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**Request of Board of Regents, [NAME WITHHELD] College**  
**Regarding “Questions for Theological Study Regarding Homosexuality”**  
[April 1994]

By way of preface to this opinion, the Commission notes that a number of the questions submitted in this request have been addressed by the Synod in convention resolutions and by the Commission in its documents on *Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective* and *Divorce and Remarriage: An Exegetical Study*. The CTCR has therefore made use of these materials in formulating responses to the questions submitted to it.

Question 1: Over time, the Christian Church has selectively relaxed or tightened various Old Covenant laws with regard to their place in the Christian life. Examples include purity laws, usury, prohibition of hybridizing plants or animals, and prohibited degrees of relationship for marriage. What are the major/central criteria by which the church determines which laws are binding upon Christian people, and specifically, upon its own members? Beyond the “first use of the law” which convicts of sin, what is the place and role of specific biblical laws or statutes in the faith, life and discipline of members of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod?

CTCR Response: With regard to the first part of the question, the Lutheran Confessions point to a distinction made in Scripture between the moral law (summarized in “the commandments of the Decalogue”) and “the ceremonial and civil law of Moses” (see, e.g., AC IV, 6). The moral law is binding upon all Christians of all times, while the ceremonial and civil law were binding only upon the Old Testament nation of Israel. Distinguishing properly between the moral law and “the ceremonial and civil laws of Moses” requires a proper understanding and application of the principles of interpretation contained in Scripture itself, such as the principle “Scripture alone is to interpret Scripture,” and the principle that “since the New Testament is the culminating revelation of God, it is decisive in determining the relation between the two Testaments.” (See “Statement on Scripture,” 1958, Part IV, “The Interpretation of Scripture.” Published in *The Lutheran Witness*, Feb. 24, 1959).

Accordingly, it is not “the church” which “determines which laws are binding upon Christian people.” Scripture alone determines this, with Scripture interpreting Scripture and New Testament interpreting Old Testament. Moreover, the moral law, which is binding on all Christians of all times, is found throughout Scripture: in the New Testament (e.g., Matt. 5-7), in the Old Testament (e.g., the 10 Commandments), and even in the Levitical code (e.g., Lev. 18:20, which forbids adultery, and Lev. 19:3-4, which forbids idolatry and disobedience to parents).

Scripture itself, especially the New Testament, determines which of the Levitical laws belong to the moral law. It is clear from the New Testament (see Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10) that the Old Testament prohibitions against homosexuality (Lev. 18:22,24; 20:13) belong not merely to the civil or ceremonial laws but to the moral law. We note that New Testament passages are listed together with Old Testament passages in 1973 Res. 2-04 and 1992 Res. 3-12A.

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With regard to the second part of the question, the Lutheran Confessions speak of three uses of the law. “The law has been given to men for three reasons: (1) to maintain external discipline against unruly and disobedient men, (2) to lead men to a knowledge of their sin, (3) after they are reborn, and although the flesh still inheres in them, to give them on that account a definite rule according to which they should pattern and regulate their entire life” (FC Ep VI; cf. FC SD VI).

Lutherans have traditionally referred to the use of the Law “which convicts of sin” as the second (not the First) use of the law. The law always accuses (*lex semper accusat*), but the law does not only accuse. “Specific biblical law or statutes” belonging to the moral law—including the biblical prohibitions against homosexual behavior—also serve as “a definite rule” or guide for “the faith, life and discipline of members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” “according to which they should pattern and regulate their entire life.”

Question 2: A number of authorities within the churches have advocated a distinction between the same-gender disposition and same-gender sexual “acts,” “behavior” or relationships. Documents of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Lutheran Church of Australia and others appear to espouse this distinction. A clear understanding of this distinction and its significance is fundamental to all other biblical, theological and pastoral considerations. If the Synod indeed holds such a distinction,

- A. What is the understanding of the Synod regarding the voluntary, innate, or immutable nature of the homosexual disposition or orientation? How did the Synod arrive, theologically, at its understanding?
- B. Define and explain the distinction as it is understood and utilized by the Synod.
- C. How does the church understand the responsibility or culpability of the individual for conditions or circumstances which it believes to be the result of original sin and not of personal or “conscious, deliberate choice”?
- D. By what criteria does the church determine that the individual is not accountable or culpable for a homosexual “disposition” while maintaining that all same-gender acts and relationships (disregarding any qualitative and ethical distinctions) are sinful?

