

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

LCMS Gets Tough on Fellowship

If you read this blog, you probably already know that today, the radio show *Issues, Etc.* was canceled by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Christians all around the globe are wondering why. I'm not, because it seems rather obvious. I could be wrong. What do I know? On the other hand, I can see a church by daylight.

It's not that *Issues, Etc.* had fallen into some grave doctrinal error, and was unwilling to be corrected by holy scripture.

It's not that *Issues, Etc.* was bad-mouthing or embarrassing the historic identity of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, or any of its historic values.

The problem is one of fellowship. The doctrinal and practical principles guiding *Issues, Etc.* are deemed by someone to be no longer compatible with the doctrinal and practical principles guiding the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

How can that be? The LCMS has changed, over time. It's not so surprising, because most things change over time. In the case of the LCMS, change has been happening for a long time already. Some of the confessional frogs have already left the simmering pot behind. (syncretism, anyone?) Others have not. I write this not to denigrate them. I respect them deeply, though I may have chosen differently. *Issues, Etc.* was having a profound cooling influence on the pot, and someone didn't like it. Well, now the LCMS can really turn up the heat. Watch out, CPH, or you'll be ablaze before you know it.

I'm admittedly ignorant of LCMS politics on the whole. Doctrine concerns me more than politics. Yet we've had our share of politics in the ELS, too. What a waste.

However, the great thing about being a Christian, and being a Lutheran, is that the biblical doctrine we treasure *really is* all that. It is the only genuine basis for unity, and if we give it more than lip-service, we will find that we are not alone -- even when we are.

The dirty little secret is that *all* synods change over time. Practically speaking, an orthodox synod is a myth of modern Lutheranism. When someone claims his synod is orthodox, it would often be more accurate to say that his synod has become *the measure* of orthodoxy. These days, "orthodoxy" is seldom meant the way Walther meant it. It's relativized in the ELS, in the WELS, in the LCMS, and anywhere else that the word orthodox has more than historic relevance (that does not include the ELCA, unfortunately; watch for its disappearance in the LCMS too). That's why we should constantly learn the meaning of fellowship, as it is defined in the Lutheran Confessions. It's a good antidote for the myth of the orthodox synod (HT: RDP), and it's encouraging for those who are martyred by "orthodox synods."

Kudos to *Issues, Etc.* for your faithful work. Perhaps we will soon be able to recognize church fellowship with each other. You are a witness for confessional Lutheranism.

VDMA

Posted by Jesse Jacobsen in Doctrine, Life, Synod at 20:10

Just thought you might get a kick out of this. Not being a theologian, I was unsure what your closing acronym stood for. Being a homeschool mom, I had to find out.

I guessed that the first two letters probably represented Vox Domini, but was clueless as to the rest. I checked it on acronym.com Here are the results. The stars represent the likelihood of a match.

***** VDMA Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau e.V. (German)

*** VDMA Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum (Latin: The Word Of God Resides In Eternity)

*** VDMA Virtual Direct Memory Access

Apparently I was not even right with the Vox Domini. My German was not up to translating that one, but since it got six stars, I ran it through the Google translator; it is German Machinery and Plant Construction. Not really related to your post. Although I know you are technologically savvy, the Virtual Memory thing really seemed a bit out of context, too. I'm going with the Latin one.

Anonymous on Mar 19 2008, 12:19

My first post ever, and maybe my last. Well Halleluia. Someone orthodox finally put it in print: "an orthodox synod is a myth." How long till the axe will fall upon those who think thusly?

Enjoy your blog. Praise be to our crucified and risen living Savior forever. May blessings through our living hope be upon you.

Anonymous on Mar 21 2008, 07:28

Practically speaking, an orthodox synod is a myth of modern Lutheranism.

Unfortunately there are those in the pew who think there is such an animal and may be there because of it.

In fact, there are those who sell it, "we are ok, we are in an orthodox synod". Some people are buying.

False advert, I know but anyhow what you say is true.

LPC

Anonymous on Mar 23 2008, 16:23