

Questions for President Kieschnick's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance Regarding Proposed Constitutional Amendments

NOTE: These are real questions, seeking information. They are not rhetorical questions.

1. The new proposed Article VI would require not only subscription to the Synod's confessional base but also to the synodical Constitution. Should a distinction be made between subscription to the one and to the other? If so, how is the distinction to be made clear? If not, why not?

2. Current Article III 7. says, "Encourage 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." The new III.B.8. says, "Encouraging a common understanding and appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common confession of faith." Why remove the striving for uniformity in church practice, a point included as far back as the Synod's first Constitution?

3. The document "Walking Together -- The LCMS Future: Proposals for Consideration and Discussion to the 2009 District Conventions of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod" gives as examples of "Doctrinal resolutions of special significance" those "initiating, modifying, or repealing specific positions or practices of the Synod" (p. 4). Why does the Task Force suggest potentially doing all these things via doctrinal resolutions, even if these resolutions are adopted by a two-thirds majority? Why does the Task Force disagree with the approach that the Synod took in its former Bylaw 1.02.b (adopted in 1977), which provided that doctrinal resolutions "shall reiterate the corporate position of the Synod"?

4. Are the Synod's non-doctrinal resolutions to be binding on congregations or not? Proposed Article VII.A.1. (which is almost identical to a current constitutional paragraph) says "No resolution of the Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God or if it appears to be unsuitable as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned." Yet in the new Article VII.B.2. the Constitution would say that members of the Synod "Agree to abide by, honor, and uphold the collective will of the Synod as expressed in its Constitution, Bylaws, and convention resolutions."

5. Current Article VI 2 includes several examples of unionism and syncretism. Why are these examples removed from the new wording proposed for Article VI B.3?

6. Why does proposed Constitution Article VIII.C.2.b. not retain the current procedure (in Bylaw 1.6.2.b) for the consideration, adoption, and ratification of a doctrinal statement?

7. Why does Article III.A. contain two statements about conserving, promoting, nurturing, and manifesting unity, numbers 2 and 3?

8. The document “Walking Together -- The LCMS Future: Proposals for Consideration and Discussion to the 2009 District Conventions of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod” notes that “the Synod expects every member congregation of the Synod to respect its resolutions and consider them of binding force on the assumption that they are in accordance with the Word of God and that they are applicable to the condition of a congregation” (p. 5). Does the Task Force think the Synod should assume that every resolution will be applicable to every congregation?

9. Why did the Task Force remove the word “exclusive” when recasting Article VI 4, which currently specifies: “Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms...”?

10. Why does Article III.B. contain, in addition to point 1 (“Recruiting and educating ministers of religion-ordained and ministers of religion-commissioned, and providing opportunity for their continuing growth”) a new point 3 (“Supporting the colleges, universities and seminaries of the Synod”)?

Other Questions for President Kieschnick’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance

NOTE: These are real questions, seeking information. They are not rhetorical questions.

1. The document “Walking Together -- The LCMS Future: Proposals for Consideration and Discussion to the 2009 District Conventions of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod” suggests on page 7 that perhaps the President of the Synod could be elected “in the context of . . . district conventions”? What does this mean? How might such an election be done in practice?

2. Slide 44 of the Task Force convention presentation says, “While all overtures submitted would be considered, resolutions from circuit forums and district conventions would receive priority at district and Synod conventions, respectively.” Will there be a need for District conventions to begin discussing details of the Synod’s higher education system or its worldwide mission program in order to insure that important and matters from these and other specialized subject areas receive high priority consideration at national conventions? If not, who else other than District conventions will be able to submit high priority overtures to the national convention?

3. Slide 34 of the Task Force convention presentation says, “Allow each district in convention to determine how [its] delegates would be selected” for the national convention. Does the Task Force envision the possibility of a District choosing some method for electing national convention delegates other than election by the District convention at the District convention? If so, please give an example.

4. Slide 82 in the Task Force's convention presentation sets forth the goal of making the Synod's Board of Directors "more representative of LCMS districts and geographic regions." Why does the BOD need to be representative in this way?
5. Who would vote on the 10 members of the BOD to come from the 5 regions, a pastor and layperson from each? Would it be the respective regions themselves, or the national convention?
6. Who does the Task Force recommend to elect the regional Vice-Presidents? Slide 79 of the Task Force convention presentation suggests the possibility of the national convention, while page 7 of the document "Walking Together -- The LCMS Future: Proposals for Consideration and Discussion to the 2009 District Conventions of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod" suggests that the vote for these officers could be taken at district conventions.
7. If there are to be 5 regions and 5 Synod Vice-Presidents, how would the First Vice-President be excepted from any nomination and/or election that might take place at the regional level?