

CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE LCMS TODAY

Unionism and Syncretism

This faith is marked by pastors and laymen who:

9. **In accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, hold that any and all heterodox teaching can only divide Christ's Church, cast doubt on the assurance of our salvation, and point us to something or someone other than Christ for that assurance. There is no benefit to the Body of Christ in the consideration of falsehood (other than that it may be recognized for what it is as is done in the antitheses of the Confessions). It is wrong for Lutheran pastors to join with clergy of non-Lutheran church bodies or with false religions in any form of public worship (unionism and syncretism) regardless of who sponsors such worship or whether or not the event is termed a "civic event". Neither will Confessional Lutherans join in such worship settings in response to any "once in a lifetime" event.**

(Deuteronomy 13:3-5; John 17:20-26; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10, 11:19; II Corinthians 6:14-18; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Galatians 1:6-8; I Timothy 6:3-5; II Peter 2:1-3; I John 1, 5-6; II John 7-11; Jude 3-4.) (Pref. to AC, 4; AC XXVIII, 1-13; AP IV, 33-35; AP VII, 48; TR 58-59; SD RN 14-20; EP XII, 2; SD VII, 96; SD X, 5; SD X, 10; SD X, 16; SD XI, 95-96, SD XII, 7-9, 28, 36, 37, 39)

What are the Issues in Contention Today?

- Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions condemn every expression of unionistic worship (that is, joint worship with other Christians with whom we are not in doctrinal agreement), or syncretistic worship (that is, joint worship with those who are not Christian). Yet in our day there are some LCMS officers, pastors and congregations who, with impunity, have joined in worship services with those with whom we are not in doctrinal agreement, and even with those of non-Christian, false religions. We reject this error.

The Witness of Holy Scripture

Deuteronomy 13:3-5

³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. ⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Exodus 20:3

³ "You shall have no other gods before me. (*Literally, "in front of my face."*)

John 17:20-26

²⁰ "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they

may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Romans 16:17

¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

I Corinthians 1:10; 11:19

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment...

¹⁹ for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

II Corinthians 6:14-18

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." ¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, ¹⁸ and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

II Corinthians 11:13-15

¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Galatians 1:6-8

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

I Timothy 6:3-5

³ If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴ he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, ⁵ and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

II Peter 2:1-3

¹ But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

I John 1:5-6

⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

II John 7-11

⁷ For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸ Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. ⁹ Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, ¹¹ for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

Jude 3-4

³ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Witness of the Lutheran Confessions

Preface (to Emperor Charles V) to the Augsburg Confession:

[4] Then we may embrace and maintain the future of one pure and true religion under one Christ, doing battle under Him [Psalm 24:8], living in unity and concord in the one Christian Church.

Augsburg Confession, Article XXVIII (Church Authority):

[1] There has been great controversy about the power of the bishops, in which some have terribly confused the power of the Church with the power of the State. [2] This confusion has produced great war and riot. All the while the popes, claiming the Power of the Keys, have instituted new services and burdened consciences with Church discipline and excommunication. But they have also tried to transfer the kingdoms of this world to the Church by taking the Empire away from the emperor. [3] Learned and godly people have condemned these errors in the Church for a long time. [4] Therefore, our teachers, in order to comfort people's consciences, were constrained to show the difference between the authority of the Church and the authority of the State. They taught that both of them are to be held in reverence and honor, as God's chief blessings on earth, because they have God's command.

[5] Our teachers' position is this: the authority of the Keys [Matthew 16:19], or the authority of the bishops—according to the Gospel—is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer Sacraments. [6] Christ sends out His apostles with this command, "As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you . . . Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld" (John 20:21-22). [7] And in Mark 16:15, Christ says, "Go . . . proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation."

