

Committees Propose 104 Resolutions for Convention

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Eight floor committees that met in St. Louis the weekend starting May 21 drafted 104 proposed resolutions for some 1,200 delegates to consider at the Synod's 64th Regular Convention, set for July 10-17 in Houston.

The work of one of those committees, for structure and governance, resulted in 33 proposed resolutions -- by far, the most for any of this convention's floor committees.

All eight committees' proposals primarily respond to reports and a total of 251 overtures -- 238 in the 2010 Convention Workbook, and 13 late and additional overtures.

The structure and governance committee's resolutions also were guided by the report of the Blue Ribbon Task Force for Synod Structure and Governance, whose findings and recommendations received synodwide exposure and feedback before the floor committees met.

The structure and governance floor committee first met to get organized April 16-18.

The floor committees also will hold open hearings and closed deliberations to further refine their work during the two days prior to the opening convention session at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston.

For the 2007 convention, floor committees drafted 97 resolutions at their meetings in St. Louis.

This year's convention theme is "ONE People -- Forgiven.

The first issue of Today's Business -- the daily convention guide -- will contain the 104 resolutions being initially proposed. That issue is scheduled to be mailed to delegates and congregations in early June. The resolutions also will be on the Web at <http://www.lcms.org/todaysbusiness>.

Following is a summary of the resolutions, by floor committee number and name.

1. MISSIONS

Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others has always been the goal of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, and in that respect the outreach-focused resolutions prepared by Floor Committee 1 for the 2010 LCMS convention reflect that time-honored goal.

But they also reflect the issues and challenges of today by encouraging LCMS congregations to reach out with God's love to immigrants, Muslims, and U.S. service men and women.

Resolutions also address Ablaze!, the Synod-endorsed effort to share the Gospel with 100 million "unreached and uncommitted" people worldwide by 2017, and the related Fan into Flame campaign to raise \$100 million to launch new Ablaze! ministries.

The eight resolutions prepared by the Missions floor committee:

- ask the Synod to "celebrate the blessings" of Fan into Flame, which has raised \$57 million as of May 2010 for mission work worldwide, and extend the campaign for one year -- until Reformation Day 2011. This resolu-

tion also asks that a final report on the campaign be provided to the next LCMS convention.

- ask the LCMS Board for Mission Services to evaluate Ablaze! and plan the future of the initiative, and "encourage every baptized child of God to be bold witnesses and faithful confessors of the faith in these challenging times."

- urge districts and LCMS World Mission to work together to strengthen their commitment to new immigrants; encourage Concordia University System schools to recruit, train, and send immigrants to serve in immigrant communities; and encourage the LCMS seminaries to continue the expansion and development of the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology, the Center for Hispanic Studies, and similar distance-education programs.

• call responding to Islam "a very high-priority mission task" and urge congregations to "respond to opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus by word and deed with those who are seeking answers to questions of faith and life." This resolution also commends Concordia Publishing House for publishing Muslim Friends, The Truth about Islam, and How to Respond - Muslims, and encourages Lutherans to use these



resources, and commends People of the Book Lutheran Outreach, Dearborn Heights, Mich., for its ministries among Muslims.

- affirm and encourage military chaplains.
- thank those who serve in the armed forces and urge congregations to be sensitive to the needs of those who return from combat by taking part in "Operation Barnabas," a program to support chaplains and soldiers, and establishing standing committees for military concerns.
- encourage inter-district dialogue when new church starts, satellite worship sites, and specialized ministries are planned for sites that cross district boundaries.
- commend the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg for initiating the vision to establish a visitor center and interactive museum to proclaim the Gospel in Wittenberg, Germany, and encourage the society to pursue this project.

2. DISTRICT AND CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES

Continuing support for six areas of ministry that are emphasized throughout the Synod is the aim of the top-priority resolution offered by Floor Committee 2, among its total of eight resolutions.

Those six areas are children's, family, school, singles, stewardship, and youth ministries.

Pointing out that these ministries "have provided significant leadership and resources to districts and congregations," the resolution's only "resolved" is "that the LCMS continue to recognize the importance of supporting the ministries for the future growth of Christ's church."

