

PART B: RESPONSE TO EAST DISTRICT RESOLUTION 00 .3-03

A resolution carried at the 2000 Convention of the East District asks the commission to reconsider its suggestion that in certain exceptional cases the practice of intinction (i.e., the dipping of the consecrated host in consecrated wine) may be employed in the administration of Christ's Body and Blood at His Holy Supper. The paragraph to which exception has been taken is found in Part A of the Appendix to the synodically approved document *Closed Communion in the Contemporary Context*:

What of those who cannot tolerate alcohol? Any accommodation to the needs of these persons must fall within the confines of catholic practice. Options for those who cannot tolerate alcohol may include intinction or communion in one kind.

By way of response, the commission draws attention to three factors.

First, the main thrust of Part A of the Appendix (titled simply "The Elements") is to confess with the Formula of Concord that our Lord has mandated real bread and real wine to be consecrated, distributed and received at Holy Communion—"there can be no doubt that He was speaking of true, natural bread and natural wine" (FC SD VII, 48; Tappert 578). When Jesus commands us to eat and drink the bread and wine which He makes to be His Body and Blood, He establishes the manner in which Holy Communion is normally to be received.

Secondly, the paragraph which we are invited to reconsider deals specifically with the exceptional situation of a would-be communicant who, for one reason or another, cannot tolerate the intake of wine. Please note that our advice that certain procedures **may** be followed in exceptional cases is given against the background of

insisting that the Lord's clear command **shall** be followed under all normal circumstances:

Even as we note the importance of using the proper elements in the Supper, we recognize that there are certain individuals who cannot receive one or the other of the elements because of allergies, or who cannot or will not take fermented wine. These cases call for special pastoral care.

Thirdly, the practice of intinction has been carefully examined by our Church's second theologian, Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586). While acknowledging that intinction was sometimes practised in the ancient Church and conceding that it may be admissible in the case of children and sick persons, Chemnitz points out that orthodox Fathers looked dimly on the practice, which he himself frowns upon mainly because it tends to lead to a situation where the lay people are deprived of access to the cup. If intinction or Communion in one kind should be proposed as normal procedures for receiving the Blessed Sacrament, then they must be vigorously opposed on the basis of Christ's institution of the cup, which is defended and promoted in a specific article of the Augsburg Confession (AC XXII).¹

Bearing these three factors in mind, the Commission remains committed to the synodically approved form of the document *Closed Communion in the Contemporary Context*.