[8] This authority is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, either to many or to individuals, according to their calling. In this way are given not only bodily, but also eternal things: eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. [9] These things cannot reach us except by the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, as Paul says, "The Gospel. . . is the power of God for salvation to everyone that believes" (Romans 1:16). [10] Therefore, the Church has the authority to grant eternal things and exercises this authority only by the ministry of the Word. So it does not interfere with civil government anymore than the art of singing interferes with civil government. [11] For civil government deals with other things than the Gospel does. Civil rulers do not defend minds, but bodies and bodily things against obvious injuries. They restrain people with the sword and physical punishment in order to preserve civil justice and peace [Romans 13:1-7].

[12] Therefore, the Church's authority and the State's authority must not be confused. The Church's authority has its own commission to teach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments [Matthew 28:19-20].

[13] Let it not break into the office of another. Let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world to itself. Let it

not abolish the laws of civil rulers. Let it not abolish lawful obedience. Let it not interfere with judgments about civil ordinances or contracts. Let it not dictate laws to civil authorities about the form of society.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV (Justification):

[33] These testimonies are so clear that, to use Augustine's words in this case, they do not need a keen understanding, but only an attentive hearer. If the carnal mind is hostile against God, the flesh certainly does not love God. If it cannot be subject to God's Law, it cannot love God. If the carnal mind is hostile against God, the flesh sins, even when we do outward civil works. If it cannot be subject to God's Law, it certainly sins even when it has deeds that are excellent and praiseworthy according to human judgment.

[34] The adversaries consider only the teachings of the Second Table, which contain civil righteousness that reason understands. Content with this, they think that they fulfill God's Law. In the meantime, they do not see the First Table, which commands that we love God, that we declare God is certainly angry with sin, that we truly fear God, that we declare God certainly hears prayer. But the human heart without the Holy Spirit either feels secure and despises God's judgment, or in punishment flees from God and hates Him when He judges. [35] Therefore, it does not obey the First Table. So, contempt for God, doubt about God's Word, and doubt about the threats and promises dwell in human nature. People truly sin, even when—without the Holy Spirit—they do virtuous works. This is because they act with a wicked heart according to Romans 14:23: "Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." For such people do their works with contempt for God, just as Epicurus does not believe that God cares for him or that he is regarded or heard by God. This contempt ruins works that seem virtuous because God judges the heart.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article VII (The Church):

[48] Ungodly teachers are to be deserted because they no longer act in Christ's place, but are antichrists. Christ says, "Beware of false prophets" (Matthew 7:15). Paul says, "If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9).

Power and Primacy of the Pope (The Marks of the Antichrist):

[58] The cruelty he exercises <against godly Christians> is also clear. God clearly commands us to flee idolatry [1 Corinthians 10:14], godless doctrine [1 Timothy 6:3-4], and unjust cruelty [Proverbs 11:17]. On this account, all the godly have great, compelling, and clear reasons for not obeying the pope. These compelling reasons comfort the godly against all of the reproaches usually cast against them about causing offenses, schism, and discord. [59] Those who agree with the pope and defend his doctrine and <false> worship [*Gottesdienst*] defile themselves with idolatry and blasphemous opinions. They become guilty of the blood of the godly, whom the pope persecutes [see Acts 9:1, 4-5; 1 Corinthians 11:27]. They detract from God's glory and hinder the Church's welfare because they confirm errors and crimes through all generations.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration (Summary, Rule and Norm):

[14] It is not only necessary that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented for the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church, but it is also necessary that the opponents who teach otherwise be reprov'd (1 Timothy 3; [2 Timothy 3:16;] Titus 1:9). Faithful shepherds, as Luther says, should do both things: (a) feed or nourish the lambs and (b) resist the wolves. Then the sheep may flee from strange voices (John 10:5-12) and may separate the precious from the worthless (Jeremiah 15:19).

[15] Regarding these matters, we have thoroughly and clearly told one another the following: a distinction should and must by all means be kept between (a) unnecessary and useless wrangling (the Church should not allow itself to be disturbed by this, since it destroys more than it builds up) and (b) when the kind of controversy arises that involves the articles of faith or the chief points of Christian doctrine. Then the false, opposite doctrine must be reprov'd for defense of the truth.

