

Church and Culture

1 Resolution 4-01

2 To Address the Sexual Integrity of Ministers and the Care for Victims of Abuse

3 WHEREAS, God calls His people to holiness and Christ has specifically summoned His
4 followers to sexual purity (Matt. 5:27–28; 1 Thes. 4:3–5); and

5 WHEREAS, Sexual sin robs us of our joy in God and is especially grievous to our souls (1 Cor.
6 6:18); and

7 WHEREAS, Many church bodies are seeking to address the scandal of sexual abuse by members
8 of their clergy; and

9 WHEREAS, We acknowledge our own fallenness and the need to prevent such appalling sins
10 from happening within our own ranks; and

11 WHEREAS, The Bible calls ministers of the gospel—whether they are pastors, counselors,
12 educators, missionaries, chaplains, or others—to be above reproach morally, both within the body
13 of Christ and in the larger community (1 Tim. 3:1-13); and

14 WHEREAS, Scripture commands that believers are to be restrained even in their speech (Eph.
15 4:29); and

16 WHEREAS, Sexually demeaning speech of any kind normalizes the denigration of others; and

17 WHEREAS, Believers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world so that our actions will
18 glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:13-14); and

19 WHEREAS, The holiness of our triune God and the gospel of Jesus Christ require the highest
20 levels of integrity in personal, family, ministerial, and business relations; and

21 WHEREAS, Ministers serve as trusted members of the community, in public ministry, in
22 personal and family counseling contexts, and as private citizens; and

23 WHEREAS, The erosion of moral fidelity has reached crisis proportions in our society; and

24 WHEREAS, Sexual infidelity and other violations of ministerial integrity always have tragic
25 consequences for those who are victimized and for others indirectly impacted by those
26 transgressions, especially in their relationship with our loving God; and

27 WHEREAS, Tragically, accusations of sexual abuse and harassment have been made within
28 LCMS congregations, and other LCMS ministries; and

29 WHEREAS, Victims of sexual abuse and harassment are often dismissed and told that they are
30 responsible at least in part for the sin perpetrated against them; therefore be it

31 *Resolved*, That the New Jersey District in convention call on one another to build and maintain
32 relationships and practices of integrity and fidelity to God and others in that we are to be people

33 above reproach (1 Tim 3:2; Col 1:22; Titus 1); and be it further

34 *Resolved*, That we urge all our spiritual leaders redouble their efforts to hold one another
35 accountable to the highest standards of Christian moral practice; and be it further

36 *Resolved*, That we urge our seminaries and other related educational institutions to make
37 ministerial integrity a major emphasis in the training of pastors, missionaries, educators, and other
38 ministers; and be it further

39 *Resolved*, That we call on our churches to discipline those guilty of any sexual abuse in
40 obedience to Matt. 18:6-17 as well as to cooperate with civil authorities in the prosecution of
41 those cases; and be it further

42 *Resolved*, That we pray for those who have been harmed as a result of sexual abuse and urge our
43 churches to offer support, compassion, and biblical counseling to them and their families; and be
44 it further

45 *Resolved*, That we commit ourselves as disciples of Christ to lives of purity in thought, word, and
46 deed; and be it further

47 *Resolved*, That we call on New Jersey District to continue and to expand efforts to teach the
48 whole counsel of God regarding sexual purity, human dignity, and the dangers of pornography;
49 and be it further

50 *Resolved*, That we remind all our congregations of their moral responsibility to implement any
51 appropriate church discipline and restoration processes; and be it further

52 *Resolved*, That we encourage pastors and congregations to develop and implement sound policies
53 and procedures to protect our children and staff from sexual abuse and harassment; and be it
54 finally

55 *Resolved*, That we urge all our people to pray for victims of abuse and harassment, to stand for
56 their protection from abuse, and to support safe and healthy children's ministries in our churches
57 and communities.

1 Resolution 4-02

2 To Denounce Ethno-Nationalism and Supremacy as a Belief that is Anti-Gospel

3 WHEREAS, Scripture teaches, “God made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all
4 the face of the earth,” (Acts 17:26); and

5 WHEREAS, All people are created in the same image of God, no matter what human
6 distinguishing identifiers might be (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; cf. Acts 17:25, 26); and

7 WHEREAS, Central to the doctrine of creation is the truth of the equal value of all humans
8 grounded in the unsurpassable worth that God places in them, demonstrated by the unsurpassable
9 price he paid for each individual person; and

10 WHEREAS, In Jesus, God became a human and so identifies fully with every human (Heb. 2:17),
11 and his mission embraces all of humankind (Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38); and

12 WHEREAS, Any claim that there is something about the nature of another human being as such
13 that renders that person to be of inferior value not only denies the biblical doctrine of creation, but
14 also calls into question what the Scriptures teach about the incarnation of Jesus Christ;¹ and

15 WHEREAS, The Apostle Peter said, “God doesn’t show favoritism, but in every nation the
16 person who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him” (Acts 10:34–35); and

