

From a paper presented by Dr. Wallace Schulz at the February 2004 Suncoast Conference of the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod titled:

Yankee Stadium: Official Actions And Decisions That Continue To Divide Us - Jeremiah 23:1-2

Reference: http://www.calvary-lutheran.com/lasvegas_schulz1.pdf

In my report following my investigation of the Benke-Yankee Stadium matter, I wrote about the seriousness of the "**original sin**" that underlies this entire case. Here is why I speak about an "**original**" sin. In his defense of his participation in the Yankee Stadium syncretistic worship service, Pastor Benke, at least one month before I had this case, posted on the world wide web an explanation of the struggle he went through as he agonized over whether or not he should participate. He tossed and turned and was restless the night before. You can read this yourself since this information provided by Pastor Benke is still available on the internet.

In his struggle as to whether to participate in Yankee Stadium, Pastor Benke states that he twice called Pastor Kieschnick to get advice as to whether he should participate in the stadium worship service.

On May 22-23, 2002 (at a meeting, in St. Louis arranged to bring together the Complainants and Pastor Benke to try to resolve this case), Pastor Benke emphatically stated that, when he called President Kieschnick, he warned him that if he, Rev. Benke, participated in Yankee Stadium and if this was shown on television, **this would be divisive.**

After Pastor Benke told President Kieschnick clearly that, if his actions were seen on television, they would be divisive, President Kieschnick nevertheless, without consulting with the LCMS Vice Presidents, gave the go ahead. This is a very grave mistake, to authorize an action in a church body that you are told ahead of time will divide the sheep. The great majority of pastors in the LCMS know of "hot buttons" in their own congregations that, if

pressed, would divide a congregation/flock. It is my sincere opinion that, if LCMS President Gerald Kieschnick would have told President Benke not to participate in this Yankee Stadium syncretistic worship service, I believe Pastor Benke would not have participated. I cannot look into Pastor Benke's heart. However, I personally believe Pastor Benke was sincere both when he asked permission and when he warned of the consequences. No matter what you may have thought, or now think, of Rev. Benke, I sincerely believe he was honest on these matters.

At this point it must also be said that, three years earlier in a similar situation involving Rev Benke's involvement in an inter religious service, President Barry put forth great effort to ask Pastor Benke to apologize for his actions and, with the full support of the LCMS Praesidium, did what he could to prevent divisiveness in the LCMS.

This is why I state emphatically, and very, very sadly, that all, and I repeat ALL of the divisiveness we have had in the LCMS as a result of Yankee Stadium can be traced to this "original" sin. This is the sin of giving permission to go ahead with an act when you know it will divide the sheep, an action very seriously condemned by God in Jeremiah 23ff. Furthermore, unless there is a recognition that this was a bad and divisive decision, divisiveness in the Synod will only increase, especially since this case has now been "officially" put back on the table this issue, resulting from this "original" sin decision, not at Yankee Stadium, but at the highest office of the LCMS. Several months ago, the *Reporter* also carried an article on showing how big an issue this is for the coming convention.

This also helps one to understand why even many so called conservative and confessional pastors do not want this controversy discussed in their congregation. They may be very much against what took place at Yankee Stadium; however, they realize that this issue is by its very nature is highly controversial and divisive and, wherever it is discussed, it always divides and ends up causing anger and hatred, even as it most likely will here at Las Vegas. Whatever you say about Pastor Benke, he correctly predicted this.

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