[16] The aforesaid writings offer the Christian reader—who delights in and has a love for the divine truth—clear and correct information about each and every disputed article of our Christian religion. They show what he should regard and receive as right and true according to God's Word of the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures. They also show what he should reject, shun, and avoid as false and wrong. The truth

must be preserved distinctly and clearly and distinguished from all errors. Nothing must be hidden and concealed under common words. Therefore, we have clearly and directly declared ourselves to one another on the chief and most important articles taken one by one. At the present time these articles have come into controversy so that there might be a public, definite testimony, not only for those now living, but also for our descendants. We make known what is and should remain the unanimous understanding and judgment <decision> of our churches in reference to the articles in controversy:

[17] 1. First, we reject and condemn all heresies and errors that were rejected and condemned in the primitive, ancient, orthodox Church, on the true, firm ground of the holy, divine Scriptures.

[18] 2. Second, as just mentioned, we reject and condemn all sects and heresies that are rejected in the writings of the comprehensive summary of the Confession of our churches.

[19] 3. Third, within thirty years divisions arose among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession because of the *Interim* and for other reasons. Therefore, it has been our purpose to state and to declare plainly, purely, and clearly in thesis and antithesis our faith and confession about each and every one of these divisions. This means we state the true doctrine and the opposite doctrine, in order that the foundation of divine truth might be clear in all articles. In this way all unlawful, doubtful, suspicious, and condemned doctrines might be exposed <distinctly repudiated> (wherever and in whatever books they may be found, and whoever may have written them, or who even now may be ready to defend them). So everyone may be faithfully warned against the errors, which are spread here and there in some theologians' writings. No one should be misled in this matter by the reputation of any person. [20] From this declaration the Christian reader will inform himself in every emergency. He will compare it with the writings listed above, and he will find out exactly what was confessed in the beginning about each article in the comprehensive summary of our religion and faith. He will note what was later restated at different times and is repeated by us in this document. He will see that it is in no way contradictory, but is the simple, unchangeable, permanent truth. Therefore, we do not change from one doctrine to another, as our adversaries falsely assert. We eagerly desire to be found loyal to the once-delivered Augsburg Confession and its unanimously accepted Christian meaning. Through God's grace we desire to abide firmly and constantly by the Augsburg Confession in opposition to all corruptions that have entered.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII (The Holy Supper):

[96] The third, that the Word of God is not false or deceitful.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article X (Church Practices):

[5] Under the title and excuse of outward adiaphora, things are proposed that are in principle contrary to God's Word, although painted another color. These ceremonies are not to be regarded as adiaphora, in which one is free to do as he wants. They must be avoided as things prohibited by God. In a similar way in such a situation ceremonies should not be regarded as genuine free adiaphora, or matters of indifference. This is because they make a show or pretend that our religion and that of the papists are not far apart in order to avoid persecution, or they pretend that the papist's ceremonies are not at least highly offensive to us. When ceremonies are intended for this purpose, and are required and received (as though through them contrary religions are reconciled and become one body), we cannot regard them as adiaphora. When returning to the papacy and departing from the Gospel's pure doctrine and true religion should happen or gradually follow from such ceremonies, we cannot regard them as adiaphora. [10] We also believe, teach, and confess that at a time of confession, when the enemies of God's Word want to suppress the pure doctrine of the Holy Gospel, God's entire church, indeed, every single Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word, as the directors of the community of God <God's church>, is bound by God's Word to confess the doctrine freely and openly. They are bound to confess every aspect of <pure> religion, not only in words, but also in works and actions. In this case, even in adiaphora, they must not yield to the adversaries or permit these adiaphora to be forced on them by their enemies, whether by violence or cunning, to the detriment of the true worship of God and the introduction and sanction of idolatry. [16] Furthermore, idolaters are confirmed in their idolatry by such yielding and conforming in outward things, where there has not previously been Christian unity in doctrine. On the other hand, true believers are grieved, offended, and weakened in their faith. Every Christian, for the sake of his soul's welfare and salvation, is bound to avoid both of these, as it is written: Woe to the world for temptations to sin! (Matthew 18:7) But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it

would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:6)

