



The Northwest District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

August 4, 2009

Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, President
International Center – LCMS
1333 South Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63122-7295

Dear President Kieschnick,

Enclosed are copies (in triplicate) of the Resolutions the Northwest District 2009 Convention is submitting as Overtures to the 2010 Synod Convention. I have also sent these to you electronically via email. The resolutions are as follows:

RESOLUTION 1-01a – To Allow Ministers of Religion – Commissioned to Serve As Delegates at Conventions

RESOLUTION 1-02a – To Support The Work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance

RESOLUTION 1-03a – To Retain Licensed Deacon Program

RESOLUTION 2-06a – To Memorialize the Synod to Include Disabilities Awareness Ministry Training In the Curricula of Synod's Seminaries and Universities

Also enclosed are Northwest District LCMS 3 overtures and 1 resolution that were referred to the BRTFSSG.

OVERTURE 1-05 – To Establish a Process By Which Commissioned Ministers May be Elected Delegates for DISTRICT conventions

OVERTURE 1-06 - To Establish a Process By Which Commissioned Ministers May be Elected Delegates for DISTRICT conventions

OVERTURE 1-11 – To Memorialize Synod to Abandon Its 'Guttenberg' Ways and Embrace our 'Google' World

RESOLUTION 1-06a – To Recognize Synod Trained Church Workers Not on Synod's Roster for IRS Purposes

If you have any questions about the above, feel free to contact us.

Peace in Christ,

Rev. Paul Linnemann
Secretary, Northwest District LCMS

Rev. Warren Schumacher
President, Northwest District LCMS

RESOLUTION: 1-01a

**TO ALLOW MINISTERS OF RELIGION – COMMISSIONED TO SERVE AS
DELEGATES AT CONVENTIONS**

WHEREAS, God has called His people to be workers in His kingdom as Ministers of Religion – Commissioned (Teachers, Directors of Christian Education, Family Life Ministers, etc.); and

WHEREAS, Ministers of Religion - Commissioned are looked upon to provide leadership in many schools, congregations, and agencies of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod; and

WHEREAS, there has been a long tradition of service from such Ministers of Religion - Commissioned; and

WHEREAS, the Synod Handbook does not allow such individuals to serve as voting delegates at either District or Synod Conventions; and

WHEREAS, Ministers of Religion - Commissioned are allowed to be advisory delegates, to the ratio of one Ministers of Religion - Commissioned per sixty (60) rostered Ministers of Religion - Commissioned in each district, at Synod Conventions (2007 Synod Handbook 3.1.3.1); and

WHEREAS, We, the members of the Northwest District, consider this voting privilege to be a high priority because of the ministry of the Ministers of Religion – Commissioned and the issue of equity, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest District in convention urge the Synod in Convention and the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance to provide Commissioned Ministers an opportunity to serve as voting delegates in convention. (Ref. overture 1-05).

Adopted **Yes – 224 No - 106**

RESOLUTION: 1-02a

**TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON SYNOD
STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE**

WHEREAS, the Gospel is God's precious gift to His people, and sharing this Gospel effectively with the people He loves must be the church's top priority; and

WHEREAS, the Gospel message is unchanging, yet the world in which we live is rapidly changing and requires the organization of the church to adopt practices and structures that enhance the Gospel's proclamation; and,

WHEREAS, the present polity of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has contributed to strife and a party spirit and inhibits the Gospel witness; and,

WHEREAS, the President's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance has been working with Synod and District leaders to design changes that better support the mission and ministry of the Gospel; and,

WHEREAS, the Northwest District appreciates that the Task Force has been posting its work on Synod's website so Synod is kept actively advised of its work, so that this important report can be available for maximum review and critique throughout the Synod prior to the convention; and be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest District in convention call upon the people of the Northwest District to be involved in prayer for this important effort; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Northwest District in convention support the efforts of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance.