CTCR Response: The Synod holds that “God’s Word clearly identifies homophile behavior as immoral, and condemns it (Lev. 18:22; 20:13 and Rom. 1:24-27).” It has not attempted to answer questions concerning the specific cause(s) or nature of homosexual orientation because God’s Word is silent on this issue (cf. the “Statement on Homosexuality” of the Lutheran Church of Australia, 3). However, synodical documents have made use of the commonly accepted distinction between “homosexual propensity” and “homosexual behavior,” since it is obvious that “there are those persons who, apart from any deliberate choice on their part, have a predisposition toward homosexuality and have no desire to enter into a relationship with a person of the opposite sex” (Human Sexuality, 34-5). Concerning this “predisposition toward homosexuality,” the CTCR has said the following in its 1981 report on “Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective”:

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It must be said that a predisposition toward homosexuality is the result of the disordering, corrupting effect of the fall into sin, just as also the predisposition toward any sin is symptomatic of original sin. Furthermore, whatever the causes of such a condition may be—e.g., environmental or genetic—homosexual orientation is profoundly “unnatural” without implying that such a person’s sexual orientation is a matter of conscious, deliberate choice. However, this fact cannot be used by the homosexual as an excuse to justify homosexual behavior. As a sinful human being the homosexual is held accountable to God for homosexual thoughts, words, and deeds. Such a person should be counseled to heed the church’s call to repentance, trust in God’s promise of deliverance (Ps. 50:15), and order his/her life in accord with the Creator’s intent (35).

Because homosexual propensity “is the result of the disordering, corrupting effect of the fall into sin,” individuals possessing such an orientation cannot be said to have chosen this condition as “a matter of conscious, deliberate choice.” According to Scripture, however, all individuals are accountable to God not only for their sinful thoughts, words, and deeds but also for their sinful human nature as a result of Adam and Eve’s fall into sin. Individuals having a “homosexual disposition,” like all those who sin by thought, word, and deed, are called on by God to repent of their sinful behavior and to trust in God’s promise of forgiveness through Christ, and to amend their lives by the power of God’s Spirit.

With respect to “any qualitative and ethical distinctions” between “same-gender acts and relationships,” see the response to question 4 below.

Question 3: Various church authorities have acknowledged that the homosexual orientation or disposition is not a matter of individual choice. As a result, such authorities have suggested a diversity of options which have either been commended to or required of gay or lesbian persons in their fellowship, but which are widely criticized by gay/lesbian people as unrealistic, unwise, dehumanizing or impossible. Of these, it seems clear that:

- A. Marriage, considered by the Lutheran reformers as a “cure” for fornication, now would not be recommended as a responsible option for the individual who discerns that he or she is oriented to the same gender.
- B. Celibacy, in Christian understanding, is a charism of the Holy Spirit which is lifelong, completely voluntary, cannot be commanded, and is affirmed and recognized by the church.
- C. Abstinence is a personal discipline focusing on external continence and purity, apart from concern for the individual’s natural needs and desires for affection, warmth and relationship, and apart from the individual’s gift or strength to live out such disciplines. In the tradition of the church, abstinence is typically commended or expected in light of the possibility of eventual marriage.
- D. Therapies designed to change homosexuals into heterosexuals have rendered no certifiable results, whether in psychotherapeutic care in reorienting individuals toward the other gender, or in Christian ministries designed to produce re-orientation. Many such ministries have now been repudiated as false and misleading by many of the individuals who founded them.

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E. Scripture commends neither perpetual loneliness nor burning with unmitigated passion.

Specifically with regard to pastoral care, what is the position of the church regarding the place of the options above? Does it hold and teach a well-developed position regarding any of the above? If the church also rejects permanent same-gender monogamous relationships, what specific, realistic ethical options does it offer to the Christian homosexual who sincerely wishes to give himself/herself “with a glad heart to the doing of God’s will,” and avoid sin, but cannot humanly live according to any of the options discussed above? What evidence is cited to propose that any such options are realistic, compassionate and viable? To summarize: if all genital sexual expression outside of heterosexual marriage is sinful, and if heterosexual marriage is not a possibility for the homosexual, and if the individual does not have the charism for celibacy, what option is commended to the Christian homosexual?

