

**A Statement Concerning  
Ecclesiastical Supervision  
from  
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As a candidate for President of the Synod, I've been asked a plethora of times from many across the LCMS about my opinion of President Emeritus Jerry Kieschnick's mailing regarding Ecclesiastical Supervision. It proved to be a well written reaction to the recommendations and overtures put forward by a committee or task force assembled by President Harrison. Pres. Dale Meyer, also a candidate for the President of Synod, shared his thoughts on this issue in his response to questions from the Southeastern District. I agree with both Jerry Kieschnick's comments and Dale Meyer's responses. But now that the first edition of Today's Business for this summer's LCMS convention is out I'll share my views by making some remarks on Resolution 12-01 "To Restore Right of Accuser to Appeal When a District President Declines or Fails to Act," found on page 153.

This proposed resolution is not a "minor tweak" but rather seeks to amend the bylaws of the Synod by permitting an accuser to make an appeal to the Praesidium of the Synod, should a district president decline to suspend the member of the Synod against whom the complaint has been made. I do not favor this proposal.

First, as has been pointed out elsewhere, it is biblically questionable. The spirit of Matthew 18 dictates that disputes be dealt with fraternally and, quite frankly, locally, by those who would know the situation best. Disputes should not be resolved by a centralized and small group of men far removed from the situation.

It should also be noted that as the Synod grew and codified its process of ecclesiastical supervision, it specifically remanded the supervision of individual and congregational members of the Synod to the district presidents (LCMS Constitution, Article XII). The President of the Synod is given supervision of the officers, employees, districts, and district presidents (Article XI), thereby empowering him to act should a district president fail in his responsibilities. Nowhere in the Constitution of the Synod or the bylaws is the Praesidium of the Synod given the responsibility for ecclesiastical supervision. In fact, the bylaws require the vice-presidents of the Synod to "be responsible to the President at all times for the performance of (their) duties" (Bylaws 3.3.2.2 and 3.3.2.3), obviating a conflict of interest should a vice-president disagree with the President regarding a matter brought to the Praesidium.

Finally, the Synod exists, in part, to "provide protection for congregations ... and ... church workers in the performance of their official duties and the maintenance of their rights" (LCMS Constitution, Article III). It is fundamentally unfair, requiring an unconscionable amount of emotional energy, time, and financial expense, for a member of the Synod to be subject to a second proceeding after a district president has determined not to suspend that member.

It is my prayer that decisions with respect to this matter—and indeed all our life together in the LCMS—would reflect the Holy Scriptures, especially the words of the psalmist: “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.” (Psalm 133)