Adopted **Yes – 227 No - 36**

RESOLUTION: 1-03a

TO RETAIN LICENSED DEACON PROGRAM

(Resolution 1-03 and 2-04 – *Suggested combination.*)

WHEREAS, small congregations and preaching stations in Alaska and other parts of the Northwest District have been wonderfully blessed through the Word and Sacrament ministries of Licensed Deacons; and

WHEREAS, The Northwest District has over 47 congregations with an average of 50 members or less attending church; and

WHEREAS, the licensed Deacon Program removes some barriers of time, distance and expense to service in these small and remote congregations; and

WHEREAS, utilization of trained Licensed Deacons is an effective way to do ministry in small and isolate areas as well as in various congregational ministries; and

WHEREAS, the present Leadership Advancement Process (LAP) program of the Northwest District continues to provide theological education relevant to congregations and preaching stations in the District and for training Licensed Deacons to serve in these settings, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Northwest District congregations, agencies, organizations and ministries recruit and enable faithful laity to enter the Northwest District lay ministry training program, known as the Leadership Advancement Process – LAP; and be it further

RESOLVED, that LAP graduates continue to be utilized by the Northwest District congregations; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Northwest District in convention memorialize the Synod at its 2010 convention to retain the use of Licensed Deacons in ministry.

Adopted **Yes – 224 No - 32**

RESOLUTION: 2-06a

**TO MEMORIALIZE THE SYNOD TO INCLUDE DISABILITIES AWARENESS
MINISTRY TRAINING IN THE CURRICULA OF SYNOD'S
SEMINARIES AND UNIVERSITIES**

WHEREAS, an estimated thirty to forty million Americans experience disabilities of one degree or another; and

WHEREAS, the ministry of Christ reveals a special care for people with disabilities, and the Christian church throughout the centuries has strived for hospitality to all people in the spirit of Christ;

WHEREAS, an aging population brings to the local congregation a significant challenge of increasing disabilities; and

WHEREAS, that number is steadily increasing as American troops serving in foreign wars return with physical, emotional, and mental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to equip professional church workers to minister effectively and confidently with people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, ministry with people with disabilities does not appear to be articulated in the core curriculum requirement of our seminaries and universities; and

WHEREAS, the rich gifts of people with disabilities are thereby not being used in the body of Christ; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest District in convention memorialize the 2010 convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to encourage our seminaries and universities to incorporate in their core curricula of training pastors and other professional church workers an emphasis on ministry to, with, and through people who have disabilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod's Board for Pastoral Education together with Synod's Board for University Education take the responsibility of assisting our seminaries and universities in articulating objectives to be included in the core curriculum within the next triennium; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the appropriate commission under the Synod's Board for Human Care Ministries serve as consultants in the establishment of this training for our professional church workers.

Adopted **Yes – 216 No - 23**

1 OVERTURE: 1-05

2
3 **TO ESTABLISH A PROCESS BY WHICH COMMISSIONED MINISTERS MAY**
4 **BE ELECTED DELEGATES FOR *DISTRICT***

5
6 WHEREAS, Commissioned ministers are the only members of Lutheran Church –
7 Missouri Synod congregations that may not serve as voting delegates to its district
8 conventions. While many have recognized that this is basically unfair no one has
9 offered a proposal that has been found acceptable to correct it. As a compromise
10 commissioned ministers have been given advisory status with no voting rights.

11
12 WHEREAS, In many of our congregations today we face the situation of non-rostered
13 individuals filling roles traditionally filled by commissioned ministers. A school
14 with ten teachers may have six rostered commissioned ministers and four lay
15 teachers. The four lay teachers can be elected as a congregation's lay voting
16 delegate while the six commissioned ministers can never be elected as a voting
17 delegate.

18
19 WHEREAS, The issue of voting by commissioned ministers has been one that the Synod
20 has attempted to address many times over the years without success. The
21 difficulty has arisen over our Synod's practice of maintaining a balance between
22 clergy and lay voters. Commissioned ministers do not fit comfortably in either
23 category. This resolution is crafted in such a way as to respect that balance and
24 impact it as little as possible.

25
26 WHEREAS, A secondary issue related to this is the consideration that all congregations
27 should be represented equally. How would congregations that have no
28 commissioned ministers be fairly represented? This resolution maintains that as
29 much as possible all congregations should have an equal voice in selecting
30 delegates regardless if their particular congregation is served by commissioned
31 ministers or not.

32
33 RESOLVED, that there be a voting commissioned minister from each circuit for district
34 conventions, and be it further

35
36 RESOLVED, that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in convention adopt the
37 following process for selecting commissioned ministers to serve as voting
38 delegates to district conventions.

