

11. CHURCH AND CULTURE

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) parochial schools, congregations, seminaries, the Concordia University System, and individuals in our Synod are experiencing mounting pressure as a result of cultural and legal changes; and

WHEREAS, LCMS church workers and laity have asked for guidance in pastoral care for individuals and families struggling with matters of same-sex attraction and gender identity issues; and

WHEREAS, Many faithful Christian individuals who experience sexual orientation or gender identity confusion have not accepted the common assumptions that same-sex acts and sex change therapies are moral, or even God pleasing; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS has produced resources such as the following CTCR reports: *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective* (Sept. 2014); *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective* (Sept. 1981); *Response to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (April 2012); and *The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church* (Dec.2009); as well as the treatment of these matters in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (Concordia Publishing House, 2017); therefore be it

Resolved, That the LCMS in convention affirm and faithfully confess the biblical truth that God created humanity as male and female; and be it further

Resolved, That we regard all those who experience sexual orientation and gender identity issues as our neighbors, beloved of God, and therefore condemn acts of abuse committed against them; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention gives thanks for those individuals who, despite same-sex attraction or gender identity confusion, continue to live chaste and decent lives in repentant faith, and that LCMS congregations, districts, and Synod entities seek the counsel and leadership of such individuals in developing faithful approaches to minister to those who experience same-sex attraction and gender identity confusion; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors and congregations of the Synod be encouraged to minister compassionately to those who experience sexual orientation and gender identity issues through prayer, the proclamation of Law and Gospel, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, corporate and individual confession and absolution, the proper administration of the Lord's Supper, the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers and sisters, and pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That pastors and congregations of the Synod be encouraged to minister compassionately to the families, friends, and all others impacted by those who experience same-sex attraction, those who are involved in same-sex relationships, and those whose sexual self-understanding

is shaped by a distressing conflict between their biological sex and their perceived gender identity through prayer, the proclamation of Law and Gospel, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, corporate and individual confession and absolution, the proper administration of the Lord's Supper, the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers and sisters, and pastoral care; and be it further

Resolved, That church workers and congregations in the Synod be encouraged to utilize the following CTCR reports: *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective*; *Response to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*; *The Creator's Tapestry: Scriptural Perspectives on Man-Woman Relationships in Marriage and the Church*; and *Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria in Christian Perspective*; as well as the treatment of these matters in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (Concordia Publishing House, 2017); and be it further

Resolved, That the CTCR be directed to prioritize the updating of the 1981 study, "*Human Sexuality*"; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention direct the Office of National Mission, Concordia Publishing House, the seminaries, and the Concordia University System to continue to provide resources that enable the church to confess the truth boldly and minister compassionately both to those who experience sexual orientation and gender identity issues and those who care for them.

Action: Adopted as amended (5)

With consent of the body, the committee modified the list of resources commended for use to include the Synod's Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (Concordia Publishing House, 2017). The chair put the close of debate to a vote, which carried [Yes: 671; No: 254]. The resolution was adopted as amended [Yes: 916; No: 30].

To Affirm the Common Humanity of All People and Ethnicities

RESOLUTION 11-04A

Overtures 11-13–14 (CW, 546–47)

WHEREAS, All humanity shares a common origin in Adam and Eve (Gen.1; 2); and

WHEREAS, Scripture affirms that God "Made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26); and

WHEREAS, "God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34–35); and

WHEREAS, Scripture emphasizes humanity's oneness in Christ's reconciling work: "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those

11. CHURCH AND CULTURE

who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:14–19); and

WHEREAS, Jesus sends His people to bring the Gospel to all nations (*ethnos*): “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18–20); and

WHEREAS, God has united all believers in Christ through Holy Baptism (Eph. 4:4–6); and

WHEREAS, The new creation consists of God’s redeemed people from all people groups and ethnicities: “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Rev. 7:9–10); and

WHEREAS, Racism is defined as: (1) A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism); (2) Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one’s own race is superior (www.lexico.com/en/definition/racism); and

WHEREAS, Racism denies the biblical truth that all humanity has a common origin in Adam and is contrary to the law of love, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39b, cf. John 13:34), and may involve, in its various expressions, the breaking of every commandment of the law; and

WHEREAS, Racism has its roots in the sins of pride and arrogance, which have plagued humankind in every time and every place including the Christian church; and

WHEREAS, Racism harms its victims in body, mind and spirit, and people in our communities and ministries have experienced such harm; and

WHEREAS, Racism has no basis in Scripture or the Lutheran Confessions, but rather is consistent with atheistic evolutionary ideologies and movements that claim the supremacy of one people group over another; and

WHEREAS, The Church is called to condemn sin in every form and manner, both in public and in private, including racism in all its expressions; and

WHEREAS, Our Lord has commanded us, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39b, cf. John 13:34); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, confessing its own faults, and walking humbly in repentance before God, has addressed racism and discrimination in 10 Synod conventions resulting in convention resolutions (e.g., 1959 Res. 13-12, “Combating Racial Discriminations,” *Proceedings*, 315–17); and

WHEREAS, The Committee on Theology and Church Relations’ (CTCR) February 1994 document, *Racism and the Church*, states: “We in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have before us a wonderful opportunity to commit ourselves to strive toward making racism a thing of the past, and to demonstrate before a watching world how people of all cultures and groups can become one in Christ, who has made of many one body for the edification of all”; therefore be it

Resolved, That Synod in convention publicly condemn the sin of racism in all its manifestations, giving honor to the Father “from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named” (Eph. 3:15); confessing the Son, who, by His Incarnation and sacrificial death gave value and dignity to every human being; and calling on the Spirit to work in us true repentance, renewal of life, and genuine unity with one another; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of Synod be encouraged to utilize the 1994 CTCR document *Racism and the Church* that was commended to the Synod by the 1995 convention (Res. 2-05A, *Proceedings*, 112); and be it further

Resolved, That the members of the congregations of the Synod be encouraged to work toward racial reconciliation and equality within the Church and within society-at-large, praying that those who advocate racist ideologies and those who are deceived by them be brought to repentance, and that justice and healing come to those who have been wounded; and be it finally

Resolved, That as followers of Christ, “we regard no one according to the flesh” (2 Cor. 5:16), that we serve the One who has entrusted “to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19), and that we celebrate that “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19).

Action: Adopted as amended (5)

It was moved to amend the resolution by striking the twelfth whereas, beginning, “WHEREAS, Racism has no basis in science...” Committee Chairman Forke noted for the committee that it had intended to strike “science,” while retaining the rest of the whereas, and this modification of the twelfth whereas was received without objection. The chair put the close of debate to a vote, which carried [Yes: 830; No: 121]. The resolution was adopted unanimously as amended by a voice vote, “Yea, yea, it shall be so.”