

## **One People—Forgiven**

Saturday, Day 7

It is the last day of the LCMS National Convention. NOW Delegates began preparing to return home. It has been a long week. Bodies are weary, emotions are often quick to rise to the surface, but hearts are alive with the good news: we are forgiven in Christ.

The last half day of convention is for finishing any business that needs to be done before adjournment. After brief morning devotion, final elections took place, and then it was on to business, mainly with items related to Floor Committees 3 and 5. Delegates approved one final resolution from floor committee 8, requesting a final audit of all outgoing boards, since by convention action all of the Boards and Commissions of the LCMS will be reorganized under two new Missions Boards (National and International). Floor Committee 8 was thanked for their hard and difficult work that stretched over 5 long years, with many additional meeting, that served to help delegates be prepared to act on the complex process that the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance had recommended. Much work still lies ahead for our Synod and its Districts, but the foundations have been laid for our Synod to be more flexible to handle the challenges ahead.

The delegates declined to address a couple of remaining Constitutional changes that would need to be acted upon by the congregations, and thereby voted to adjourn the Convention. President Kieschnick took time to thank all of the many, many people who worked behind the scenes producing the red chair videos, all the various volunteers and convention managers, IT support, Today's Business staff, travel and meeting teams, and many others. The delegates rose in standing ovation in thankful support.

After 9 years of faithful service, it was a moving moment for President Kieschnick as he closed a chapter on his life and closed the convention by sounding the gavel three times, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. In the closing Service of Sending, President Kieschnick addressed the delegates and reminded us of what our Synod is all about—Changing lives, in time, for eternity. He highlighted for us what he considered to be the crowing moments of the convention, the moments when we got to see the real mission and ministry of our Synod in action, such as our church's relief response to the Haitian earthquake, the faithful service of our chaplains and missionaries, the new LCMS International School (and only official Christian presence) now to open in Hanoi, Vietnam, the response our church agreed to make to address malaria, and many others. His prayer is that many more people will know Christ because of the LCMS. With emotion rising to the surface, he thanked the Synod for allowing him to serve them for 9 years.

It was now time to leave Houston. Some would go on to the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Others would go on to the Lutheran Hour Ministries/Lutheran Laymen's League Convention in Omaha, Nebraska. Most would return home.

(For all the details of the convention go to [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org) )

## Some Final Thoughts on the 64<sup>th</sup> Regular Convention of the LCMS

For me what stands out the most is that the reality that Jesus Christ is the Lord of his Church and we are His servants. Under all of the mind-numbing bylaws, points of order, amendments of amendments, and vote after vote, there remains a grand sense of awe in our Lord and in his Church.

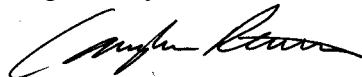
I was reminded in talking with another delegate, formerly from another denomination, that in spite of minor disagreements that we have in our Synod about how things *should* be done, we still remain one in Christ, and in agreement in our confessions. Unlike other church bodies who battle over things like the resurrection of Christ (whether it is true or not) or whether Christ is truly God or not, we in the LCMS have not torn one page out of God's word. We continue to stand by our faith and continually strive as one for the sake of the Gospel so that as much as possible, *all people* might come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

It is difficult to get 1,200 people in one room to be in total agreement about anything, yet much business was accomplished. We moved to reorganize our Synod to be more flexible and able to handle our financial challenges. We set the stage for our Synod to become more efficient and responsive in a changing world. We celebrated the work that God has enabled us to do by his grace in responding effectively to the real needs of the world, always bringing Christ in the midst of every crisis. We worshiped God and received forgiveness and life in his name. We have elected new servant leaders. We have supported many fellow Christians around the world. In a very real sense, we have been given a position of theological leadership in the world. In an era of religious plurality and relativity, many emerging churches are looking to the LCMS for help in forming solid theological values and ethos.

Yet though it appears on the outside that *we* have done all of these things, in truth it is not us, but *Christ* working in and through us that accomplishes all. We remain merely beggars in the sight of God, bringing nothing good to God, but receiving every good and every blessing from the majestic and merciful God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who forgives our sins, and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. May God continue to be praised today, tomorrow, and for all eternity, for we are truly One People—Forgiven!

To God alone be glory!

Respectfully submitted in the name of Jesus,



Rev. Langdon J. Reinke  
Secretary, NOW District LCMS