CTCR Response: It should be noted, first of all, that this question contains a number of false assumptions which tend to prejudice the theological question at issue here. For example, it is not true that marriage was viewed by the Lutheran reformers simply as a “cure” for fornication (see, e.g., Large Catechism, Sixth Commandment). Nor is it true that celibacy, in Christian understanding, is always “completely voluntary,” or that abstinence is necessarily “typically commended or expected in light of the possibility of eventual marriage.”

The theological question at issue here, however, has been addressed by the CTCR in its document on “Human Sexuality.” The Commission says:

We cannot conclude without noting that the discussion above suggests that Christian counsel for the homosexual is that he seek to control his sexual orientation at least in the sense that he abstain from homosexual acts. We should not overlook the burden of loneliness which this places upon the homosexual. If the discerning eye of Cod created woman as the answer to man’s loneliness, the homosexual who abstains from the sexual relationship to which he is inclined must feel that there is no “other” to answer to his loneliness. He must be helped to bear that burden, not merely exhorted to struggle nobly against his inclinations. It is right to remember, of course, that Christian counsel to heterosexuals will also often involve asking them to restrain their impulses and refrain from acts to which they are inclined. Finally, we should note again that, while marriage can be said to be the center of the male-female polarity, it is only a created reality. As we stressed above, marriage has limits, and entrance into a marital union is not a necessity. The person of homosexual orientation must be constantly made aware that fellowship in the church and a share in the hope of the heavenly kingdom is also offered to him/her through faith in Christ, whose death has atoned for all sins. (*Human Sexuality*, 36. Cf. the helpful discussion of this same topic in the LCA’s Statement, 3-4)

Not all therapists would agree with the negative assessment given in 4.0 above regarding therapies and/or Christian ministries designed to help those who seek to change or overcome their homosexual orientation or behavior. As Christians, we dare not make light of Cod’s power to rescue those who trust in him from bondage to specific sins or sinful tendencies

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(Rom. 6:11-14).

In its efforts to develop a plan for ministry to homosexuals, the Synod has identified in 1992 Res. 3-12A the following “goals to be pursued” by such a plan:

1. to offer to our world biblically alternative models of sexual celibacy outside of a committed, permanent heterosexual marriage and same-gender social, but not genitally sexual, deep friendships;
2. to confront the individual with his/her sinfulness, and call him/her to repentance;
3. to help the individual recognize that God can rescue individuals from homosexual orientation and practice;
4. to assure him/her of forgiveness in Christ, contingent upon sincere repentance and faith in Christ, and to assure him/her of the love and acceptance of the church;
5. to assist the individual to rely on Christ’s love and strength to abstain from homophile behavior;
6. to help the individual to bear his/her burden without fear of recrimination and rejection by his/her sisters and brothers in Christ;
7. to find ways of ministering to families which include persons of homophile orientation;
8. to do all this patiently, persistently, and compassionately in the love and Spirit of Christ, who says, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

Question 4: Does the church in fact hold and teach that all gay or lesbian sexual relationships are equally wrong and equally invalid for believing Christians—whether such actions or relationships be a fleeting, anonymous sexual genital encounter on the one hand, or a lifelong monogamous relationship on the other? If all such relationships and all such acts are grouped together with no qualitative distinction, what biblical, theological, ethical and other factors are used to group these distinct and different behaviors together?

