



Red Queen Rules

The [Cheshire] cat shrugged, curling upward so that he could seat himself properly on the tree branch. “This way? That way? Does it matter? Left, right, up, down! All mixed up thanks to the shadows!” His grin grew. “And besides: All ways here are the Queen’s ways.”

Alice could not have lost her way in Wonderland because all ways are the Queen’s ways.

In the ELCA all ways are the bishops’ ways.

“You don’t have to believe it, you just have to do it” – was the mantra that greased the skids for the ELCA 1999 vote to adopt, as a permanent structure, the Episcopal historic episcopate.

You can believe what you want. You can have your opinion, but you have to do it; you have to live under it; and you have to pay for it.

Episcopacy brings with it a presumption in favor of centralizing. Over time all ways are the queen’s ways.

“Get to your places!” shouted the Queen in a voice of thunder, and people began running about in all directions.

Look at the ways the queens have centralized their power.

1. Bishops demand money from congregations. “Withholding mission support is unconstitutional and violates the governing documents of this church,” demanded ELCA bishops after the 2009 Churchwide Assembly (“Constitutional Matters Q & A,” available at www.nemnsynod.org).

You don’t have to call a partnered gay pastor to your congregation, but you have to support the ELCA and its gay clergy, pro-gay Bible studies, pro-gay confirmation materials, gay speakers at Youth gatherings, and more. You don’t have to like it, but you have to pay for it.

What happens if your congregation doesn’t pay up? There will be career-ending consequences for your pastor. Does he/she want to move? Do you want him/her to move on? Don’t expect help from the queen.

“I warn you, dear child, if I lose my temper, you lose your head. Understand?” snarled the Queen.

2. Bishops control pastors by controlling the call process.

S14.11a: “When a congregation... desires to call a pastor... [it] shall consult with the bishop before taking any steps...”

c: “[T]he letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop’s signature” (ELCA Constitution for Synods).

Even large congregations cannot function independently; they, too, have to get the bishop’s signature.

Some congregations get around this rule by hiring whom they want, giving the person a different title, and covering their pension/medical needs outside the ELCA.

3. Bishops control interim calls. Congregations used to be able to call an interim pastor of their choice, but this freedom is gone. The new rule: “Calls to interim ministry may not be extended by a congregation.” (ELCA Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of Rosters, p. 45).



(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Some congregations have had a majority of members wanting to leave the ELCA, so the synod sends an interim who undermines the lay leadership and/or wears people down until the good lay leaders leave and more pliable leaders take their place. Then the synod makes sure the congregation calls someone loyal to ELCA agendas.

4. Bishops can defrock a pastor -- without any disciplinary hearings – for serving a congregation which votes to join LCMC: *“Any pastor who serves a group schismatic from this church or from a congregation thereof, shall cease to be a member of this church. The ordained minister’s name shall be removed from the roster of ordained ministers by the bishop of the synod”* (Manual of Policies and Procedures, p.45).

This especially affects pastors with two or more point parishes. If one congregation votes to leave and join LCMC and another doesn’t, the pastor can no longer serve both. This creates enormous hardship for small congregations in rural areas where pastors are in short supply.

5. Bishops have more power to remove pastors. S14:13b: *“When allegations of ... ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop...the bishop in his or her sole discretion may ... investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained and one layperson.”*

Note that the bishop decides what is “ineffective conduct.” Maybe

reducing benevolence? And the bishop appoints the committee of two ordained pastors and one layperson.

S14.13d: *“In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation...the bishop with the committee described in S14.13.b shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation....If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor.... (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call”* (Emphasis added).

The ELCA Constitution used to require a 2/3 vote; now only “a simple majority” is required.

Note that the committee referred to above is the committee appointed by the bishop.

6. Bishops have power to take property. S13:23: *“...if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, ... title to the property shall revert to the synod....”*

S13:24: *“... if in the opinion of the Synod Council that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished ... the Council ... may take charge and control of the property of the congregation.”*

Even if the provisions above have not yet been used, the power has been centralized in the synod council, which in effect means the bishop and his staff.

At last the Dodo said, “Everybody has won, and all must have prizes.”

Bishops, like queens, keep track of perks. Like congressmen, most bishops expect trips, appointments, and golden parachutes.

