

The CLC and the LC-MS: A Summary of Differences in Teachings

(Adapted from *WELS and Other Lutherans* by Pastor Paul D. Nolting - June 1998;
Further adapted by Pastor Ernest W. Bernet - May 2015)

View of Scripture

| CLC | LCMS |
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| 1. Scripture is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. There are no errors in the Holy Bible. The power for salvation and the church's work is in the Word of God, so the focus remains on the Word of God. | 1. Overcame most problems at their seminaries (but not in all colleges or pastors throughout the synod), eliminating the historical critical method of Bible interpretation which allows for errors in the Bible and attempts to harmonize Scripture and science or reason (e.g. allowing for evolution). |

Doctrinal Discipline

| CLC | LCMS |
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| 2. Doctrinal discipline maintained; pastors and congregations are required to maintain the confessional position of the Bible and synod. | 2. Doctrinal discipline is inconsistent; pastors and congregations frequently remain in good standing despite failure to maintain a confessional position. |

Church and Ministry

| CLC | LCMS |
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| 3. No particular form of the visible church is divinely instituted. The invisible church is present in the local congregation or the synod--both can properly be called "church." 4. The pastor of a local congregation is only one of many divinely instituted forms of public ministry. The specific form is determined by the church's call. | 3. Official position is that the local congregation is the one divinely instituted form of the visible church. Synod is merely a human arrangement. 4. Official position is that the only divinely instituted form of the public ministry is the pastor of a local congregation. All others are auxiliary to this. |

Doctrine of Fellowship

| CLC | LCMS |
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| 5. Full agreement in doctrine is required for all forms of fellowship. 6. The same scriptural principle is to be applied to all forms of church or religious fellowship. 7. All joint prayer is an expression of fellowship. 8. Only pastors in doctrinal agreement can officiate together at weddings. 9. Only those in confessional agreement may receive the Lord's Supper (Close Communion). | 5. Full agreement in doctrine is required only for pulpit and altar fellowship. 6. Full agreement in doctrine is not necessary for worship at occasional joint Christian celebrations, Reformation services, convocations, rallies, etc. 7. There can be joint prayer that is not an act of fellowship. 8. Some pastors allow "ecumenical wedding services" at which pastors or priests not in fellowship with LC-MS may participate. 9. Official position is Close Communion, but numerous pastors and churches practice Open Communion. |

Women in the Church

| CLC | LCMS |
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| 10. Because Scripture assigns a headship role to man and a helping role to woman, women do not participate in voting at congregational meetings or in leadership roles that exercise authority over men, including the role of pastor. | 10. Women are granted full voting rights and may assume leadership roles that exercise authority over men. Women may not serve as pastors, although a growing number of pastors and laity support the idea of women pastors. |

Government Military Chaplaincy

| CLC | LCMS |
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| 11. Sees government military chaplaincy as a violation of separation of church and state, as incompatible with the divine call, and participating in unionistic practices. | 11. Completely involved in government military chaplaincy program. |

Boy Scouts of America

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| 12. Opposes membership in the Boy Scouts of America because of mandatory Scout Oath, non-Trinitarian definition of God and Scout Law which promote a spirit of self-righteousness. | 12. Allows membership in scout troops. Their congregations conduct Boy Scout troops hoping to eliminate objectionable features, but does not limit membership to their own troops. |