of the church in our divine services for building consensus in our doctrine and practice of worship* in the seventh resolve was also defeated.)

To Commend *Hymnal Supplement 98*

RESOLUTION 2-11A

Report R2-02 (CW pp. 28-29)

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention (1995, Res. 2-07) encouraged the Commission on Worship to prepare a supplement of hymns; and

WHEREAS, Over the past two years appropriate materials have been gathered and doctrinally reviewed for such a supplement; and

WHEREAS, *Hymnal Supplement 98* has been produced and is being released and used at this convention; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention give thanks to God for *Hymnal Supplement 98* and be it further

Resolved, That *Hymnal Supplement 98* be commended for use throughout the Synod in its congregations, schools, and homes.

Action: Adopted (4)

To Encourage Work to Begin on New Hymnal

RESOLUTION 2-12

Report R2-02 (CW pp. 28-29); Overtures 2-18-19, 2-27 (CW pp. 132, 134)

WHEREAS, The Commission on Worship has proposed a timetable for preparing a new hymnal (CW p. 29); and

WHEREAS, Synodical Bylaw 3.929 a specifies the procedure for preparing and approving official hymnals of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Worship desires sufficient time to test and receive reaction to its work; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod assembled in convention encourage the Commission on Worship to begin the task of developing and testing materials, inclusive of all hymns found acceptable in the list of songs submitted for the African-American hymnal, for a new hymnal; and be it further

Resolved, That the Commission on Worship report to the 2001 synodical convention on its progress.

Action: Adopted as amended (6)

(By common consent the words *inclusive of all hymns found acceptable in the list of songs submitted for the African-American hymnal* were added between *materials* and *for* in the first resolve.)

To Support Annual Urban Institute

RESOLUTION 2-13A

Overture 2-40 (CW pp. 137-38)

WHEREAS, The apostle Paul's first mission strategy was very much an urban strategy of planting and strengthening churches in the cities of the Roman Empire (Rom. 15:22-24); and

WHEREAS, The United States continues the trend of becoming a more and more urban nation; and

WHEREAS, Urban ministry is a unique challenge and opportunity because of the many cultures that are found in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, Many of our urban congregations see the need for assistance in serving the changing populations of their neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Our whole Synod and all Districts are challenged to identify, train, and encourage urban church workers and congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, That the congregations and District and national staffs of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be encouraged to support the development of an annual Urban Institute conducted to train and support present and emerging urban workers; and be it further

Resolved, That the congregations and District and national staffs of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod seek to begin new ministry in at least one urban area in each District. Examples of this new ministry might be a new church plant or the development of new mission work by an existing congregation.

Action: Adopted (10)

To Encourage District Rural/Small Town Ministry Committees

RESOLUTION 2-14

Report R2-01 (CW pp. 20-28); Overture 2-41 (CW p. 138)

WHEREAS, The national Rural/Small Town Ministry Committee during the last three years has discovered that District Presidents along with lay leaders and pastors from rural/small town settings are seeking assistance with mission and ministry issues of rural/small town congregations; and

WHEREAS, The 2,100 (33 percent) rural/small town congregations spread throughout all the Districts have a unique cultural makeup and outlook very different from suburban settings; and

WHEREAS, The 653,000 baptized members (25 percent of the Synod's membership) live in geographic areas where agriculture, leisure/tourism, and the extraction industries of mining, fishing, or forestry are dominant means of making a living; and

WHEREAS, The congregations need to recognize the mission fields God has placed around them or the LCMS could lose 20-25 percent of rural/small town congregations in the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, The Board for Congregational Services has recognized the importance of the ministry to rural/small