Missionary tourism is a standard perk for bishops in their self-chosen role as world prophets for peace.

They often go to Israel because the flights are direct and relatively cheap, the airports close to scenes of the conflict, the area is relatively safe, the restaurants good, the accommodations comfortable, and the reporters plentiful and cooperative.

When bishops step down, they are given golden parachutes – such as a desirable call or a job in the bureaucracy.

Sometimes bishops, when they retire, start speaking publicly about the big problems in the church.

When they were in office, however, and could have done something about the problems, they were team players.

Alice to the Queen and court: “You’re nothing but a pack of cards.”

“The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.”

- Archilochus, 7th Century BC



Our “one big thing” is to lift high the Cross.

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HANSON'S LEGACY

The beginning of the end. With 2.5 years left in Mark Hanson's second term (provided he doesn't run again), what will be his legacy? Consider the following:

1. Hanson was instrumental in electing the Anti-Israel Bishop Younan to be head of the LWF. Normally the new LWF president is the leader of the church which hosts the LWF Assembly.

In 2010 Hanson was the outgoing President. The LWF Assembly was held in Germany in July. But the nominating committee, controlled by Hanson, nominated Younan, head of the minuscule *Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land* (ELCJHL).

The LWF, a federation of 70 million Lutherans, is now led by a bishop whose church has at most 700 members, not 3,000, as the ELCA press release claims.

Hanson said of Younan's election: *"His leading the ELCJHL in the midst of the suffering of occupation will become a sign of hope for all LWF member churches....It is a great joy to pass the mantle of leadership to my friend Bishop Munib Younan"* (ENS 7/24/2010).

A German newspaper reports that Younan is "of slight build" and "very smooth." (*Die Badische Zeitung*, 7/26/2010). Younan is not influential in the Middle East but he is in the West, where he is lavishly supported with applause and "mission" money.

In 2009 Younan was an initiator of the *Kairos Document*, which blasts Israel as solely responsible for the problems in the region. Younan was the only current church leader to sign on; ten days after it was released, he withdrew his signature.

He lives in a mansion and insists on flying business class. He will never tell you that it's Muslim persecution that Arab Christians are afraid of.

2. Hanson effectively silenced the Lutheran Archbishop of Tanzania, Alex Malasusa. In April 2010 Archbishop Malasusa declared loudly that his church would reject money from churches which approve of same-sex marriage.

Malasusa: "We should be independent so that they don't use their money and wealth to threaten us.... We should leave them with their money and stick to the Word of God," he said.

But in May 2010, after meeting with Hanson behind closed doors, Malasusa backpedaled rapidly. After all, his church receives \$1M plus per year from ELCA headquarters.

3. Hanson sticks a thumb in the eye of the WCC by appointing the partnered gay prof, Guy Erwin, to be the face of American Lutheranism. In October 2007 Hanson appointed Guy Erwin, a gay religion prof from *California Lutheran University*, to serve on the prestigious *Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches*.

This is the most important theological appointment a church leader can make – and Erwin has a thin, inflated resume. Among other things, he claims to have taught at Yale; at most he was someone's teaching assistant.

Erwin is the only American Lutheran among 120 members on this theological commission. Imagine the in-your-face offense of this Lutheran "couple" – the middle-aged Erwin and his young gay partner – meeting Catholic, Orthodox, and African Christian leaders at WCC meetings.

Unfinished business. The Episcopal Church has yet to declare full communion achieved with the ELCA; as CCM 14 states:

"For the Episcopal Church, full communion, although begun at the same time [2001], will not be fully realized until both churches determine that in the context of a common life and mission there is a shared ministry of bishops in the historic episcopate."

Most, but not all, of the 66 ELCA bishops have been consecrated by an Episcopal bishop.

ELCA bishops cannot be co-consecrators of Episcopal bishops until all ELCA bishops are in the historic episcopate. They can be present at the ceremony, but they cannot participate in the laying on of hands. (See blog posts for Feb 18, March 2, and May 19 at www.crossalone.us)

Before the end of Hanson's second term, watch for Hanson to get all ELCA bishops ordained/consecrated into the Episcopal episcopate by some sleight of hand.

