

Marriage & Family Group produces sample resolution

The Marriage and Family Group, a committee of seven laypersons and pastors, which is studying the Biblical and confessional understanding of God's gifts of marriage and the family, is offering a sample resolution supporting earlier stands on human sexuality and ordination standards.

The resolution, first offered at this spring's WordAlone Network convention, can be used by congregations to let their synods know how they feel about human sexuality and homosexuality issues being studied by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for the next three years. It is available on the news page of the WordAlone website for downloading and may be photocopied, or you may call the WordAlone office to request a copy.

"We are pleased to offer our sample resolution to every congregation in the ELCA,"

recently commented Pastor Ray F. Kibler III, Claremont Cal., and convener of the group. "We intend this to be a resource for congregations (individually or collectively) that desire to petition their respective synods on this matter."

Though initiated under WordAlone auspices, the Marriage and Family Group stands independent of all such organizations and movements in order to be a help and resource to them all, he added.

The resolution, among other items, supports a 1993 statement from the Conference of Bishops opposing blessings of homosexual relationships and supporting the earlier "Vision and Expectations" ELCA document on ordination standards, which precludes active homosexuals from being ordained.

Support "exceptional" new pastors

As seminary graduates consider whether to ask their bishops for an exception from being ordained by a bishop, one way to encourage them is to let them know that "exceptional" pastors are desired as new pastors by congregations and as colleagues by pastors and associates in ministry (AIMs). For that purpose, WordAlone has a public list of congregations willing to call "exceptional" pastors, and a second list of pastors and AIMs who would gladly serve with "exceptional" pastors. The list is posted on

the WordAlone website on the Support Seminarians page.

Congregations wishing to join the list should send a statement signed by a congregational leader, "Our congregation would gladly call a pastor not ordained by a bishop." to the WordAlone Office. Pastors and AIMs should send a signed statement, "I do not conform to CCM's requirements, and I will gladly serve with a pastor not ordained by a bishop."

Reformation had liturgical ramifications



by
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Conrad Bergendoff, the sainted leader of Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., once opined that although Lutherans were not a liturgical church, they did have a liturgy inherited from the medieval church. Martin Luther's reformation was theological, he wanted to reform the theology of the church, not its liturgy. However, he discovered that his theological convictions soon had liturgical ramifications, which he set forth in his pamphlet on the German Mass in 1525. There he constructed a service he thought would work well for the laity.



Gracia Grindal

His most significant work was to turn the liturgy into a liturgy that used only German hymn versions of the traditional parts of the Mass: the Kyrie (LBW 161), the Gloria in Excelsis (LBW 166), the Apostles' Creed (LBW 374), the Lord's Prayer (LBW 442), the Sanctus (LBW 528), and the

Agnus Dei (LBW 111). This came to be known as the German Mass, (Deutsche Messe) or Chorale version of the Lutheran service.

His genius made it possible for the common people to sing in church because strophic (songs in which the stanzas are all sung to the same tune) hymns with repeatable melodies and rhymed stanzas were much easier to learn and sing than the Gregorian Latin versions of the texts that were best sung by professional choirs, usually the clergy. In

composing this service, Luther gave the liturgy back to the people and created a tradition that lasted in Denmark, Norway and a good bit of Germany until the latter part of the 19th century when Lutherans in Europe and America under the influence of Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, Germany changed back to a liturgical

form, which used music especially composed for the main parts of the service.

What Luther carefully excised from the Catholic liturgy was the canon of the Mass, which speaks directly about the Mass as being a sacri- (Continued on page 8)

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(Continues from page 7) fice. Luther thought this language, which made the Mass a work that garnered merit for sinners, was like a sewer, since it put before the Lord our good works, which, to him, were nothing more than filthy rags. It has begun to appear back in the services in our Lutheran books as the Eucharistic prayer, although without the language of sacrifice. Still, when the pastor prays a prayer to God in which the words of institution are included, one wonders about whether or not sacrifice has made a strong comeback since the words of institution are supposed to be proclamation to the congregation, not prayer to God.

Luther's theology of worship had one idea driving it: In the worship service, in hymns, prayers, readings, preaching, it should be made clear that everything comes from God, and nothing from us except confession, thanksgiving and praise. The entire order of service and proclamation was to be judged by whether or not the words "for you" were central. Worship, then, was to be a time when we met God who wanted to minister to us in Jesus Christ, who would deal with us during the service as His name was preached and

glorified. In the service He would greet us by name, forgive our sins and fill us with good things so that we could go forth, forgiven and refreshed, to serve our neighbor.

As he composed his German Mass, he well knew, however, that people would be tempted to make an idol of his ser-

Luther's theology of worship had one idea driving it: In the worship service... it should be made clear that everything comes from God, and nothing from us except confession, thanksgiving and praise.

vice so he concluded it with the very strange reference to the brass serpent, which had become an idol the people worshiped long after its use in the wilderness had faded. "In short, this or any other order shall be so used that whenever it becomes an abuse, it shall be straightway abolished and replaced by another, even as King Hezekiah put away and destroyed the brazen serpent, though God himself had commanded it be made, because the children of Israel made an abuse of it (II Kings 18:4).... No order is, therefore, valid in itself--as the popish orders were held to be until now. But the validity, value, power and virtue of any order is in its proper use. Otherwise it is utterly worthless and good for nothing." LW, 53, p. 90.