The second resolution from the committee urges the Synod and 35 LCMS districts to share electronically with "every congregation and ministry" a document from LCMS School Ministry for implementing a "Reduction in Force" (RIF) process.

The proposed action also encourages congregations to use the resource when considering an RIF policy and to "consider the spiritual, financial, and emotional well-being of all impacted workers when implementing RIF policies."

Noting that inter- and intra-generational concerns are "reflective of the mind of Christ and integral to His mission mandate to reach out to all," another resolution calls on the president of the Synod to appoint a commission to "research, study, and make recommendations relating to our changing world and to the 21st century ministry of churches of differing sizes." The commission would share its finding with congregations and report them to Synod leaders as it prepares the findings and recommendations for the next LCMS convention.

Other resolutions from this committee ask the Synod to encourage:

- daily devotions and study of Scripture for individuals and families, commending Concordia Publishing House for its "numerous resources in a variety of media formats to assist individuals and families in their devotional life."
- every LCMS congregation and school to have "regular ongoing studies" of The Book of Concord as the 500th anniversary of the Reformation approaches in 2017.
- LCMS congregations, agencies, institutions, and entities "to follow district salary guidelines for professional church workers as a minimum guide to provide proper compensation."

Another resolution commends the "Theses on Worship" produced by the LCMS Council of Presidents "for guidance for congregations," and encourages their use throughout the church body, along with resources from the Model Theological Conference on the Theology of Worship held earlier this year.

3. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

Five of the 10 resolutions drafted by Floor Committee 3 deal with implications of the decision last August by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to recognize "publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships" as morally acceptable and to approve pastors living in those relationships.

The committee's first-priority resolution quotes from the report released early this year from the Task Force on Theological Implications of ELCA Human Sexuality Decisions, saying the issue "impacts the Gospel itself" and "... promotes a false security about behavior and conduct which God has forbidden and from which He longs to redeem us." The resolution also expresses care for homosexual persons. For example, one "resolved" states that the LCMS acknowledge its responsibility "to love our neighbor as ourselves" and "to affirm that sexual orientation is no excuse for bigotry, hatred, animosity, or violence."

The resolution also commends the task force report, as well as "Same-Gender Relationships and the Church," a statement adopted in August 2009 by the International Lutheran Council. The resolution would recommend both documents for study and reference.

Other resolutions related to the ELCA decision:

- note that the LCMS, "while not encouraging discord in the ELCA, nevertheless cannot turn away from those who dissent from the ELCA, lest we deny our own convictions" and, if passed, the resolution would encourage other Lutheran church bodies that strive to remain faithful to confessional Lutheranism; would request the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations

(CTCR) to continue developing plans for an international model theological conference on confessional leadership; and would call on the Synod president and the CTCR to explore ways to promote confessional Lutheranism throughout the world.

- propose continuing cooperation in matters of physical need with other Lutheran churches, including the ELCA, "with theological integrity" and request the CTCR, in consultation with the Praesidium and other entities, to develop theological criteria for assessing cooperative endeavors toward a report on current "cooperation in externals" by the next Synod convention.
- acknowledge procedures in place for establishing formal altar and pulpit fellowship with well-established church bodies, and propose to amend a Bylaw to allow the Synod president, following consultation with the Praesidium and approval by the CTCR, to declare recognition of altar and pulpit fellowship with emerging or newly formed confessional churches, subject to endorsement of the subsequent Synod convention.
- request the CTCR, in consultation with seminary faculties, to "develop a thorough, biblical, and confessional analysis of and response" to the ELCA report that led to its assembly action on same-gender relationships.

Floor Committee 3 also drafted resolutions on topics related to current and proposed theological studies.

One resolution proposes to commend the CTCR for its recent report, "The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church," and would encourage the commission to address additional issues related to the Christian understanding of man and woman.

Another resolution notes that the church faces new challenges brought by trends of Scripture interpretation in the post-modern era. The resolution would ask the CTCR, in consultation with the seminaries, to prepare Bible studies for the laity on "How to Read the Bible."

