

TALK SHEET: CONFESSIONAL POSITION OF THE SYNOD, DOCTRINAL RESOLUTIONS, STATEMENTS, AGREEMENTS AND REVIEW

Word

1. What does God say about doctrine, the purity of doctrine and the church's responsibility concerning doctrine?
 - a. Ephesians 4:3–6, 11–16 _____
 - b. 1 Corinthians 1:10 _____
 - c. Romans 16:17 _____
 - d. 1 Timothy 1:3–7 _____
 - e. 1 Timothy 6:2–5 _____
 - f. 1 Timothy 1:9 and 2:1 _____

Discussion

2. Article II in the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod states that “the Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation” the Scriptures and “all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.” Open the *Book of Concord*. In its table of contents, you will see the same titles as listed in Article II. Page through the Augsburg Confession. What are the titles of the 28 articles? Why is it important that we have doctrinal unity in our church body around these teachings?

3. In his ordination, and every time he is installed thereafter (as he is called to various congregations), every pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod confesses that the Confessions contained in the *Book of Concord* are faithful to the Scriptures and accurately represent Lutheran doctrine. Every commissioned worker in the LCMS does the same (e.g., Lutheran school teachers, directors of Christian education, deaconesses). How does the provision of ecclesiastical supervision and a community for fraternal conversation and correction serve each church worker?

4. It's not just our called workers, however, who vow faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Everyone who is confirmed in the LCMS answers this question, “Do you confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from the Scriptures, as you have learned to know it from the Small Catechism (which is in the *Book of Concord*), to be faithful and true?” The answer is “I do.” Discuss your understanding and commitment to the Lutheran Confessions concerning your confirmation vow: “Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?”

5. Discuss this scenario: You want to write a book and submit it to Concordia Publishing House (CPH) for publication. This book may be a Christian novel, a devotional book, a children's Christmas program, a history of the church or an academic theological work. Assuming CPH is interested in publishing your book, what would be the process to have your manuscript go through doctrinal review according to Synod Bylaw 1.9?

6. Discuss this scenario: Your congregation wants to submit an overture to the upcoming Synod convention concerning creation. You craft an overture that confirms the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2. It also confirms that the world was created by God in six natural days (2019 Res. 5-09) and rejects evolution. How does such an overture become "the position of the Synod" according to Bylaw 1.6.2.b.7? *Note: "Position of the Synod" in the sense of doctrinal positions that are to be honored and upheld is not strictly limited to doctrinal statements (cf. Bylaw 1.6.2.a). It is important to note that the position of the Synod is as broad as the Scriptures and Confessions and that such a resolution only serves to clarify what is inherent in Constitution Article II or seeks to apply it to contemporary circumstances and/or controversies.*

Further Study

1. McCain, Paul T. et al., eds., Concordia: *The Lutheran Confessions*. 2nd ed. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005.

2. Baneck, James A. *Lutheran Doctrine and Practice Today: A Study Based on Scripture and the Book of Concord*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015.