17 WHEREAS, The Book of Concord teaches that all Christians will make the will of Christ
18 supreme in their own lives and in human society, and so opposing all forms of racism (AC Ap V
19 1-3); and

20 WHEREAS, Racism and racial superiority is idolatry²; and

21 WHEREAS, Racism is a blatant denial of the unity of the body of Christ, into which all who have
22 been baptized into his name have been incorporated (1 Cor. 12:13) for Jesus Christ has removed
23 all barriers between all human beings, making peace through His cross (Eph. 2:13-16); and

24 WHEREAS, James says, “If you really fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, ‘You shall
25 love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are
26 convicted by the law as transgressors” (James 2:8-9); and

27 WHEREAS, Christians of differing national or ethnic origins must not claim Christ as exclusively
28 their own, as if to say that their view of him most closely approximates the biblical portrayal of
29 him.

¹ As a human, Jesus descended from Adam, whom God created (Luke 3:38), and whom all human beings have as progenitor. To deny the full humanity of any fellow human being is at the same time to compromise the apostolic truth that in Christ “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col. 2:9), that is, that he truly “was made man” (Nicene Creed)

² “That to which your heart clings and entrusts itself,” Dr. Martin Luther wrote in the Large Catechism, is “really your God.” “If any one boasts,” he continued, “of great learning, wisdom, power, prestige, family, and honor, and trusts in them, he also has a god, but not the one, true God.” If anyone should claim superiority over others and treat them as inferior because of racial origin or characteristics, we may add, that person, too, has a god, but not the one true God.

30 WHEREAS, the Synod in convention has passed the following resolutions
31 **1971 — Res. 9-32:** To Encourage Christian Action to Combat Racism
32 **1973 — Res. 9-22:** To Continue Efforts to Combat Racism
33 **1977 — Res 10-18A:** To Make Every Effort to Eliminate Racism
34 **1979 — Res 4-11:** To Reaffirm Efforts to Combat Racism
35 **1981 — Res 8-07:** To Oppose Racism and Violence
36 **1983 — Res 3-09:** To Clarify Position on Anti-Semitism
37 **1992 — Res 3-03:** To Combat All Racism
38 **1995 — Res 2-05A:** To Commend for Study the CTCR Document *Racism and the*
39 *Church*, and

40 WHEREAS, As the 1992 resolution states, “racism is contrary to God’s Word and a sin against
41 Him.” Synod by-law 2.3.1 (a) states: “It shall be the policy of the Synod to decline membership
42 to congregations whose constitutions deny membership or other congregational privileges to any
43 Christian because of race or ethnic origin;” therefore be it

44 WHEREAS, In what is sometimes known as white nationalism or separatism, alt-right, British
45 Israelism, Evropa Identity, Nation of Islam, Zionism and others, the worth of an individual or
46 group is determined principally by genetic origins, biological characteristics, or cultural heritage,
47 which becomes the primary basis for drawing conclusions about the comparative worth of an
48 individual³

49 *Resolved*, That the New Jersey District of the LCMS, denounce every form of racism, including
50 alt-right white supremacy, white separatists, British Israelism, and Evropa Identity, et. al., as
51 antithetical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and be it further,

52 *Resolved*, That we repent of our own sins of the idolatry of nationalism and racism and denounce
53 and repudiate white supremacy and every form of racial and ethnic hatred as a scheme of the
54 devil intended to bring further suffering and division to the world and to hinder the Gospel; and
55 be it further

³ For example,

“Any white person who brought the element of civilization had the right to take over this continent”, Ayn Rand, “To the Graduating Class of West Point”, 1974;

“Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.. look with confidence to the ultimate universal acknowledgement of the truths upon which our system rests? It is the first government ever instituted upon the principles in strict conformity to nature, and the ordination of Providence, in furnishing the materials of human society. Many governments have been founded upon the principle of the subordination and serfdom of certain classes of the same race; such were and are in violation of the laws of nature. Our system commits no such violation of nature's laws.” Alexander Stevens, Vice President to the Confederacy, “Cornerstone Address” March 21, 1861;

“To be white is to be a striver, a crusader, an explorer and a conqueror. We build, we produce, we go upward ... For us, it is conquer or die. This is a unique burden for the white man, that our fate is entirely in our hands. And it is appropriate because within us, within the very blood in our veins as *Children of the Sun*, lies the potential for greatness. That is the great struggle we are called to. We are not meant to live in shame and weakness and disgrace. We were not meant to beg for moral validation from some of the most despicable creatures to ever populate the planet. We were meant to overcome—overcome all of it. Because that is natural and normal for us. Because for us, as Europeans, it is only normal again when we are great again...the concepts that are now designated “problematic” and associated with whiteness—power, strength, beauty, agency, accomplishment. Whites do and other groups don’t ... We don’t exploit other groups. They need us, and not the other way around.” Richard Spencer, “Hail Trump Speech”, November 2016

