

Points of Agreement on Controverted issues of the Day
Agreed in Niles, Michigan
21 July A.D. 2005
Amended: 6 June A.D. 2006

We all agree:

Office of the Ministry

- 1) The office of the ministry is not merely a function in the church but the divinely established office in the church. Its holders represent Christ to the church and give God's gifts to God's people.
- 2) The office of the ministry is not derived from baptism; rather it is conferred through call and ordination within the church.
- 3) Women cannot hold the office of the ministry, nor presume to function in it, in the church catholic.
- 4) Ordination is not an adiaphoron. It is part of a right understanding of a proper call.

Pulpit and Altar Fellowship

- 5) The practice of closed communion is biblical and confessional, and the true practice of Christian love.
- 6) Worship together with non-Christians is a violation of the Christian faith and a gross sin against the triune God.
- 7) Participation in an event of joint public prayer, that is, taking part in a religious service in which many different gods are invoked is participation in universalistic worship and is clear violation of scripture.
- 8) Calling such participation acceptable because it is "serial" is deceptive and a violation of scripture.
- 9) Being in pulpit and altar fellowship with any particular member of the Lutheran World Federation, or any other such organization, puts one in fellowship with all members of the LWF or any other such organization.

The Lord's Supper

- 10) The use of grape juice or any other element but natural wine for the blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper is a violation of Christ's institution, as is the use of anything other than natural bread for the body of Christ.
- 11) We recognize that it is preferable from the Scriptures, Confessions, and catholic practice that pastors offer the Lord's Supper to the flock each Lord's day, and that the divine service of word and sacrament is the normal service for the Lord's day.

Catholicity

12) The term “catholic” is not the possession of any particular church body, including the Church of Rome. To say that the church is “catholic” is to confess that it is the one true and universal church, which teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity and administers the Sacraments according to Christ’s institution. Therefore any church body which teaches false doctrines and/or corrupts the sacraments, even if it claims catholicity, is not catholic.

13) The teaching of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession (i.e. that of all the Concordia [1580]) is the true catholic doctrine. The church that faithfully adheres to and confesses this historic, apostolic faith, drawn from the unchanging Holy Scriptures, is a truly catholic church. To be truly Lutheran is to be truly catholic.

14) The Lutheran Church continues to express its catholicity through our use of the liturgy of the ancient and undivided Church, as it was purified at the time of the Reformation, traditional vestments for the divine service and various prayer offices, and retention of the historic church year.

15) The Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God.