Today we are in the midst of a wave of liturgical controversies. The most com-

mon one is the debate between so-called "traditional" Lutheran worship, as contained in the LBW, and "contemporary" as created by a vast array of contemporary composers and musicians. This debate is unfortunate, since it gives the LBW service priority as THE Lutheran service, while others are not. It seems to me that this question has to do mostly with musical styles, rather than liturgical orders.

The musical settings of the liturgy in the LBW are basically modern music by modern musicians who preferred modern music to what they regarded as the sentimental sounds of their predecessors. On the whole, that music has received essentially the same welcome as modern music receives in the concert hall: only a few really like it. On the other hand, the contemporary musical liturgical settings of today are basically folk/rock/jazz, which are, oddly enough, more traditional sounding than modern music, and more recognizable to our people, the common laity, for whom Luther prepared his German Mass.

I would plead that we think seriously once again about Luther's use of hymns to get the basic liturgy done. There are

too many contemporary liturgies out there that are every bit as difficult to sing as the old Gregorian music. People are not really asking for "new" liturgies so much as they are asking for hymns that swing a little and sound more like the music they hear on pop radio stations. Finding familiar hymns and putting together a worship service that feels familiar to people is not at all difficult. Those

choosing, for example, to use hymns should think of what the favorite hymns of the congregation are, and how they might like to sing them. Good musicians can put swing, jazz, rock, folk, country under any tune. Those attempting to create worship services that connect with people and maintain the core Lutheran theological commitments should

remember the fundamental thing: Christ and his gracious gifts to us must be central.

The Augsburg Confession says as much in Article 7:

Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to (Continued on page 10)

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agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4, 5, 6.

To help those who are struggling with these issues, we conclude this article with Luther's order for worship as it appeared in the German Mass.



"In the first place, I would kindly and for God's sake request all those who see this order of service or desire to follow it: Do not make it a rigid law to bind or entangle anyone's conscience, but use it in Christian liberty as long, when, where and how you find it to be practical and useful. For this is being published not as though we meant to lord it over anyone else, or to legislate for him, but because of the widespread demand for German Masses and services and the general dissatisfaction and offense that has been caused by the great variety of new Masses, for everyone makes his own order of service." LW, 53, p. 61.

The German Mass

- a. German Psalm
- b. Kyrie Eleison (three times)
- c. Collect (chanted)
- d. Epistle (eighth tone)
- e. German hymn
("Nun bitten wir" or any other)
- f. Gospel (fifth tone)
- g. Creed ("Wir glauben all")
- h. Sermon
- i. Lord's Prayer (public paraphrase)
- j. Words of Institution
- k. Distribution of bread
- l. German Sanctus
("Isaiah in a Vision Did Behold" or other)
- m. Distribution of wine
- n. Agnus Dei
- o. Collect
- p. Aaronic benediction.

'Ripple Effect' is pilot program to educate, invite congregations



"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem; in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

"Ripple Effect," a pilot program based on Acts 1:8, designed to educate and invite congregations to the WordAlone Network, is being started in three congregations from around the country in hopes of eventually reaching all of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) nearly 11,000 congregations.

WA President Jaynan Clark Egland said in a recent interview: "As the ripples in a pond go out in an ever widening pattern of concentric circles, we remember that the cause of all that activity is just one small pebble thrown into a potentially huge body of water. So it is with the WordAlone Network and its membership of congregations, chapters and individuals. Education of the wider church starts with one."

The contacts by these three congregations are meant to come out of personal relationships their members have in other congregations and they are not limited geographically.

"There is no set way that's going to work," she said. "The idea is based on the hope that someone says, 'If only Aunt Wilma knew.' Well, tell it to Aunt Wilma! We want them to start with a personal relation-

ship. It's not binding on a geographic area. You may be in Montana and you can contact someone in Florida.

"All of us Lutherans know Lutherans somewhere else."

The three pilot congregations, one each in Idaho, Texas and South Dakota, have committed to share with three other congregations the news of what is happening in the ELCA and the vision and mission of the WordAlone Network, she said. These next congregations will be asked to commit to share with more congregations. And so, the ripple effect.

A "starter pack" of information and educational resources is available by calling the WordAlone office at 888-551-7254. This packet was first used by some members at Morningside Lutheran Church in Morningside, Iowa, to successfully introduce their congregation to WordAlone. That congregation subsequently joined WordAlone. Morningside members presented this packet in a workshop at the April WA convention.

Egland said she hopes the pilot program will inform congregations about the current status of the ELCA in regards to its numerical relations, declining mission and poor stewardship. The program also is meant to invite new congregations to get involved in the renewal, reform and reflection going on through the WordAlone Network.