- 39
40 1. *Each circuit shall meet at the call of the counselor to elect its commissioned*
41 *minister not later than six months prior to the opening day of the district*
42 *convention.*
43 2. *In the announcement for the meeting the circuit counselor shall call for*
44 *nominations of commissioned ministers to be elected as the circuit voting delegate*
45 *from that circuit. Any member of Synod who is also a member of the circuit may*
46 *make a nomination.*

- 1 3. *Elections shall be by written ballot.*
- 2 4. *The privilege of voting shall be exercised by one pastor and one layperson from*
3 *each member congregation of the circuit, both of whom shall have been selected*
4 *in the manner prescribed by the congregation.*
- 5 5. *Multiple parishes shall be entitled to a lay vote from each member congregation.*
- 6 6. *Each voter may write in the name of two commissioned minister nominees on the*
7 *initial ballot. The three commissioned ministers (or more, in case of a tie vote for*
8 *third place) who received the highest number of votes in this preliminary ballot*
9 *shall be placed on the next ballot.*
- 10 7. *On the next ballot each voter shall vote for only one candidate. Balloting shall*
11 *continue with the candidate receiving the least votes being removed from each*
12 *succeeding ballot until one commissioned minister shall have received a simple*
13 *majority of all votes cast, whereupon he or she shall be declared the*
14 *commissioned minister delegate.*
- 15 8. *The congregation from which the commissioned minister delegate has been*
16 *elected shall then be removed from consideration for supplying an alternate*
17 *commissioned minister delegate to that particular convention unless there are no*
18 *other commissioned ministers available from other congregations.*
- 19 9. *All other commissioned ministers who received at least one vote on the initial*
20 *ballot shall be eligible for election as the alternate.*
- 21 10. *Each voter shall now vote for only one candidate.*
- 22 11. *Balloting shall continue with the candidate receiving the least votes being*
23 *removed from each succeeding ballot until one commissioned minister shall have*
24 *received a simple majority of all votes cast, whereupon he shall be declared the*
25 *alternate commissioned minister delegate.*
- 26 12. *The counselor shall report the results of the election to the secretary of the district*
27 *in writing immediately after said election.*
- 28 13. *If neither the delegate nor the alternate can serve, the vacancy may be filled by*
29 *the district president in consultation with the respective circuit counselor.*
- 30 14. *Circuits that have no commissioned ministers that hold membership in circuit*
31 *congregations will have no commissioned minister delegate for the district*
32 *convention.*
- 33 15. *All direct costs for the commissioned minister in participating in the district*
34 *convention shall be born by the district.*
- 35 16. *The voting delegates shall replace the previous advisory delegate status of*
36 *commissioned ministers. And, be it further*

37
38 RESOLVED, that the Commission on Constitutional Matters shall make such changes to
39 the by laws of Synod as are necessary in order to implement this resolution. And,
40 be it finally

41
42 RESOLVED, that the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in
43 convention submit the following overture to the regular convention of the
44 Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in 2010.

45
46 Submitted by: Trinity Lutheran Church & School, Portland, OR

1 OVERTURE: 1-06

2
3 **TO ESTABLISH A PROCESS BY WHICH COMMISSIONED MINISTERS MAY**
4 **BE ELECTED DELEGATES FOR SYNODICAL CONVENTIONS**

5
6 WHEREAS, This resolution presupposes the adoption of the resolution “To Establish a
7 Process by Which Commissioned Ministers May Be Elected Delegates for
8 District Conventions”. Be it

9
10 RESOLVED, that the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in convention adopt the
11 following process for selecting commissioned ministers to serve as voting
12 delegates to synodical conventions:

- 13
14 1. *Each district shall elect (a) commissioned minister(s) at its district convention to*
15 *serve as (a) voting delegate(s) to the Synodical convention.*
16 2. *Each commissioned minister who has served as a voting delegate to the district*
17 *convention shall be considered as nominated to be elected as a voting delegate to*
18 *the synod convention unless they remove themselves for consideration by*
19 *notifying the district secretary.*
20 3. *Each commissioned minister who receives a majority of the votes cast shall be*
21 *elected as delegate to the Synodical convention.*
22 4. *If further balloting is necessary the ballot shall contain two names for every*
23 *remaining position to be elected determined by who received the highest number*
24 *of votes on the first ballot. On all subsequent ballots the commissioned minister*
25 *with the lowest number of votes shall be removed from the ballot.*
26 5. *All districts shall be entitled to at least one commissioned minister voting*
27 *delegate.*
28 6. *Districts with more than ten non-exceptional circuits shall be entitled to one extra*
29 *commissioned minister delegate and one more in every multiple of four above*
30 *that. (i.e. districts with 11 circuits will have two delegates, if there are 15 eligible*
31 *circuits they receive 3 delegates, etc.)*
32 7. *Non-exceptional circuits are those that meet all the numerical numbers in bylaw*
33 *5.1.1 without exception.*
34 8. *Six months prior to the district convention the secretary of synod shall determine*
35 *and notify each district how many commissioned ministers each district is entitled*
36 *to elect. And be it further*

37
38 RESOLVED, that the Commission on Constitutional Matters shall make such
39 changes to the bylaws of Synod as are necessary in order to implement this
40 resolution. And, be it finally

41
42 RESOLVED, that the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri
43 Synod in convention submit the following overture to the regular convention of
44 the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in 2010.