56 *Resolved*, That we reaffirm the resolution the Synod in convention of 1992, “It shall be the policy
57 of the Synod to decline membership to congregations whose constitutions deny membership or
58 other congregational privileges to any Christian because of race or ethnic origin;” and be it
59 further

60 *Resolved*, That it shall be the policy of the New Jersey District of the LCMS to deny membership
61 any member of Synod who espouses racist ideology such as is found in ethno-,
62 nationalist/separatists, etc. groups, and to suspend the membership of any member who refuses to
63 repent of such ideology as it denies the Confessions and the Scriptures to which we subscribe;
64 and be it further

65 *Resolved*, That we acknowledge that we still must make progress in rooting out any remaining
66 forms of intentional or unintentional racism in our midst; and be it finally

67 *Resolved*, That we earnestly pray, both for those who advocate racist ideologies and those who
68 are thereby deceived, that they may see their error through the light of the Gospel, repent of these
69 hatreds, and come to know the peace and love of Christ through redeemed fellowship in the
70 Kingdom of God, which is established from every nation, tribe, people, and language.

1 Resolution 4-03
2 To Engage in Ministry to Transgendered Persons

3 WHEREAS, All persons are created in God's image and are made to glorify Him (Gen. 1:27; Isa.
4 43:7); and

5 WHEREAS, God's design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and
6 female (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4; Mk 10:6;) which designate the fundamental distinction that God
7 has embedded in the very biology of the human race; and

8 WHEREAS, Distinctions in masculine and feminine as ordained by God are part of the created
9 order and should find expression in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21–24; 1 Cor 11:7–9; Eph
10 5:22–33; 1 Tim 2:12–14); and

11 WHEREAS, The Fall of man into sin has introduced brokenness and futility into God's good
12 creation (Gen 3:1–24; Rom 8:20); and

13 WHEREAS, According to a 2016 study from the UCLA School of Law, about 1.4 million
14 Americans identify as transgender; and

15 WHEREAS, Transgenderism differs from hermaphroditism or intersexualism in that the sex of
16 the individual is not biologically ambiguous but psychologically ambiguous; and

17 WHEREAS, The state of New Jersey prohibits licensed counselors from any attempt to change a
18 child's "gender expression"; and

19 WHEREAS, the church does not have a good history of ministering to transgendered persons
20 often due to our uncomfortability with the topic or to the harsh, unloving, hypocritical manner in
21 which we speak often while refusing to speak publicly against other sexual sins such as divorce,
22 remarriage, pornography, sexual harassment, coarse language, etc, and

23 WHEREAS, the CTCR has produced a 2014 paper entitled, "Gender Identity Disorder or Gender
24 Dysphoria in Christian Perspective" which begins to address this topic; now, therefore, be it

25 *Resolved*, That the NJ District in convention affirm God's good design that gender identity is
26 determined by biological sex and not by one's self-perception—a perception which is often
27 influenced by fallen human nature in ways contrary to God's design (Eph. 4:17–18); and be
28 it further

29 *Resolved*, That we commend the CTCR for their current work and request they produce a full
30 study on practical ministry to transgendered persons, and be it

31 *Resolved*, That we grieve the reality of human fallenness which can result in manifestations of
32 sexuality outside of the teaching of Scripture and point all to the redemption of our bodies in
33 Christ (Rom. 8:23); and be it further

34 *Resolved*, That we extend love and compassion to those whose sexual self-understanding is
35 shaped by a distressing conflict between their biological sex and their gender identity; and be it
36 further

37 *Resolved*, That we invite all transgender persons to trust in Christ and to experience renewal in

38 the Gospel (1 Tim 1:15–16); and be it further

39 *Resolved*, That we love our transgender neighbors, seek their good always, welcome them to our
40 churches and, as they repent and believe in Christ, receive them into church membership
41 (2 Cor. 5:18–20; Gal. 5:14); and be it further

42 *Resolved*, That we regard our transgender neighbors as image-bearers of God and therefore
43 condemn acts of abuse or bullying committed against them; and be it further

44 *Resolved*, That we oppose efforts to alter one’s bodily identity (e.g., cross-sex hormone therapy,
45 gender reassignment surgery) to refashion it to conform with one’s perceived gender identity; and
46 be it further

47 *Resolved*, That we continue to oppose steadfastly all efforts by any governing official or body to
48 validate transgender identity as morally praiseworthy (Isa. 5:20); and be it further

49 *Resolved*, That our love for the Gospel and urgency for the Great Commission must include
50 declaring the whole counsel of God, proclaiming what Scripture teaches about God’s design for
51 us as male and female persons created in His image and for His glory (Matt. 28:19–20; Acts
52 20:27; Rom. 11:36);

53 *Resolved*, That the New Jersey District provide resources and training on this topic to help pastors
54 and congregations minister to those struggling with sexual sins; and be it finally

55 *Resolved*, That the New Jersey District memorialize the Synod in convention to request the
56 CTCR to study this issue in more depth and provide Gospel-centered resources on how to engage
57 in ministry to transgendered persons.