Before Hanson steps down will an ELCA bishop be allowed to participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordination of an Episcopal bishop? Stay tuned!

"It is a great joy to pass the mantle of leadership to my friend, Bishop Munib Younan."

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson..

AGENDA-LADEN STUDY BIBLE ...

The first printing of ELCA's *Lutheran Study Bible* promotes **many-ways-of-salvation** and **gay sex**, among other things.

Pastors and laity complained to *Augsburg/Fortress Publishing* about biased presentation of issues in the text.

Augsburg/Fortress responded by issuing a second printing with changes – but without identifying them or giving any clue that the second printing is different from the first. Three examples:

1. The commentary misuses the text to claim there are other ways of salvation (Writer: Prof Duane Priebe, Wartburg Seminary).

First printing. Matt 5:3-12

The Beatitudes create what they declare. Jesus makes the new world of God's rule actual now in this broken world. Yet it also remains a promised future. ~~Notice that they do not depend on faith or even on knowing Jesus. This is one way God creates salvation.~~

Second printing: Matt 5:3-12

The Beatitudes create what they declare. Jesus makes the new world of God's rule actual now in this broken world. Yet it also remains a promised future.

Two controversial sentences (marked above) **are deleted** in the second printing.

2. More from Priebe on other-ways-of-salvation

First printing. Matt 28:16-20

Jesus now sends the disciples to make disciples of all nations. ~~That does not mean make everyone disciples. Most people who are helped by Jesus and believe in him never become disciples. Jesus includes in salvation people who do not believe in him or ever know about him (5:3-10; 25:31-45).~~

Second printing. Matt 28:16-20

Jesus now sends the disciples to make disciples of all nations. Disciples are students, called for the sake of the world to learn from Jesus and to bear witness to the kingdom. They are salt and light (5:13-16). Jesus promises to be with them always as they carry out this mission. Previously, Jesus promised to be present in the exercise of forgiveness (18:18-20) and in the 'least of these' who suffer (25:31-45).

In the second printing the offensive claims are there but muted. It's a serious error to say there are other ways of salvation. **We really do not know.** We do not even **infer** that everyone is saved, or some damned. We have this calling: To proclaim salvation by faith alone in **Christ alone**. (See www.crossalone.us on universal salvation and mission.)

3. The commentary misrepresents the text in order to promote gay sex (Writer: Prof David Fredrickson, Luther Seminary).

First printing 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Ancient Christian writers listed specific vices to illustrate a more general evil. Two terms in the vice list have been mistranslated from the Greek in all modern versions, and this has caused needless pain in the church: *malos* ("soft," that is, lacking self-control) and *arsenokoites* (literally, "one who beds a male"). Both terms are specific examples of injustice, the topic of the vice list in 6:9-11. The "soft" person (here translated: "male prostitute") takes more than his or her due. The *arsenokoites* (translated as "sodomite") rapes and shames other males to increase his reputation for power. The issue here is violence. ~~Neither term pertains to homosexuality or to the lives of gay and lesbian people.~~

Second printing

"The last two examples of injustice in verse 9 stir controversy: the Greek words *malakoi* (literally, "soft ones") and *arsenokoitai* (literally, "the ones who 'bed' males"). Bible versions beyond the NRSV (here "male prostitutes") translate *malakoi* as "passive homosexual partners" (NET) and "homosexuals" (NKJV); *arsenokoitai* (here "sodomites") appears as "practicing homosexuals" (TNIV) and "homosexual offenders" (NIV). Two Bible versions (RSV and ESV) even join the separate words; one reads "sexual perverts" and the other "men who practice homosexuality". Recently scholars have asked how ancient, Greek-speaking audiences might have heard the two terms. "Softness" signified lack of self-control in matters including but not limited to sex, as reflected in the KJV's "effeminate" and NJB's "the self-indulgent". Some early Christians (Theophilus of Antioch, Eusebius, and Macarius) heard in *arsenokoitai* a male's desire to increase his reputation for power by shaming other males through coerced penetration. In a word, rape.

In the second printing the agendas are still there, but it's harder to see them. What's deleted? The last sentence of the first printing (see strike-out above).

