

## Omnium gatherum

**We just report** • Couple of months back, I quoted a response we had gotten to Pr. Scott Yakimow's account of the LCMS convention last summer. Pr. Yakimow had *reported* — emphasize that word — that some in the LCMS believe it is the ELCA who is moving away from the LCMS. The response argued that it was more the other way around. But in my lead-in to the comment, I made it sound as if Pr. Yakimow himself had suggested the ELCA is moving away from the LCMS, when in fact he had simply *reported* — there's that word again — that some at the LCMS convention seemed to be of that opinion. I don't really know what Pr. Yakimow personally thinks about who's moving away from whom, but in this instance he was only *reporting*, not *opining*. He may need to play his cards close to his vest, his mother being an ELCA pastor and all. But at any rate, the misstatement, and any confusion resulting therefrom, was entirely my own fault, my own most grievous fault.

**Background checks** • David Benke is President of the LCMS's Atlantic District, and a regular participant in Forum Online. His contributions are always interesting, and sometimes pretty amusing. In a recent conversation about professional qualifications for church workers, Pr. Benke opined: "Paul could not get admitted to an American Lutheran Seminary — murder. Nor Moses — murder. Nor David — adultery. These are all 'one strike and you're out' items, and the admission process including full background check would spot them. And Jesus' lit-

tle peripatetic seminary with tax collectors, women hangers-on, a political extremist, haggling infighters and passive-aggressive posers, a bunch of under-educated donkeys from upstate who get sent out with 60 other hangers-on two by two to do miracles — uh, are there ANY standards in effect here? The theological proficiency of a fisherman — can you spell DENIED on the admission application? Can you even read?"

**Historical perspective** • We are now nearly 40 years beyond the Missouri Synod civil war of the early 1970s. Those directly involved in the conflict have mostly retired or died, and the new generation of LCMS pastors has no personal memory of the conflict. Some months ago over a couple of beers I listened to some Lutheran scholars muse that it is about time to begin some serious scholarly reflection on what happened and why. Fortress Press is about to enter this conversation with the publication next month of James Burkee's *Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod: A Conflict that Changed American Christianity*. Burkee teaches history at Concordia University Wisconsin, and Fortress bills it as "the first full scholarly account of the rise of political conservatism" in the LCMS. Whether it lives up to that lofty claim or not remains to be seen; but I've had a look at it, and I believe it will be an important and interesting read for anyone concerned about American Lutheran history, or about the mess we're in today. You can preorder the book from Fortress, and I recommend you do so. — *roj*

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