Noting that the CTCR already includes representation from both seminary faculties, another resolution proposes an expression of thanks for the gifts of seminary faculty and the CTCR and asks that the commission and the faculties collaborate wherever possible.

In another resolution, the floor committee proposes to decline a congregation-submitted overture calling for partner churches to withdraw from the Lutheran World Federation. The committee's resolution cites a resolution of the International Lutheran Council that recognizes that each member church has a responsibility to act in matters of church fellowship according to its conscience based on the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions.

And a final resolution declines three congregation-submitted overtures -- to end all official theological talks with the ELCA; to request the Synod president not to attend ELCA Churchwide Assemblies; and to return to a Scriptural position on birth control. The committee cited the encouragement of 2Tim: 2:25 to "correct opponents with gentleness" so that God might grant them repentance as reasons for the first two declinations. As for the third overture, the committee noted that the Synod has never had an official position on birth control.

4. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

With a call for study of biblical stewardship and approaches to LCMS finances, this floor committee drafted its first four resolutions for the convention to deal with the Synod's financial situation. The balance of the committee's 12 resolutions deal with administrative topics by proposing amendments to the Synod's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.

The first resolution, "To Lead the Church in a Stewardship Renaissance," would encourage all congregations to search the Scriptures for stewardship examples and study stewardship principles. It would call on the Synod and its districts to promote a Lutheran understanding of stewardship principles that emphasize God's gifts, the needs of neighbors, and trust in God's provision. The resolution calls on each district president to lead his district in "a stewardship renaissance" using resources from the Synod.

Pointing to the 2007 report from the Blue Ribbon Task Force for Funding the Mission, a second resolution would place its recommendations for increasing unrestricted revenues on the agenda of the LCMS Board of Directors for disposition by the next convention. It also would request the Board "to evaluate all assets, taking action to ensure that they are being effectively used to carry out the Synod's mission and ministry or make recommendations to the next convention for their appropriate use."

A third resolution encourages the vice-president-finance/treasurer to broadly communicate the Synod's financial position each November.

A fourth resolution proposes a study of the LCMS higher education system -- colleges and seminaries -- with a report to the next convention. The resolution would encourage congregations and individuals to increase their support of higher education with prayer, referrals of students, and financial gifts. It also would require the colleges and seminaries to require students to receive instruction in biblical stewardship to increase their ability to manage their personal resources.

Other resolutions:

- propose a Bylaw change so no more than two members -- currently the Bylaw specifies only one member -- may be elected to the Board of Directors from any one district and establishes an order for electing clergy, commissioned, and lay members at the convention.
- would amend and restate the Articles of Incorporation to include purposes as well as objectives of the Synod, plus other word changes as proposed by the Commission on Structure.
- offer Bylaw amendments to facilitate convention preparations, including earlier deadlines for reports, floor committee appointments, convention nominations and distribution of the Convention Workbook and Today's Business, as well as providing that they be posted on the Synod's Web site, and changing the number of presidential nominees from five to three and vice presidential nominees from 20 to 10.
- would alter the procedure for determining the date and site of conventions from a convention decision to a procedure involving the convention manager, the president, and the Board of Directors.
- would provide that convention floor committees be appointed by the Synod president in consultation with the Council of Presidents and the Praesidium.
- propose a return to pre-2004 wording of the Bylaw describing the responsibilities of the Board for Church Extension and its relationship to the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and independent district church extension funds.
- propose amendments to Bylaws -- in two separate resolutions -- to define an "operating board" and

clarify the definition of a "governing board."

- would change auxiliary terminology in Bylaw 6.1.3, replacing the word "president" with "chief elected officer."
- would change Bylaw 1.5.3 wording to allow agencies to set their own manner of meetings, especially to cut the expense of travel for face-to-face meetings.
- propose a decrease from 14 to seven the number of members on the Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support for responsible use of stewardship resources.

