

Overtures from the *Convention Workbook*
for the 52nd Regular Convention
of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
meeting in Dallas, Texas, July 15-22, 1977
(*Workbook* pages 259-60)

6-92A

**To Request the Synod to Assume
Full Responsibility for the Office of Deaconess**

Whereas, The ministry of the deaconess is recognized in the Synod as an historic and legitimate office wherein dedicated women serve their Lord and His church; and

Whereas, The Synod presently places graduates of the deaconess training program in the same manner as it places graduates of its colleges and seminaries who have prepared for the pastoral and teaching ministries; and

Whereas, The Synod some years ago authorized its colleges to provide the first 2 years of the predeaconess collegiate training programs (the last 2 years being taken at Valparaiso University); and

Whereas, The Lutheran Deaconess Association in its constitution up to May 1975 declared as its purpose “to recruit, encourage, select, education, and train young women of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and affiliated synods: to serve the said church bodies and their parishes, mission stations, and agencies, thus clearly and closely identifying its ministry with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod; and

Whereas, In May 1975 The Lutheran Deaconess Association significantly changed its constitution and purpose by adopting articles of incorporation referring in general to a “female Lutheran Diaconate” which is to “promote the aims of the Diaconate in the church and world” and “to serve the church, with primary reference to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, its parish congregations, missions, institutions, and agencies” thus clearly preparing the way for entry into pan-Lutheran activities; and

Whereas, The Lutheran Deaconess Conference in July 1976 adopted Resolution 12, which recognizes “their ministry as being open to the wider Lutheran church family” and requests the Lutheran Deaconess Association to “arrange for representation of their boards at the constitution conventions of emerging Lutheran bodies” and also resolved to share with The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod administration a decision “to affirm our diaconate’s autonomy”; and

Whereas, Such developments and other similar ones in the deaconess movement indicate a definite trend toward a more ecumenical stance in which the distinctive ministry to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as an agency within the Synod is being lost; and

Whereas, the education of the Lutheran deaconess students at Valparaiso University is neither under the supervision of the Synod’s Board for Higher Education nor of the President of the Indiana District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod; and

Whereas, Such preparations of individuals for one of the important ministries of the Synod without supervision is inconsistent with the carefully structured training for other ministries in the Synod; and

Whereas, Recruitment, education, acceptance of the Lutheran deaconess, as well as the general status of the office will profit from a closer connection with the Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod assume responsibility for the complete education of women preparing for the office of the deaconess; and be it further

Resolved, That the location of such education be at one or more of the Synod’s existing senior colleges; and be it further

Resolved, That the Lutheran Deaconess Association be invited to maintain its past and historic close affiliation with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, thus reversing its apparent drift toward pan-Lutheranism; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod invite the Lutheran Deaconess Association to identify with, support, and relate to the synodical education of deaconesses in an advisory capacity; and be it further

Resolved, That in the event that the Lutheran Deaconess Association does not agree with the Synod’s assuming responsibility for this important ministry of the church, the Synod shall nevertheless recruit, support, educate, and place in its congregations and agencies the young women who graduate from its colleges as Lutheran deaconesses; and be it finally

Resolved, That the women serving The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its affiliated synods and agencies be organized throughout the Districts of the Synod in conferences following the pattern of pastors and teachers.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, East Chicago, Ind.,

Andrew Milan, President; William R. Timmer, Pastor

Identical or similar:

6-92B to 6-92M

Trinity, Westville, Ind.	Elmer Luls
Good Shepherd, Gary, Ind.	John O. Ligon
St. Paul, Hammond, Ind.	Gus Warner
Grace, Muncie, Ind.	David V. Gray
Faith, Green Bay, Wisc.	John Zellner
Trinity, Hobart, Ind.	Donald Shreckengost
St. John, Calumet City, Ill.	Ralph Heide
St. John's, Geneva, Ohio	Ray Lange
Guardian, Dearborn, Mich.	John L. Heins
St. John, Bingen, Decatur, Ind.	Lester Uffelman
St. Paul, Chesterton, Ind.	Donald R. Garvue
Memorial, Bremerton, Wash.	T. Edwin Peterson

6-93

**To Evaluate
the Lutheran Deaconess Program**

Whereas, through the years many congregations and other ministries have been blessed by the faithful service of Lutheran deaconesses; and

Whereas, At the present time the Lutheran Deaconess Association is in need of leadership in order to take a meaningful place in the ministry of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the President of the Synod be directed to appoint a committee to evaluate the Lutheran Deaconess Training Program at Valparaiso University and to explore the possibility of establishing a deaconess program in one of our synodical institutions; and be it further

Resolved, That this committee report its findings to the 1979 synodical convention.

South Wisconsin District
Robert A. Schmidt, Secretary

6-94

To Study Deaconess Training Program

Whereas, the ministry of deaconess is an important one in our Synod; and

Whereas, The deaconess should have the best possible training; and

Whereas, It would be helpful for deaconesses in training to have more contact with future teachers or pastors in our Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board for Higher Education be directed to conduct a study to determine the best situation for the future training of deaconesses; and be it further

Resolved, That the possibility of moving the deaconess training program from Valparaiso University to Concordia Teachers College, River Forest; Concordia College, An Arbor, Mich.; or some other synodical school be seriously considered; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Board for Higher Education report to the 1979 synodical convention with concrete recommendations.

Christ Lutheran Church, Troy, N.H.
Martin Nolan, President; George Steel, Secretary

6-95

**To Introduce Deaconess Program
at Ann Arbor**

Whereas, The Lay Training Institute graduate, the parish worker, and other similare church vocations have always been a direct part of the educational governing body of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod; and

Whereas, The deaconess program has not had this relationship; and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has caused all of its full-time workers to be certified by a system institution; and

Whereas, The Synod has established, through its Board for Higher Education, its own program of training for all church workers except the deaconess; and

Whereas, There is a growing need for this type of ministry in our congregations; and

Whereas, It appears that a Synod-sponsored program would receive a greater positive response from the church; and

Whereas, The preministerial program presently at Concordia College, Ann Arbor, lends itself ideally to the addition of such a program; and

Whereas, Concordia, Ann Arbor, is surrounded by especially rich resources in both Lutheran social ministry and in specialized helping professions, to be utilized in field experience, research and classroom activities; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in convention request the Board for Higher Education to initiate a Synod-sponsored deaconess program and that this program be placed on the Concordia, Ann Arbor, campus; and be it further

Resolved, That this program be suitably subsidized; and be it finally

Resolved, That this program become operative no later than September 1978.

Board of Control and Faculty
Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Mich.
M.S. Pohl, President

6-96

**To Discontinue Colloquy Program
for Deaconess Ministry**

Whereas, The Board for Higher Education of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has indicated that it has neither responsibility nor authority in the operation of the Lutheran Deaconess training program or the Lutheran Deaconess Association; and

Whereas, The services rendered by the deaconesses can be performed by the various graduates of our synodical schools which are under the responsibility and authority of the synodical Board for Higher Education (e.g. DCEs, parish workers, etc.); therefore be it

Resolved, That we no longer charge the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments to place the applicants for the deaconess ministry; and be it further

Resolved, That we discontinue the colloquy program for the deaconess ministry; and be it finally

Resolved, That the *Handbook* of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod be brought into conformity with this resolution.

Board of Directors, Iowa District West
D.E. Weiss, Secretary