CTCR Response: The Synod’s position is that “homophile behavior” is “intrinsically sinful” (1973 Res. 2-04). In taking this position, the Synod does not distinguish between “a fleeting, anonymous sexual genital encounter on the one hand, or a lifelong monogamous relationship on the other.” The basis for the Synod’s position is that “God’s Word clearly identifies homophile behavior as immoral, and condemns it (Lev. 18:22; 20:13 and Rom. 1:24-27)” (1973 Res. 2-04). The CTCR has stated that “Homosexuality comes under a categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22,24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10)” (32). The CTCR also notes that

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In discussing the sins which follow upon man's refusal to honor God as Creator of all things (Rom. 1:26-32), the apostle Paul singles out the sins of homosexual behavior for special comment. Such behavior comes under God's judgment not because it is any more heinous than the 21 vices listed in 1:29-31, but because it, too, illustrates man's rebellion against his Creator. Like these sins, homosexual behavior is illustrative of how rebellious man turns in upon himself and makes "an agony of the common life that should in God's intent have been a blessing to mankind" (Human Sexuality, 34).

Question 5: There has been considerable debate regarding whether those biblical passages most often cited against homosexuality even speak about constitutional homosexuality as it is now understood. Does The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod hold and promulgate specific exegetical views of these particular passages? On what exegetical history or authorities does the Synod rely? Is there a clear, unequivocal Christian tradition of interpretation of these particular passages, and if so how can that interpretation be summarized?

CTCR Response: As stated above, it is the position of the Synod that "God's Word clearly identifies homophile behavior as immoral, and condemns it (Lev. 18:22, 20:13 and Rom. 1:24-27)" (1973 Res. 2-04). In taking this position, the Synod does not rely on "exegetical... authorities" or on "Christian tradition" but on the authority of Scripture alone. This position is consistent with that of the vast majority of exegetes throughout history.

Question 6: Paul's remarks about arsenokoites and malakoi in Romans 1 are made in the broader context of his discussion of Idolatry. Many commentators find that, if these two Greek terms even refer to homoerotic behavior at all, such homosexuality is in Paul's thinking one of the results of God's abandonment of the world, rather than the cause of God's judgment. What is the particular relationship of idolatry and sexuality? Is sexual desire a natural God-given component of human life or is it an idol a shadow or false "god"? Or, should lust be understood as the idol or shadow of true and rightly-used human sexuality? As the church interprets sexuality and its inappropriate manifestations such as lust, is there any particular relationship of the gender of one's partner which is to be seen as idolatry? Is homosexuality more prone to idolatry than heterosexuality? Is the lifelong, monogamous relationship of two persons of the same gender to be seen invariably as lust, or might it be seen as an expression of self-giving love and human caring?

CTCR Response: Sexual desire (whether one is homosexual or heterosexual) can become idolatrous and thus be contrary to God's will for his people. This can be true of all of God's gifts. With regard to "the particular relationship of idolatry and sexuality" as it applies to the issue of homosexuality, the CTCR says the following in its discussion of homosexuality "in the light of the total Biblical context regarding the purpose of marriage and the man-woman duality:"

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The creation of human beings for covenant community finds its original expression in the fellowship of male and female. This fellowship, as we have stressed above, requires a commitment to the integrity of our sexual identity. The fellowship of male and female implies a recognition that we are male and female and that we should not strive to transcend that distinction. The ultimate fellowship for which God is preparing us, of which the man-woman polarity is an intimation, is not a merging of those who are alike into an undifferentiated oneness. It is a harmonious fellowship of those who, though different, are united in love. From this viewpoint we may say that the homosexual relationship approaches too closely the forbidden love of self and minimizes the distinction between lover and beloved. The male-female duality as the created pattern of human fellowship requires of us fidelity to our sexual identity, a willingness to be male or female. (“Human Sexuality,” p. 33)

Lust can be understood as the sinful desire for sexual gratification and is violative of God’s 1st commandment, as well as the 6th, 7th and 10th. Understood in this manner, the desire for a lifelong, “monogamous” sexual relationship of two persons of the same gender is lust because such behavior is contrary to God’s will. At the same time, it should be reiterated that the Synod’s commitment to develop a plan of ministry to homosexuals includes pursuing the goal of offering “biblically alternative models of sexual celibacy outside of a committed, permanent heterosexual marriage and same-gender social, but not genitally sexual, deep friendships.” Indeed, non-genital friendship relationships between two people, whether of the same sex or not, are both possible and desirable expressions “of self-giving love and human caring.”