45 Submitted by: Trinity Lutheran Church & School, Portland, Oregon

1 OVERTURE: 1-11

2
3 **TO MEMORIALIZE SYNOD TO ABANDON ITS 'GUTTENBERG' WAYS AND**
4 **EMBRACE OUR 'GOOGLE' WORLD**
5

6 WHEREAS, futurist Leonard Sweet recently addressed a conference of Northwest District
7 Pastors concerning the need for churches to come into the
8 'Google' age; and
9

10 WHEREAS, the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance, appointed by
11 President Gerald Kieschnick in 2005 has identified a need for being better
12 stewards of the resources God has given us ("WALKING TOGETHER: THE LCMS
13 FUTURE" p.3 & 4); and
14

15 WHEREAS, the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance, appointed by
16 President Gerald Kieschnick in 2005 has suggested the need for "focused"
17 conventions which "focus on theology, contemporary issues, common confession
18 and mission, nurture, inspiration, and celebration" with "limited business and
19 reports" ("WALKING TOGETHER: THE LCMS FUTURE" p. 4); and
20

21 WHEREAS, futurist Leonard Sweet has commented that "There is a whole new culture out
22 there that is wired very differently by digital electronic culture" (see
23 [http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/biblestudyandtheology/perspectives/carpenter-](http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/biblestudyandtheology/perspectives/carpenter-sweet_starbucks.aspx)
24 [sweet_starbucks.aspx](http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/biblestudyandtheology/perspectives/carpenter-sweet_starbucks.aspx)); and
25

26 WHEREAS, the digital electronic means exist whereby all Synodical convention business
27 could be conducted without the need for costly travel and lodging; and
28

29 WHEREAS, every decision of the Synod in convention affects every congregation in the
30 Synod and reflects equally on every congregation in the Synod; therefore be it
31

32 RESOLVED, that the Northwest District memorialize the Synod to embrace our 'Google'
33 world and make full use of our "whole new culture out there that is wired very
34 differently by digital electronic culture" by conducting all Synodical convention
35 business via digital electronic means thereby eliminating the need for the expense
36 of travel and lodging in connection with convention business; and be it further
37

38 RESOLVED, that the Northwest District memorialize the Synod to allow every congregation in
39 Synod to participate in Synodical convention business with one lay delegate and
40 one pastoral delegate; and be it finally
41

42 RESOLVED, that the Northwest District memorialize the Synod to continue with "focused"
43 conventions of a more conventional sort which "focus on theology, contemporary
44 issues, common confession and mission, nurture, inspiration, and celebration,"
45 and do not contain any business whatsoever.
46

47 Respectfully submitted by: Peace Lutheran Church, Chehalis, WA

1 **RESOLUTION 1-06a**

2
3 **TO RECOGNIZE SYNOD TRAINED CHURCH WORKERS NOT ON SYNOD'S**
4 **ROSTER FOR IRS PURPOSES**

5
6 WHEREAS, according to CUEnet about 1,000 synodically trained teachers serving in
7 synodical schools are not listed on Synod's roster of Commissioned
8 Ministers because of the financial ramifications of IRS regulations, and
9

10 WHEREAS, the roster of commissioned ministers now does not fully reflect the Synod
11 trained and serving individuals simply because of the definitions imposed
12 by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service for taxing purposes; and
13

14 WHEREAS, this categorization within the Synod affects its recognition of ministry and
15 other applications within Synod simply because a name is not "on the
16 roster"; therefore be it
17

18 RESOLVED, that Synodical publications recognize its workers in lists, obituaries, and
19 other appropriate ways, and be it finally
20

21 RESOLVED, that the District send this issue to the Council of Presidents and the Blue
22 Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance for consideration.
23
24
25

26 COMMITTEE #1
27 Jonathan Rockey, Chairman
28

