

Final Report and Recommendations

Ad Hoc Commission
June 2009

Local Congregation

- Responsible for its own affairs
- Chooses to align itself with other congregations that share the same beliefs
- With others creates the larger visible church organization—synod
- Together we are a confederation not a hierarchy.

The Mission and Purpose of the Synod

- Each church has the responsibilities Christ gave to his church, such as
 - Retaining the truth
 - Teaching
 - Preparing future leaders
 - Extending the kingdom by proclaiming the gospel
- **Historically, the purpose of our synod has been to do together what we cannot do as individual congregations.**

What does the Synod do?

- Conserve biblical Lutheran doctrine; maintaining confessional integrity with the weight of the collective confession of member congregations.
- Admonishes in love deviations from Lutheran doctrine by member congregations

What does the Synod do?

- Acts for local congregations in preparing called workers; collective efficiency and consistency
- Planting home missions and sending missionaries into world missions

What does the Synod do?

- The synod has the opportunity to raise the vision of local congregations to mission opportunities beyond the local congregation's reach.
- Publishes material that adheres to the doctrines held by synod congregations.

The Synod Requires Resources

- Work together requires financial resources
- Work together also requires structure and administrators.

Endorsements and Recommendations

- 80 of 86 recommendations received overwhelming support
- Recommendations that did not receive support were amended or removed
- Endorsements included in report where progress is being made

A Challenge

- Financial challenges recently became greater
- At such a time, **we believe the synod should concentrate on doing work that is more easily carried out jointly than by separate congregations.**
 - Honor priorities of previous two conventions
 - Cuts not proportionate but ministry driven

Section 1: Expansion of Mission Efforts

- **Recommendations**
 - Home Missions retrench to start new churches
 - Retain Vicar in Mission Setting Program

Section 2: Synodical Budget and Finance

- Reaffirm CMO as primary support
- Efforts to enable COP and SC to work more closely with each other
- Coordinate appeals with Ministry of Christian Giving
- Spend down existing funds
- Reduce number of special funds
- Develop policy for new special funds
- Address congregations providing little or no support for synod's work

Budget Process

- **Recommendations**
 - All areas of ministry study staffing levels in each budgeting cycle
 - District Presidents continue to be advocates for Synod's work

Section 3: Strengthening Congregations

- We believe a new approach is needed.
 - Parish Services has not always been readily or extensively utilized.
 - District Presidents share a concern for the spiritual health of congregations.
 - Some congregations continue to struggle.
- Sharpening the Point of the Spear

A Cooperative Team Approach

- Allow District Presidents time to be more proactive: *make districts smaller*.
 - Study comprehensive redistricting
- Improve and strengthen the circuit pastor system to assist District Presidents to deal proactively with congregational issues
- Redeploy and reconfigure Parish Services

Section 4: Excellence among Called Workers

- Recommendations
 - Provide full tuition scholarships to MLC to academically gifted students
 - At MLC provide scholarships tied to merit or excellence in academics, music, the arts, leadership, campus service, or evangelism
 - WLS establish a program of study fellowships based on gifts for ministry
 - WLS explore ways to increase directed study programs with in-class components.
 - WLS graduates aspiring to higher learning be provided WLS faculty guidance.
 - A flexible program of continuing education be required of all called workers.

Section 5: Synod-wide Theological Study

- Recommendations
 - COP initiate a review of key doctrines and practical issues pertinent to the challenges facing WELS today
 - Year one Study: Trusting the Efficacy of the Means of Grace
 - Year Two Study: Vocation, church and ministry
 - Year Three study: Care of Souls
 - Year Four Study: The sacramental Life
 - Stimulate fresh, vigorous study of the issues

Section 6: Structure and Organization

- Recommendations
 - Make First Vice-President a part-time position
 - Replace four area of ministry chairmen with three pastors and one teacher elected by the convention.
 - Advisory members of SC attend committee and plenary sessions upon request

Section 7: Conventions

- Recommendations
 - Explore ways information can flow to delegates in a more timely fashion
 - Include all necessary and vital information in BORAM and RTTTD.
 - Consider whether synod convention can be shortened and/or scheduled at a more appropriate time.
 - Improve system for reporting results of conventions

Section 8: Synodical Communications

- Explore new technology that can be utilized in carrying out the synod's mission

Section 9: Cost of Ministerial Education

■ Recommendations

- Prep Level
 - Reduce spending levels on a per student basis
 - Tuition and fees should be comparable to area Lutheran high schools
- College Level
 - Reduce spending levels on a per student basis
 - Explore and implement one or both options: comparable to in-state tuition and fees and reimbursement program

Soli Deo Gloria!