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XI (Election):

[95] From our explanation, friends and enemies and, therefore, everyone, may clearly see that we have no intention of yielding any part of God's eternal, immutable truth for the sake of temporal peace, tranquility, and unity (which is not in our power to do anyway). Such peace and unity would have no permanence, since it is devised against the truth and for its suppression. We are even less willing to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and clear, condemned errors. [96] We do yearn with heartfelt pleasure and love for unity. On our part, we are sincerely willing and anxious to advance that unity (according to our utmost power) by which God's glory remains unharmed. We willingly advance unity where nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no room is given to the least error, and poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, raised up by faith, confirmed in new obedience, and justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XII (Other Factions and Sects):

[7] However, we do not want the condemned errors of the factions and sects we just mentioned to be silently ascribed to us. [8] For the most part these groups, as is the nature of such spirits, secretly stole in at certain places. They did this especially at a time when no place or room was given to the pure Word of the Holy Gospel, when all its sincere teachers and confessors were persecuted, and the deep darkness of the papacy still prevailed. Poor, simple people, in their simplicity (who could not help but feel the clear idolatry and false faith of the papacy), embraced whatever was called the Gospel and was not papistic. We cannot avoid testifying against these groups publicly, before all Christendom. We have no part or fellowship with their errors, be they many or few. We reject and condemn them one and all. They are wrong and heretical, and are contrary to the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles and to our Christian Augsburg Confession, which is well grounded in God's Word.

(Erroneous Article of the Anabaptists)

[9] For instance, the erroneous, heretical doctrines of the Anabaptists are not to be tolerated and allowed in the Church or in the commonwealth or in domestic life. For they teach the following:

(Erroneous Articles of the Schwenckfeldians)

[28] In a similar way, the Schwenckfeldians assert the following:

(Erroneous Articles of the New Arians)

[36] The New Arians teach that Christ is not true, essential, natural God, of one eternal divine essence with God the Father. They say He is only adorned with divine majesty inferior to, and beside, God the Father.

(Erroneous Articles of the New Anti-Trinitarians)

[37] 1. Some Anti-Trinitarians reject and condemn the ancient, approved Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. They condemn both their sense and words. These people teach that there is not just one eternal divine essence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They teach that, just as there are three distinct persons (God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), so each person has also its essence distinct and separate from the other persons. They say that all three are either like three men—distinct and separate in their essence, of the same power, wisdom, majesty, and glory <as some imagine>—or are unequal in essence and properties <as some think>.

[Conclusion]

[39] These and similar articles, one and all, with what belongs to them and follows from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, and contrary to God's Word, the three Creeds, the Augsburg Confession and Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and Luther's Catechisms. All godly Christians should beware of these articles to the extent that the welfare and salvation of their souls is dear to them.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article XII (Other Factions <Heresies> and Sects):

[2] The Anabaptists are divided among themselves into many factions, because one fights for more errors, another for less. However, they all in common profess the sort of doctrine that cannot be tolerated or allowed in the Church, in the commonwealth and secular government, or in home life.

OTHER COMPLICATING ISSUES REGARDING UNIONISM & SYNCRETICISM

1. On September 9, 1998, Rev. Dr. David Benke, President of the Atlantic District of the LCMS participated in an interfaith worship service at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, New York, NY. At that time the President of the LCMS, Rev. Dr. Alvin Barry, placed Dr. Benke under discipline and a public apology was demanded and given on the convention floor of the ensuing Synodical convention by saying:

"My participation in this service was a direct violation of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and consequently, violation of the Constitution, Bylaws and doctrinal resolutions of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. I also recognize that my participation in this interfaith prayer service was a violation of my duties and responsibilities as an elected officer of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. While well-intended, what I did was wrong. I therefore sincerely and publicly apologize to the Synod for my actions in this connection. I assure the Synod that I will not repeat this error in the future by participating as an officiant in ecumenical services."
2. At Synod's 2001 convention in St. Louis, Resolution 3-07A is passed regarding a Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) document entitled, "The Lutheran Understanding of Church Fellowship and CTCR Report on the Synodical Discussions".