5. SEMINARY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The first two of the 13 resolutions prepared by Floor Committee 5 call for the Synod in convention to continue its support of the What a Way initiative for recruiting and retaining full-time church workers and the "For the Sake of the Church" program that seeks to increase the number of students at the Concordia schools and support them financially.

Noting that more than \$200 million in endowment gifts and pledges have been received through the "For the Sake of the Church" program, the resolution offers "special encouragement to congregations and individuals" to continue their support so the effort can reach its goal of \$400 million.

Following a 2007 convention resolution that called for a task force study of the Synod's current lay deacon program, another resolution asks that the program be continued and includes recommendations for providing a "reasonable way through which deacons, who are preaching and administering the sacraments, might be examined, called, and ordained within three years of beginning their service."

A resolution that seeks to increase the impact of the vicarage program calls for the creation of a synodwide funding plan that would make supporting a vicar possible for congregations unable to afford the cost.

Addressing the topic of pastoral formation, a resolution asks the Synod to adopt 12 themes for pastoral education to "provide a planning and guiding focus for preparation of pastors" within the Missouri Synod.

Additional resolutions call for clarifying or revising the Synod's Bylaws pertaining to:

- the election process for college/university presidents that would give a school's board of regents responsibility for leading the presidential election process, instead of being "dominated by a search committee structure that is predominantly faculty members."
- the responsibilities of a college/university president that allows the delegation of certain tasks to officers with leadership in the areas of finance, academics, student and spiritual life, recruitment, and fundraising. Saying the current Bylaw implies that the president must be male through its use of the pronoun "he," the proposed Bylaw uses the word "president" instead. The committee's rationale for the change states that no current Bylaws prohibit women from serving in the position.
- the composition of the Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministers and its purpose and functions.

The remaining resolutions revise the qualifications for a person to be elected or appointed to a school's board of regents, streamline the process for the promotion of faculty to "continuing status," and change the Bylaw wording regarding faculty appointments.

6. HUMAN CARE

Floor Committee 6 is proposing seven resolutions that:

- thank God for the Synod's disaster-relief work -- particularly in Haiti - through LCMS World Relief and Human Care, LCMS World Mission, Orphan Grain Train, districts and congregations, Haitian mission societies, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti, and the Lutheran Church of Haiti. The resolution also urges the Synod to "preserve and maintain" its disaster-response and human-care capacity.
- encourage the convention to denounce legislation or actions that support or fund abortions; urge congregations to work with local crisis-pregnancy centers; commend Lutherans For Life and encourage pastors and congregations to affirm the sanctity of life; call on the Synod to maintain its sanctity-of-life ministry and ask that ministry to convene a conference.
- ask the Synod to amend its Bylaws so that institutional chaplains and pastoral counselors may receive "divine calls for ministry" as do parish pastors.
- encourage the Synod and its agencies and schools to be "committed" to the Lutheran Malaria Initiative - a collaborative effort with Lutheran World Relief, Baltimore, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to combat malaria.
- ask the LCMS Board for Human Care Ministries to develop resources to recruit and train clergy and laypeople for prison and jail ministry; ask the Synod to sponsor a training conference; and encourage districts to have prison min-

istry coordinators.

- ask the LCMS Board for Human Care Ministries to provide materials and training to help districts, congregations, and schools address domestic violence and child abuse.
- encourage the Synod to support efforts to end human trafficking and slavery that affects some 2.5 million people worldwide.

7. ECCLESIAL MATTERS

To encourage the continuing work of the 12-member Task Force on Synodical Harmony, whose progress report is contained in the Convention Workbook, is the first of eight resolutions prepared by Floor Committee 7.

Its second resolution comes in response to numerous overtures that request the overruling of certain opinions by the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM). The CCM opinions deal with the ecclesiastical supervision and expulsion of a member, who, when performing his or her official duties, follows the advice and counsel of the designated supervisor.