What's added? Convoluted sentences only trained scholars could decipher (See Gagnon's critique of Fredrickson on the next page.)

In sum: The changes made from the first to second printing again are like weather that changes from clear to foggy. The first printing is offensive but clear. The second printing is offensive and foggy.

... CHANGED WITHOUT NOTICE

ELCA leaders who are responsible for this agenda-laden *Study Bible*: James Aageson, Norma Cook Everist, Diane Jacobson, Rolf Jacobson, Mark Allan Powell, Barbara Rossing, Nelson Strobert, Jane Strohl, and Timothy Wengert – who together comprise the Board of Consultants for the text.

Beth Lewis, the CEO of Augsburg/Fortress, and her staff are also responsible.

The ELCA: All interpretations are equal. ELCA leaders say all views of Scripture are acceptable. Dr. Stan Olson writes in *Opening the Book of Faith*:

Approaches to Scripture can intentionally or carelessly suggest that the reader or some method is in control of the meaning. This error may be revealed when an interpreter or group implies that their particular understanding must be correct and **shows disrespect for the faithfulness of others' efforts at hearing**" (*Opening the Book of Faith* p. 14).

If all views are acceptable, why change the *Study Bible* because of complaints about its bias? Aren't such complainers showing "**disrespect for the faithfulness of other's efforts at hearing**" – as Olson claims?

The *Study Bible* shows what ELCA seminaries are teaching: Priebe at Wartburg Seminary is teaching that there are other ways of salvation.

Fredrickson, at Luther, is teaching that St. Paul was troubled by passion, not gay sex and its consequences.

If there is a scholarly debate in the ELCA challenging these views, it's invisible and ineffective.

However, Presbyterian New Testament Professor Robert Gagnon addresses Fredrickson's scholarship:¹

"None of Fredrickson's three main arguments is even remotely sustainable; namely, [1] that Paul did not view same-sex intercourse as a violation of a male-female norm ordained by God at creation; [2] that Paul's problem was with passion, not the gender of the persons having sex, and [3] that Paul was not focusing on male-male intercourse per se with the terms *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* in 1 Cor 6:9 but rather on issues of self-control and arrogance. Fredrickson shows an admirable awareness of ancient Greek literature but is less adept at noticing distinctive elements in the perspective of Paul and early Judaism and at discerning the argument and literary context for Pauline texts. **In the end Fredrickson leaves the reader with the wrong impression that the perspective of ancient Israel, early Judaism, and early Christianity on**

same-sex intercourse differs not one bit from the perspectives that typified the ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman milieus."²

That the Board of Consultants wanted Fredrickson and Priebe to do commentaries for the *Study Bible* speaks volumes about the ELCA and its agendas. The Board knew what it was getting.

Did ELCA leaders and Augsburg/Fortress executives change the text in the second printing because they had a bad conscience about the biased and inaccurate scholarship in the commentaries, or was their concern to sell as many *Study Bibles* as possible?

37,000 agenda-laden *Study Bibles* given to youth. All the high school students who went to the 2009 Youth Gathering in New Orleans, "Jesus, Justice, Jazz," were given the first printing of the *Study Bible* – with its message that there are other ways of salvation, and Paul's problem was with passion, rather than gay sex and its harmful consequences.

Next time you hear someone say the younger generation of Lutherans is pro-gay, remember that the **ELCA is teaching youth to approve of same sex behaviors and families.**

If the church were to teach them about the dangers of same-sex behaviors, the possibilities of healing of same-sex attraction, and the importance of mom and dad families to kids, many youth would listen.

Agenda-laden *Study Bibles* sent abroad. In April 2009 Wartburg Seminary presented *Study Bibles* to the leaders of the Lutheran Church in Guyana, who were visiting in St. Paul, MN.

Subsequently the Guyana Mission Network shipped *Study Bibles* to Guyana for pastors, deacons, and lay leaders in training.

Study Bibles were also shipped to Rwanda and other Third World churches. To send these *Study Bibles* as "mission gifts" is serious because the Lutherans in Africa and Latin America do not have money for books, and this *Study Bible* will likely be the only such book many mission sites have.