Question 7: Often authorities within the churches uphold biblical concepts as if they provide a clear and unambiguous teaching regarding homosexuality. Yet the biblical word also speaks to other issues of moral and ethical consequences to church and society, for example, divorce and re-marriage. By what criteria is the clear, unambiguous teaching on other issues liberally interpreted while allegedly similar teaching regarding homosexuality is strictly interpreted? For example, does The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod teach that a divorced and re-married person is barred from ministry in the Synod?

CTCR Response: This question is prejudiced by the presupposition that in the LCMS “the clear, unambiguous teaching on other issues (is) liberally interpreted while allegedly similar teaching regarding homosexuality is strictly interpreted.” The Synod adheres firmly to what the Scriptures teach not only regarding homosexuality but also regarding divorce and remarriage. In its 1987 report on Divorce and Remarriage: An Exegetical Study, for example, the CTCR has said that “Divorce, destructive of what God has joined together, is always contrary to God’s intention for marriage,” and that “A person who divorces his/her spouse for any other cause than sexual unfaithfulness and marries another commits adultery. Anyone who marries a person so discarding his/her spouse commits adultery” (pp. 37-38). Regarding the divorce of pastors, the CTCR has said:

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The divorce of Christian pastors must be taken with utmost seriousness. It is difficult to see how the church can maintain the integrity of its witness--especially in an age where divorce is prevalent--if it permits pastors who have divorced their wives for less than Biblical reasons to continue in the office of the public ministry. Generally a pastor who has been divorced, except in cases of unchastity or desertion on the part of his wife, ought not to remain in office nor be reinstated in the office of pastor. However, it is possible that under very exceptional circumstances a former pastor may by the grace of God come to the point of being in a position to be reconsidered as a person qualified to be entrusted once more with the powers of the pastoral office. (Divorce and Remarriage, p. 44)

Applying the clear teachings of Scripture to specific situations and circumstances, including both homosexuality and divorce and remarriage, always involves the proper application of law and Gospel and compassionate, responsible pastoral care.

Question 8: The concept of law is extremely broad in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and its development over the centuries is highly complex. Often “natural law” and the “orders of creation” are referred to in the rejection of homosexual experience and life. But “natural law” cannot easily be equated with the specific commandments and prohibitions of the Torah, or with “the law” as used and understood in the Epistle to the Romans.

- A. If we are not under law but under grace (Romans 6:14), are we still then under some kind of “natural law”? In this sense is natural law what Franklin Sherman calls “an operative reality in the midst of which and `under’ which all men live, whether they know it or not”?
- B. If we are then still “under natural law,” does that imply that violations of natural law now cause a new judgment equally as serious as, or more serious than, violations of the moral law?
- C. How is “natural law” understood with regard to the present subject? If the orders of creation (as understood, for example, by the Lutheran Reformers) can be taken to require the complementarity of the two genders in human sexuality and relationship for the validity of sexual expression, how are the keeping of natural law and the orders of creation to be regarded? How is the keeping of a “natural law” not open to the criticism as “works of the law,” and rejected as a contradiction to the sufficiency of justification by grace through faith?

CTCR Response: The Synod’s recognition of homophile behavior as “intrinsically sinful” (1973 Res. 2-04) is based not on an abstract or “highly complex” understanding of “natural law” but on the clear words of Scripture. It is St. Paul himself who condemns homosexual behavior as **para thusin**, “that which is against nature” (KJV) or that which is “unnatural” (RSV, NIV). “Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameful acts with men...” (Rom. 1:26-27). Scripture’s word of law regarding homosexuality, like all of its words of law, certainly is not “a contradiction to the sufficiency of justification by grace through faith.” The law was given by God not to justify sinners, but for the threefold purpose discussed in the response to question 1 above.

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Question 9: In conclusion, it is requested that the CTCR identify or make available, through the Library of [Name withheld] College . . ., a specific and brief bibliography of papers, books, resolutions and studies (excluding materials which are confidential) which clearly state the current policy and teaching of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod regarding any and all facets of homosexuality, and which (a) are available to the general membership of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod; (b) have been utilized by District Presidents and other church authorities as procedural guidelines in the event of specific cases; and/or (c) have been open to public discussion and debate within the Synod.