"Resolved, That we commend this study and response for continued use and guidance to build that unity where it is still lacking, and be it further *Resolved*, That the Synod reaffirm once again its position on joint worship..."
3. On September 19, 2001, LCMS President, Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick and Rev. Dr. David Benke participated in a unionistic joint worship service at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA), in New York with ELCA clergy, Rev. Dr. Robert F. Scholz, Pastor at Holy Trinity; The Rev. H. George Anderson, Presiding Bishop – ELCA; and The Rev. Dr. Stephen P. Bouman, Bishop, Metropolitan New York (ELCA)
4. On September 23, 2001 (following the World Trade Center terrorist attacks), Rev. Dr. David Benke, President of the Atlantic District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod participated in a Memorial Service at Yankee Stadium in New York City. Clergy participating in this memorial service were:

His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan, Archbishop of New York;
Rabbi Joseph Potasnik;
Rabbi Alvin Kass;
Rabbi Haskel Lookstein;
Rabbi Marc Gellman, President, NY Board of Rabbis;
Rabbi Joy Levitt;
Dr. Inberjit Singh, Sikh Temple, Richmond Hills;
Brother Abdul Wali Y. Shaheed;
Imam Muhammad Shamsi-Ali;
Imam Izak-EL-M. Pasha;
Bishop Ernest Lyght, Bishop Council of Churches of NYC;
Rev. Carolyn Holloway;
the Right Rev Mark Siak;
the Rev. James Forbes;
His Eminence Archbishop Anania Arapajinn, Armenian Church in America;
Rev. Calvin Butts, President Council of Churches, NYC;
Rev. David Benke, President Atlantic District of the LCMS;
His Eminence Archbishop Demetrius, Greek Orthodox Archbishop of America;

Pandir Roop Sukhram, Hindu Sreeraam Temple, Brooklyn;
and others.