Noting that it honors "the genuine concern expressed by individuals, congregations, circuits, and districts of the Synod regarding CCM opinions in question and desire(s) to resolve this manner in a responsible and God-pleasing fashion," the floor committee's resolution affirms the Synod's responsibility to:

- provide each of its members with appropriate ecclesiastical supervision and counsel;
- supervise and hold accountable ecclesiastical supervisors that it puts in place for the protection of its members and the Synod itself; and
- affirm that CCM Opinion 02-2309 and related opinions should not be misunderstood "to grant immunity

to any member of the Synod, or to allow such member to act with impunity, or to give permission to act contrary to the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, the Constitution or Bylaws of our beloved Synod."

The committee's third resolution calls for adding a new Bylaw to the Synod's Handbook that deals with the removal of individual members from boards and commissions, stating that previous proposals "have not been acted upon by past conventions," but recommends it now because "there is an interest in bringing peace and order among the individual members and congregations of the Synod." The proposed Bylaw outlines 10 causes for an individual's removal and details the process.

Responding to a task force report that studied the composition of hearing panels involved in dispute resolutions, the fourth resolution seeks to add a hearing facilitator and a reconciler who is a layperson to the panels and change the way district presidents are selected for the panels.

Other resolutions from the committee ask the Synod to:

- clarify the Bylaw regarding specific ministry pastor limitations, changing the word "location," which implies a specific geographic area, to "context."
- amend the Bylaw regarding the calling of pastors by congregations to include ordained ministers of certain partner churches.
- amend the Bylaw that deals with expectations of Synod membership to include "financial support of the work of the Synod and the provision of annual statistical information."
- request the Synod secretary to study time limitations for initiating the dispute resolution process.

8. STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

This committee's 33 resolutions are presented in five sections carrying titles that all begin with "Congregations walking together in mission," and then continuing with wording more specific to each section's subject matter.

In addition to calling for certain actions, most of those resolutions also authorize changes to Bylaws or Articles in the Synod's constitution.

The first five resolutions offered by the committee have to do with "small and large networks," primarily concerning circuits and districts -- beginning with a proposed action that would eliminate the provision for advisory members in the Synod, "since they are represented by the eligible voting delegates selected by their congregation," as the resolution states.

The second-priority resolution proposed by the committee would have representatives of "the circuit network of congregations" gather for a circuit forum at least once in the later-proposed "quadrennium" (of every four years) "to celebrate their common confession and give voice to the opportunities to share in mission and ministry." It also encourages congregations to send convention overtures to the circuit for study.

Noting that the circuit counselor is the "principal officer of the circuit," another proposed resolution in this section concerns nominations for circuit counselors beginning with the congregations in the circuit, and also would allow the district president to nominate eligible circuit counselor candidates, with their election occurring at the circuit forum, and to be ratified during the next district convention.

Congregations without a pastor at the district convention would be assured more equal representation if a proposed resolution is adopted that allows vacancy or interim pastors to serve as delegates to those conventions.

Other proposed resolutions call for:

- voting delegates for Synod conventions to be elected at district conventions.
- establishing a "preferred process" for receiving overtures for the Synod convention that gives priority "to overtures submitted ... by circuits and districts, while still giving consideration by floor committees to all submitted overtures."
- "this year's Synod convention to direct the president of the Synod to convene a special task force to work with the Council of Presidents and the LCMS Board of Directors toward submitting an overture to the next Synod convention that would recommend "general

principles of viability for a district ..., the purpose and function of a district, ... a recommendation for the number and configuration of districts," and "an implementation plan for any recommended changes that will address staff personnel and operation."

One of the major resolutions coming out of Floor Committee 8 calls for the realignment of the Synod's national ministries around two mission boards. In the preamble to the resolution, the committee states that the "current operational structure of the Synod's boards and commissions and the relationship of staff coordination and accountability begs for improvement."

The resolution would:

- eliminate the existing program boards and some staffed commissions, excluding the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), the Commission on Doctrinal Review, the Commission on Constitutional Matters, and the Commission on Structure (to be renamed the Commission on Handbook).
 - assign responsibility for all staff functions at the national office to an officer of the organization
 - Realign all functions currently performed by the program boards and staffed commissions, with the exception of the CTCR, into a two-office ministry structure, or assigned to the Office of the President, the LCMS Board of Directors, or other LCMS agencies.