¹Gagnon, Robert, "A Comprehensive and Critical Review Essay of *Homosexuality, Science, and the 'Plain Sense' of Scripture, Part 2*," in *Horizons in Biblical Literature*, 22:2 [Dec 2000] 178-243; here 206-43 (available at www.robgagnon.net/articles/homoBalchHBTRReview2.pdf).

²Gagnon, 239.

WORLD WATCH

BOISE

Synod Assembly nixes term limits for bishop

The ELCA's Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod voted (167-65) to do away with term limits for bishop.

The synod's current bishop, Martin Wells, will complete his second term in 2011 and will now be available to be elected for a third term at that assembly.

YORK

C of E approves women bishops

The Church of England voted in July to allow women to be elected to the Office of Bishop. This is decisive because the Church of England is not in some far away province. Rather, it is the Mother Church of the Anglican communion.

The Church of England has ordained women priests since 1994 and today one third of the working Anglican clergy are women.

No matter what the PR is out there, this vote for women bishops ends serious dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

HOUSTON

LCMS not buying ELCA's "bound conscience"

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod at its Triennial Convention in Houston, July 10-17, 2010, adopted a resolution asking its seminary faculties and theological leaders to respond to the ELCA's concept of "bound conscience" – a novelty in Lutheran theology which the ELCA used to justify approving same-sex unions and partnered GLBT clergy.

HOUSTON

"Tumultuous Change" for the LCMS

The Rev Matthew C. Harrison, Executive Director of the LCMS World Relief and Human Care, was elected President of the LCMS on the first ballot at the General Convention.

Harrison received 54% of the vote for the three-year term. The incumbent, Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, received 45% and had served three terms.

Harrison called his election "a tumultuous change in the life of our synod." Kieschnick described the LCMS as "a denomination of parties."

The LCMS is split virtually in half between the ultra-conservatives and the conservatives. They share a commitment to verbal inerrancy, but this commitment has not united them.

HOUSTON

LCMS affirms inerrancy and male-only clergy

LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick said that the "unique contribution" of the LCMS to the world is that it has not compromised on holding to the Bible as "God's inspired, inerrant, infallible Word."

Kieschnick went on to state that one of the necessary consequences of the LCMS doctrine of inerrancy is that "the pastoral office is limited to men." (*Christian Post*, 7/13/2010, "Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Urged to Defend Abandoned Biblical Truths")

HOUSTON

LCMS to review cooperative work with the ELCA

The dilemma: The ELCA approves of same-sex "families" and same-sex couples adopting kids.

The LCMS doesn't. So how will these two churches work together in social ministry?

The LCMS will study the issue and report in a year.

CHICAGO

ELCA official approves of Muslim and Buddhist prayers at youth event

At an ELCA evangelism event for college and university students held in August 2010, called "Sharing the Gospel in a 2.0 World," and at the invitation of ELCA officials, Muslim and Buddhist prayers were said by two students from *Interfaith Youth Core*, a group promoting "religious pluralism," and led by Eboo Patel, a Muslim who was also a keynote speaker at the event.

Sue Rothmeyer, ELCA Associate Executive Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministries, said of the Muslim and Buddhist prayers: "*Out of hospitality we offered these students the opportunity to pray.*"

Keynote speaker Eboo Patel is a member of President Obama's *Advisory Council of the White House Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships*, and a close associate of the Ground Zero imam, Feisal Rauf. Patel and Rauf "have been documented together discussing America as 'the ideal place for a renewal of Islam'" (*WordNet Daily* 7/21/10).

Also speaking at the ELCA event were Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, Michael Organ, former Director of Internet Advertising for President Obama's presidential campaign, and Nadia Bolz-Weber, a heavily tattooed ELCA pastor from Colorado whose "emerging church" boasts of being "queer-inclusive."

ST PAUL

GLBT clergy reordination masquerade

ELCA bishops, in St. Paul, San Francisco, and elsewhere are officiating at “Rites of Reception” for GLBT clergy. Bishop Margaret Payne explained:

“All of us without exception felt it was utterly important and essential that there be the laying on of hands and prayer as a part of a rite. We know there are some people who would like to use the word ordination – we are not saying the candidates will be ordained – but we are suggesting that we use words in the authorized rite that replicate the promises of ordination, and will be in fact words from the ordination rite.”