- A. The Constitution of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (2001 Synodical handbook, p. 8) says, “Conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod are the following...2. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description...”
- B. In a memo from Mayor Giuliani announcing this event it said: “Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani today announced “A Prayer for America,” an interfaith service for the families and colleagues of the victims of the World Trade Center tragedy.” (emphasis added). It went on to say: “This event will give families of victims and those affected by the tragedy an opportunity to come together, worship together, and gain strength...” (emphasis added).
- C. In response to Dr. Benke’s participation in this interfaith worship service formal charges were brought against Dr. Benke by the following individuals and congregations of the Synod:
- 1) Rev. Joel R. Baseley, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Dearborn, MI. (10/22/01)
 - 2) Rev. Benjamin T. Ball, St. Luke’s Ev. Lutheran Church, Dedham, MA (11/12/01)
 - 3) Rev. Charles E. Froh, Grace Lutheran Church, San Mateo, CA (11/12/01)
 - 4) Rev. Walter D. Otten, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Brookfield, IL (11/12/01)
 - 5) Rev. Joel A. Brondos, Zion Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, IN (11/12/01)
 - 6) Rev. Brent W. Kuhlman, Trinity Lutheran Church, Murdock, NE (11/12/01)
 - 7) Rev. Todd A. Peperkorn, Messiah Lutheran Church, Kenosha, WI (11/12/01)
 - 8) Rev. James D. Bauer, Trinity Lutheran Church, Denver, CO (11/28/01)
 - 9) Rev. John M. Berg, Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Pleasant Prairie, WI (11/28/01)
 - 10) Rev. Dennis E. Brech, Mt. Hope Lutheran Church, Boulder, CO (11/28/01)
 - 11) Rev. Daniel G. Bremer, Grace Lutheran Church, Grand Island, NE (11/28/01)
 - 12) Rev. Clark A. Brown, Trinity Lutheran Church, Center, MO (11/28/01)
 - 13) Rev. Eric M. Christiansen, St. John Lutheran Church, Libby, MT (11/28/01)
 - 14) Rev. James E. Dahlke, Trinity Lutheran Church, Hebron, NE (11/28/01)
 - 15) Rev. Gene K. Holtorf, St. John Lutheran Church, Palmer, KS (11/28/01)
 - 16) Rev. Donald R. Hunter, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Taylorsville, NC (11/28/01)
 - 17) Rev. Dean C. Kavouras, FBI Chaplain, Parma, OH (11/28/01)
 - 18) Rev. Michael McCoy, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Emmett, ID (11/28/01)
 - 19) Rev. Robert Wurst, Jr., Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Evansville, IN (11/28/01)
 - 20) Our Savior Lutheran Church, Pagosa Springs, CO – Rev. Richard A. Bolland, Pastor (12/16/01)
 - 21) Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Pleasant Prairie, WI – Rev. John M. Berg, Pastor (1/28/02)
 - 22) Christ Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD – Rev. Michael W. Henrichs, Pastor (3/10/02)
- (NOTE: By way of comparison the number of clergy bringing charges against the faculty at the St. Louis seminary in the 1970’s was two.)*
- D. Dr. Benke twice contacted the President of the LCMS, Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, prior to his participation at the interfaith worship service, and twice received the President’s approval for his participation. This was later to serve as President Benke’s main defense and resulted in a Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) binding opinion (02-2309) being issued that substantiated, (after the fact), that even if a member of Synod does something ethically, morally, or biblically wrong, that as long as he had his ecclesiastical supervisor’s approval, that he/she could not be held accountable for their own actions. (This binding opinion of the CCM is still in effect and is binding on all members of the Synod today despite multiple efforts by multiple districts of the Synod in convention asking for the opinion to be overturned.)
- E. Resolution 7-02 (To Affirm Ecclesiastical Supervision) was presented to the 2010 Convention. The Committee on Ecclesial Matters wrote an introduction that acknowledged that several overtures were submitted requesting “...the convention overrule CCM Opinion 02-2309 and other related opinions dealing with ecclesiastical supervision and expulsion of a member who, when performing his or her official duties, follows the advice and counsel of the ecclesiastical supervisor designated by the Synod.” (*Today’s Business Proposed Resolutions 2010*, p.117).

The Committee's conclusion to their introduction to 7-02: "CCM Opinions 02-2296, 02-2309 and 02-2320, issued over seven years ago, have been reviewed by two subsequent conventions of the Synod, but they continue to attract attention and misunderstanding as evidence by the overture to this convention. Based upon the extensive review of these and related CCM opinions by previous convention, as well as the CTCR, COP and COS, Floor Committee 7 [Ecclesiastical Supervision] recommends the adoption of Res 7.02." (*Today's Business Proposed Resolutions 2010*, p.119).

The final Resolve of 7-02 reads as follows: "...thereby be it

Resolved, That the Synod affirm that CCM Opinion 02-2309 and related opinions should not have been and shall never be understood to grant immunity to any member of the Synod, or to allow such member to act with immunity, or to give permission to act contrary to the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, the Constitution, or the Bylaws of our beloved Synod."

Not only did the 2010 Convention affirm the CCM ruling regarding the Yankee Stadium event (958/189), but they rejected consideration of a substitute resolution that would have overturned CCM Opinion 02-2309 (465/646). Here is the substitute motion that the convention voted not to consider:

Whereas, CCM Opinion 02-2309 and related opinions were rendered prior to the adoption of 2004 Res. 8-01A; and

Whereas, CCM Opinion 02-2309 and related opinions continue to cause consternation in some quarters of our Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Synod in convention overturn CCM Opinion 02-2309 and related opinions."