It also asks that the position currently titled "vice-president-finance/treasurer" be renamed "chief financial officer" and that a new position, chief mission officer, be created. This person would serve a four-year term, report directly to the Synod president, and be responsible for supervising the daily activities of the national office's ministry functions.

The two ministry offices to be created would each function under policies set by two new mission boards: the Board for National Mission and the Board for International Mission. The Office of National Mission would be responsible for coordinating the national office efforts in serving domestic ministries, especially congregations and schools through their districts, while the Office of International Mission would oversee the work of the Missouri Synod in other countries.

If the restructuring proposals are adopted, other resolutions call for the creation of a "Transition Team" that would facilitate the movement from the current structure to the proposed structure and the Synod's Board of Directors to amend the Bylaws to "implement the spirit of the resolutions involved in the restructuring of the Synod adopted by the 2010 convention."



Another resolution in this section seeks to develop mission and ministry emphases that would coincide with the proposed four-year national convention schedule, and asks that schools and congregations develop individual goals in alignment with these emphases to provide a "common focus for the LCMS as we engage in ministry together."

Stating that "a church body may periodically see the need for a name change to more effectively reflect its character, breadth, and mission," another proposed resolution asks the Council of Presidents and Board of Directors to consider alternative names for the Missouri Synod from a suggested list and agree on two names that would be voted on by delegates at their next district conventions. The alternative name receiving the most votes would be proposed as a resolution at the next national convention.

The next five resolutions offered by Committee 8 concern how leaders are nominated and elected.

Noting that the Synod president and first vice-president must work compatibly, the floor committee offered a resolution that would permit the president-elect to select five preferred names from a list of 20 nominees for first vice-president. That list of five would comprise the ballot for election at the national convention.

The structure and governance task force recommended the creation of five regions as a means to build stronger connections between congregations. The floor committee's resolution would have the Board of Directors designate these regions in coordination with the Council of Presidents. Based on geography and confirmed membership, the Board would form the regions at least 24 months before the national convention. Congregations in those five regions would nominate candidates for vice presidents and the convention would elect the regional vice presidents.

To complete elections at this year's convention, the floor committee provided a resolution to waive the 24-month advance notification for 2010. That would enable elections to the Board of Directors, the Board of National Mission, and the Board of International Mission. Under terms of the resolution, the Board of Directors and the Council of Presidents would present a regional makeup to the convention prior to the elections.

Another resolution would revise the election procedure for the LCMS Board of Directors. Composition of the Board would be one layperson from each region, two ordained ministers elected at large, one commissioned minister elected at large, two laypersons elected at large, three laypersons appointed by the elected Board (to bring skills in specialized areas such as finance, etc.), and the Synod president -- for a total of no more than 14 voting members. The resolution proposes that no more than two voting members would be from the same district.

Congregations would have a direct role in electing the Synod president under procedures outlined in another resolution. Using technology, the process would have each congregation's two delegates to the previous district convention cast votes for Synod president. The election would take place four weeks prior to the national convention from a ballot of three candidates who received the highest number of nominations submitted earlier by congregations. If no candidate receives a majority in the first election, the voting would go to a second ballot. Should no candidate receive a majority on the second ballot, the convention would elect the president from the two remaining candidates.

Floor Committee 8 prepared nine resolutions that deal with district and national conventions of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, and the business they conduct.

Those resolutions call for:

- a four-year cycle of conventions, with circuits holding theological convocations in year one; districts holding theological convocations in year two; districts holding conventions in year three; and the national LCMS convention meeting in year four. (Current cycles of district and national LCMS conventions are three years.)
- four-year terms of office for all circuit, district, and national officers, as well as board and commission members (current terms are three or six years, depending on the office). This resolution also limits officers to three successive terms.
- a two-thirds majority vote of national LCMS convention delegates to adopt resolutions that state the Synod's doctrinal position on specific issues. (Such statements currently require a simple majority by delegates, plus a two-thirds ratification by LCMS congregations within six months of the convention.)
- reducing the number of delegates at national LCMS conventions to 10 percent of the number of congregations in the Synod six months prior to the first district convention.
- amending the Preamble of the LCMS Constitution to remove "cumbersome and unnecessary wording" while amplifying, affirming, and clarifying that "the reasons for the Synod's existence under Acts 15 and 1 Corinthians 12 are for congregations to walk together in God's mission and to serve one another for His purpose of saving all people through Jesus Christ." This recommendation "affirms and clarifies that Christ -- His person and justifying work -- is the center of the Synod's common confession" and is considered "a strong addition to the Synod's constitutional foundation."