Why the masquerade? The ELCA doesn’t want to use the word “ordination” because most of the GLBT clergy are already ordained – although not under ELCA bishops in the historic episcopate. The “Rite of Reception” will make them **kosher in Episcopal eyes**. Thus the masquerade to make their reordination seem as if it’s normal.

HOUSTON

LCMS poised to embrace the NALC?

The LCMS Convention approved a bylaw giving the Council of Presidents **new power** to determine –

“the possibility of establishing fellowship with small, formative, or emerging confessional churches where theological discussions have provided convincing evidence that the LCMS is in doctrinal agreement with the church in question.”

In the LCMS the Council of Presidents, which includes the President and five Vice Presidents, functions like an executive committee for the church.

Some ELCA losses mean gains for the LCMS. The AALC, a break-off group from the 1988 merger of the ELCA, has been largely absorbed by the LCMS.

TORONTO

Roman Catholic Church in Australia bans pop music at funerals

“Somewhere Over The Rainbow,” “Always Look on the Bright Side of Life,” and the like are not appropriate songs for funerals, according to Archbishop Denis Hart of the Diocese of Melbourne, Australia.

A funeral should be a solemn rite commending the dead person to God, not “a celebration of the life of” the deceased. Rather, the life of the deceased should be celebrated “at some social occasion before or after the funeral,” the Archbishop recommends.

The ban has received a mixed reaction. Funeral directors called the ban “insensitive” to the wishes of grieving relatives who want the funeral to include the dead person’s favorite music and mementos.

COLUMBIA, S. C.

Ev. Catholic = Eventually Catholic

You know what they say: Lutherans who are evangelical catholic eventually become Catholic.

There went another one: Dr. Michael Root, Professor at Southern Seminary, left the ELCA to become a Roman Catholic.

Root joined a line of fellow travelers: Richard John Neuhaus, Robert Wilken, Jay Rochelle, Leonard Klein, Bruce Marshall, David Fagerberg, Reinhold Hütter, Mickey Mattox, David Gustafson, and others – all self-identified evangelical catholics who want to recover the historic episcopate, find a way to accommodate indulgences, the sacrifice of the Mass, Marian devotion, and the like.

Did Root ever get Luther’s rediscovery of the gospel – that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone – and if more is required, the cross is no longer all-sufficient? No, he was an ardent advocate of making the Episcopal episcopate **required**, which it now is (ELCA Constitution ¶ 10.81.01).

Carl Braaten and others have lamented the ELCA’s brain drain. But, really, what happens to Root and other “scholars” who go to Rome? They stop being creative. They spend the rest of their lives proving they’re kosher.

The Society of the Holy Trinity. What of their fellow-travelers left behind? ELCA evangelical Catholics gravitate to the *Society of the Holy Trinity* (STS), a group “like a religious order” founded in the 1990s to promote high church Lutheranism. The STS has about 400 clergy members, largely in the East.

The STS is “especially committed” to “the Lutheran ecumenical destiny of reconciliation with the Bishop and Church of Rome.”

“Mother Church” is the focus of the October 2010 STS yearly retreat. STS members are **encouraged “to proclaim Mary”** as the sacramental and communal reality which affirms **“the steady reality of how God works.”** Roman Catholics would readily agree.

The Seven Marks Society is a similar “evangelical catholic ministerium” which holds to “the Great Tradition,” regards bishops as necessary (“there must be bishops”) and “respects the proper role of bishops to defend the faith.”

A member of Lutheran CORE, the Seven Marks Society met Aug 23-24, just prior to the CORE Convention and at the same location.

Luther Quotes

“In the church a bishop is not made by the succession of bishops, rather the Lord alone is our bishop” (WA 53:74).

“These words [from Isaiah] seriously warn us that we should not think of the church as though it were a worldly state and that we should not measure it by the succession of bishops or by the rank and place of pontiffs.... But the church is constituted in another manner. For its assembly is not bound to regular succession but to the Word of God” (Melanchthon, cited by R. Goeser, “The Church and the Authority of the Word,” *dialog* 29:3 [1990] 200).

“We cannot concede to the bishops, either by ecclesiastical or secular right, the power to determine something for the church, even when it is permissible and good” (LW 49: 386-87).



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