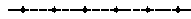


Organizational Structure of LCMS Churches



Your Constitution & Bylaws
Part 2 of a Leadership Series



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References

- ✦ *Government in the Missouri Synod*, Carl S. Munding
- ✦ *God's Plan for Church Leadership*, Nnofel Staton
- ✦ *A Lay Person's Guide to Good Church Government*, Gene White
- ✦ Synod guidelines available from the LCMS Secretary

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Purposes of a Constitution

- ✦ Provides a *legal* name and *place* of operations for the congregation
- ✦ Provides a *purpose* or *mission*
- ✦ Provides an *organizational structure*
 - ◆ Names the *titles* for officers, boards and permanent committees of the congregation
 - ◆ Expresses the time honored duties and responsibilities of the *Office of Public Ministry*, as defined by the Holy Scriptures

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Purposes of a Constitution

- ✧ Defines who is the *legal* representative for the congregations *assets*
- ✧ Express the way the *Power of the Keys* is carried out *according* to Holy Scripture
- ✧ Defines *Confessional* statement
- ✧ Contains so called “unalterable” articles
- ✧ Defines who has the *fiduciary* responsibility for the congregation, at a minimum
 - President, V-President, Secretary, & Treasurer

Purposes of a Constitution

- ✧ Provides the *highest* level of *policies* for your congregation
 - Delegation of authority
 - What the Voters don't delegate, they *retain* for themselves
 - Provides for bylaws, which are the more *detailed* and *procedural* descriptions
 - Some congregations also maintain a third lower level document containing additional procedures of a more fluid nature

Purposes of a Constitution

- ✧ Describes dissolving/splitting of the organization
 - Where does the property and other assets go?
 - 501(c) 3 implications
- ✧ Who are members in good standing?
 - Baptized
 - Communicant
 - Voters

Purposes of a Constitution

- ✳ Provides *checks and balances*
 - ◆ Elders and clergy
 - ◆ Council/Boards and Voters' Assembly
 - ◆ Authority to *spend* and to *maintain* a balanced budget
 - The approved budget is not money in the bank
 - ◆ Grounds for *dismissal* of Ministers, Officers, and Board and Committee Chairs
 - ◆ Doctrinal teachings (including the Sacraments) and dealing with false doctrines and teachings

Practical Implications

- ✳ Congregations *are not* businesses, they are *religious* organizations
 - ◆ They have *special* tax exemptions
 - ◆ However, many *functions* use *accepted* business practices, and *properly* so
 - Financial/bookkeeping
 - Administration, contracts, employee benefits, payroll, etc.
 - Democratic elections
 - Organizational structure
 - Open and democratic meetings

Practical Implications

- ✳ A good *analogy* might be:
 - ◆ a congregation is like an employee owned, not for profit, service oriented, soul seeking, business
 - ◆ Its *reasons for being* are evangelical, educational and spiritual, i.e. the forgiveness of sin
 - ◆ Its *most important* products are *proclaiming the Gospel*, the proper *administration of the Sacraments*, and developing *mature* disciples
 - ◆ It must *maintain* its *moral* and *financial* solvency to remain in "business"

Practical Implications

- ✳ If the Voters are the administrative *authority* in the congregation (and they are), then it follows that:
 - Any *diminishing* of that role is *contrary* to our *established* polity
 - When the Voters don't have their "head in the game" it can lead to general *apathy*
 - Which *can lead* to reduced attendance and giving, lack of contentment, inability to recruit the best talent for offices, leadership abuses, etc.

Practical Implications

- ✳ Called pastors are the *spiritual* leaders, not the *administrators* of the congregation
 - Pastors have the *highest calling* (vocation), the Office of Public Ministry
 - In order for them to do their *primary* and *secondary* spiritual duties they must be *freed* from the *administrative details* of running the congregation (which is the *laity's* responsibility)
 - What are the *principal* duties of a pastor?
 - Preach the Gospel, forgive and retain sins, and administer the Sacraments (AC, Article 28)

Practical Implications

- ✳ Every *new* member of the congregation should receive a *current* copy of the document. Why?
- ✳ Voters should *sign* that they have read and will abide by the document when they *become* Voting Members

Practical Implications

- * An outdated constitution & bylaws are documents *asking to be ignored and abused*
 - ◆ How *often* should they be reviewed?
 - ◆ How *often* should they be updated?
- * *Any* changes must be submitted to the Synod (District) for review to *ensure* that your confessional statement is consistent with that of Synod
 - ◆ Your *changes* are not effective until that approval is *received*

Workshop Session

- * Each table will receive a worksheet with questions to be discussed and the results reported
- * Elect a recorder to report your conclusions to the main body
- * 20 minutes to complete your activity
- * Following this we will reconvene and hear reports from each group and briefly discuss the results.

Q1. What do you think are the two most important reasons for having checks and balances?

Q2. What is the most important reason for having designated officers assigned fiduciary responsibilities?

Q3. Give at least three reasons for listing the principal and secondary responsibilities for a minister in a call document?

Q4. How many check and balance structures are needed? Name some you are familiar with in your church(es).