The final category of resolutions offered by Committee 8 deal with "clarify[ing] the congregational principle and clarify[ing] and affirm[ing] our governing documents."

Six resolutions from the floor committee would enact these changes in the Synod Constitution:

- add an Article XIV stating that the Constitution controls and supercedes any Bylaws that may be adopted, amended, revised, or eliminated by a simple majority vote of the convention.
- amend the Preamble to the Constitution to state that the Synod works together in the mission of saving people through Jesus Christ, to proclaim the Gospel message, urge the Gospel mission, preserve doctrinal unity, and use the gifts in the body of Christ.
- amend Article II to include a statement that salvation is only through faith in Jesus Christ.

- amend Article VI to state requirements for acquiring and maintaining membership in the Synod.
- amend Article III to state the mission and purpose of the Synod and add language describing how the mission and purpose is carried out.
- amend Article VII -- which currently states the relationship of the Synod to its members -- by stating the relationship of the members to the Synod as reflected in current Bylaws and convention resolutions.

An additional resolution would add clarifying language in Chapter 2 of the Bylaws, dealing with membership, based on recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance.

✠ *Prayer Resources* ✠

Your prayers on behalf of all those participating in the convention are highly valuable. Here are but a few prayers that could be prayed. Additional resources are available on the LCMS website at www.lcms.org/prayervigil.

SATURDAY, JULY 10

Lord Jesus, You paid the price for our sinfulness when You died upon the cross. By the receiving Your Body and Blood this evening at the opening worship of the convention, grant that the delegates may have their own sinfulness covered by Your grace and may receive the wisdom of Your Holy Spirit to make decisions which are in accord with Your will. Amen.

SUNDAY, JULY 11

Heavenly Father, on this first day of the week You began the creation of the universe, and completed the recreation of fallen mankind through the resurrection of Christ. Give wisdom to the delegates of the LCMS convention as they undertake the question of how best to order and structure our church body to best serve You and follow Your will. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MONDAY, JULY 12

Send, O Lord, Your Holy Spirit On Your servants now, we pray; Let them prove all faithful stewards That no lamb be led astray. Your pure teaching to proclaim, To extol Your holy name,

And to feed Your lambs, dear Savior, Make their aim and sole endeavor. Amen. (LSB # 681, stanza 1, alt.)

TUESDAY, JULY 13

Lord, on this day our delegates elect those officers whom You appoint to lead our Synod. Bless these delegates that they may be the instruments of Your choice. Guide and direct them to choose those who will bring honor and glory to You through the working of our Synod. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14

O God, You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant by that same Spirit in our day to the delegates at our synodical convention that they have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

THURSDAY, JULY 15

Almighty God, heavenly Father, by Your Son, Jesus Christ, You promised to be with Your Church to the end of the world and that the gates of hell should not overcome it. Graciously

make Your strength perfect in our weakness and, according to Your promise, be present with us, Your unworthy servants (especially those serving as delegates at our synodical convention) and grant us and them Your merciful help; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FRIDAY, JULY 16

Direct, O Lord, by Your gracious favor the delegates to our synodical convention in all that they say and do. Further them with Your continual help that in all their works, begun, continued, and ended in Your name, they may glorify Your holy name and finally by Your mercy receive eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SATURDAY, JULY 17

Bless and preserve all the delegates as they conclude their duties in Houston this day. Guard and protect them as they travel homeward. Give us all the strength and the resolve to carry out Your will. In Jesus' name. Amen.