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Materials included with this opinion in accordance with this concluding request:

- 1) 1973 Resolution 2-04, “To Declare Homophile Behavior Sinful”
- 2) 1992 Resolution 3-12A, “To Develop Plan for Ministry to Homosexuals and Their Families”
- 3) Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod as prepared by its Social Concerns Committee (September 1981)
- 4) Guidelines for Ecclesiastical Supervisors of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in Addressing Instances of Homosexuality in the Lives of Professional Church Workers (A Policy statement adopted by the Council of Presidents, February 28, 1991)
- 5) Statement on Homosexuality, Lutheran Church of Australia (1975). (The CTCR has recognized this statement as “a worthy contribution to the discussion of a sensitive question,” and has made it available to the members of the Synod “with the invitation to study it and to share reactions to it.”)

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RESOLUTIONS

**To Declare Homophile Behavior Sinful  
RESOLUTION 2-04**

Overtures 2-106A, 2-106B (CW, p. 78)

Whereas, God's Word clearly identifies homophile behavior as immoral, and condemns it (Lev 18:22; 20: 13 and Rom. 1:24-27); and

Whereas, The Law and the Gospel of Jesus Christ are to be proclaimed and applied to all conditions of mankind; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod recognize homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod urge that the Law and Gospel of the Scriptures be applied to homophiles as appropriate with a view toward ministering the forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ to any and all sinners who are penitent; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod decline Overtures 2-106A and 2-106B.

Action: Adopted (4).

(This resolution had also been discussed in Session 3.)

**To Develop Plan for Ministry  
to Homosexuals and Their Families**

RESOLUTION 3-12A

Overtures 3-86, 3-88A-C, 3-89A-B, 3-91 (*CW*, pp. 207-08)

Whereas, Many voices in our society as well as various church bodies are expressing the view today that homophile behavior is an acceptable alternative lifestyle; and

Whereas, The Word of God clearly condemns homophile behavior in Lev. 18:22, Rom. 1:26-27, and 1 Cor. 6:9; and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in convention in 1973 stated: “That the synod recognizes homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful”; and

Whereas, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations document on *Human Sexuality, A Theological Perspective*, states, “Whatever the causes of such a condition may be, . . . homosexual orientation is profoundly ‘unnatural’ without implying that such a person’s sexual orientation is a matter of conscious, deliberate choice. However, this fact cannot be used by the homosexual as an excuse to justify homosexual behavior. As a sinful human being, the homosexual is accountable to God for homosexual thoughts, words, and deeds.” (*Human Sexuality, A Theological Perspective*, p. 35); and

Whereas, The redeeming love of Christ, which rescues humanity from sin, death, and the power of Satan, is offered to all through repentance and faith in Christ, regardless of the nature of their sinfulness; and

Whereas, The need exists to make available a carefully developed Law/Gospel ministry plan to congregations and other institutions in order to minister to those who are troubled by their homosexuality; and

Whereas, It is necessary for the church to expose and resist the sexual idolatry of our society; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, in convention, reaffirm the position it stated in 1973, “That the Synod recognize homophile behavior as intrinsically sinful”; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the President of the Synod direct the appropriate boards and commissions to develop a plan for ministry usable by congregations, campus ministries, institutions, and agencies in the Synod, for the purpose of providing biblical and Gospel-oriented ministry to persons troubled by being homophile in their sexual orientations and to their families; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the goals to be pursued by such a plan for ministry be

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1. to offer to our world biblically alternative models of sexual celibacy outside of a committed, permanent heterosexual marriage and same-gender social, but not genitally sexual, deep friendships;
  2. to confront the individual with his/her sinfulness, and call him/her to repentance;
  3. to help the individual recognize that God can rescue individuals from homosexual orientation and practice;
  4. to assure him/her of forgiveness in Christ, contingent upon sincere repentance and faith, in Christ, and to assure him/her of the love and acceptance of the church;
  5. to assist the individual to rely on Christ's love and strength to abstain from homophile behavior;
  6. to help the individual to bear his/her burden without fear of recrimination and rejection by his/her sisters and brothers in Christ;
  7. to find ways of ministering to families which include persons of homophile orientation;
  8. to do all this patiently, persistently, and compassionately in the love and Spirit of Christ, who says, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Action: *Adopted as amended twice (13).*