

Floor Committee #2: Conference of Presidents

Subject: Memorial (2025-01): Encouragement for education about the history, tenets, and threat of critical theory, and the Lutheran response

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 195,196

Report No. 02

Our committee has decided not to present this memorial to the convention. We do not deny the dangers of critical theory (CT); this particular lie of Satan is pernicious and pervasive, as the memorial's author states. However, several factors led us away from agreement with the resolution, including the following:

- The Conference of Presidents has already composed and disseminated a pastoral brief on the subject, pursuant to a resolution from the 2023 convention. "The brief was intended to be a summary of critical theory to equip called workers and lay members with an understanding of its background and nature to help them respond in a biblical way. Since it was never intended to be a comprehensive overview of all aspects of the history and essence of critical theory, the Conference of Presidents has determined not to add to or revise the document (which could be a neverending process) unless it is found to contain factual or doctrinal errors. Rather, the COP will encourage those interested to do additional research on their own" (*Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 9). Our committee agreed.
- The memorial states that there is "a need to further educate the pastors, teachers, leadership, and laity of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod on the history, character, tenets, and threats of CT in a way that prepares our people to appropriately respond." We questioned whether another document prepared by the Conference of Presidents would best accomplish that purpose, especially if critical theory is "multiheaded" and "ever-evolving." Rather, we felt that other WELS groups and institutions (e.g., the Institute for Lutheran Apologetics, Northwestern Publishing House, or WELS Campus Ministry) would be better positioned to provide such education to our people, if and how they see fit.

Instead of asking the COP to prepare another document, then, we offer the following:

- We encourage our called workers and others in positions of influence in our church body to learn about critical theory, understand how it impacts the people they serve, and do what they can to equip the saints to contend with it in their lives and ministries.

- We suggest that those who have studied and written about critical theory share their work through available channels, e.g., *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, *Forward in Christ*, circuit and conference gatherings, conferences for laypeople, etc.
- We urge our called workers and lay members alike to “be prepared to defend the faith and offer reasons for the hope they have in Christ,” and to proclaim boldly and persistently God’s truth to counter this and all of Satan’s lies.

Pastor Samuel Degner, chairman
Teacher Mark Thiesfeldt, secretary