

## A statement from the pastors of the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

We thank God for the vigilance and diligence of parents, educators, library-workers and citizens throughout Wyoming who have taken action to protect children. Through the faithful exercise of their vocation, inappropriate books and events have been revealed and challenged in libraries throughout Wyoming. We refer to press accounts of library book controversies in [Campbell County](#), [Laramie County school district](#), [Sheridan County School District](#), [Natrona County School District](#), [Lincoln County Library](#), and [Kelly Walsh High School](#), and to a [“drag story hour” \(DSH\) event at the Albany County Public library \(June 2022\)](#).

Our Lord Jesus Christ especially blessed little children during His earthly ministry (Mark 10:13-16). He commanded all human beings to “become like children” precisely because of their dependence on God (Matthew 18:3-4). Since childlike dependence is, at one and the same time, highly valued and exploitable by those who would do harm, Jesus followed His blessing with a vivid warning to those who would endanger children: “whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

Children are harmed when they are exposed to truths of adulthood for which bodies and minds are not yet ready. They are doubly harmed when exposed to role models who teach falsehoods by word and deed (Deuteronomy 22:5). God gives parents special and direct charge over each child that He entrusts into their care (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 6:4). It is their duty to shield children from all harm, including those caused by inappropriate images, words, and actions. Just governments recognize and respect this authority by creating institutions and laws that help and do not hinder parents to maintain the innocence of children while raising them “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Because all fathers and mothers have this divine command, all children have this protection as their God-given right.

Wyoming criminal law recognizes the responsibility of the entire community to join in protecting the innocence and vulnerability of children. Title 6, chapter 4 of Wyoming statute enumerates crimes against the family from public indecency to the distribution of obscene literature (Articles 2 & 3). There can be no legitimate reason to exempt either public libraries or school libraries from these protections. Moreover, Article 4 “Offenses against the family” explicitly prohibits anyone—most especially government actors—from endangering children by exposing them to indecent, obscene and pornographic acts and images—either directly or by hampering parental supervision.

Therefore, when the [Albany County Library hosted](#) a “Drag Story Hour,” in June 2022, those officials responsible abused their public office. The DSH organization explicitly admits, on its [website](#), that such events are intend to “capture[] the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and give[] kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models. In spaces like [libraries], kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions. . .” This is plainly intended to sexualize children and to fill their minds with lies about the nature of male and female, men and women. This is grooming by any standard.

State, county, or municipal officials who are incapable of discerning how these evils harm children should not be entrusted with the public care and teaching of children. Not only is the DSH organization designed

[to subvert God's institution of Holy Marriage](#), its deliberate appeal to prurient interests of children also engages in behaviors clearly prohibited by Wyoming statute: public indecency and promoting obscenities to minors ([W.S. 6-4-201\(a\)\(iii\)](#)), [6-4-301\(a\)\(iii\)](#), [6-4-302](#), etc.)

Based on the Word of God, we encourage our members to support and uphold the godly intent of Wyoming's indecency and obscenity laws both in private conversation and in public action. Additionally, we, here, publicly correct three common misunderstandings that are maliciously fostered by opponents of good and just laws.

1. We point out the standards of Wyoming law not as a substitute for the standards of God's Word, but to refute a misguided interpretation of the First Amendment. While our bodies and souls are given by God, and common-sense laws reflect this common origin, it is a perversion of reason to consider such laws as the state establishment of religion.
2. Likewise, it is a perversion of the First Amendment to set it at odds with the parental right and responsibility to direct the education of their children. The American Library Association has ensconced this ungodly and unconstitutional perversion in its [Library Bill of Rights](#), (Arts. V & VII); and [Guidelines for library policies](#) (esp. #8). Accordingly, the ALA refuses to abide by state laws that make a distinction between adults and minors and specially guards children more than adults from indecent literature and activities. No state or county library should subscribe to the ALA Library Bill of Rights or adopt library policies based on its lies.
3. Finally, it is an abuse of the public trust when anyone—especially an office-holder—deliberately misleads the public. Specifically, when requests to move books inappropriate for minors out of the children's section are wantonly mislabeled as “book burning,” “censorship,” “book banning,” and other incendiary rhetoric, the public is denied its right to have a truthful and informed debate, while citizens are unjustly slandered by government officials. Organizations that employ such rhetoric should be shunned. And public officials who repeat these lies in the course of their duties should be censured.

We pastors strive to make our churches places of refuge from a world gone mad. We preach the God who loves His creation as He has made it. We preach the God who became man to redeem mankind. We preach the God who forgives all sins and dwells in all who repent their rebellion against the Creator and trust in Him in the person of Jesus.

Since there can be no repenting of rebellion without acknowledging the authority of the Creator, (Whom the Declaration of Independence calls ‘Nature's God’), ministers of God are duty-bound to name this Creator as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and to give witness that the public crimes against Wyoming families and children are sins against Him. We invite all to embrace this truth in repentance and faith, and to join us in praying God to forgive us our sins and restore sanity and peace to our state.

Dear brothers,

September 25, 2023

I thought it good to inform you of its aims and genesis of the attached resolution.

In 1989, the publication of “Heather Has Two Mommies,” by Leslea Newman was an early salvo in a decades-long campaign to confuse and indoctrinate children with unchristian and unnatural views of marriage, life and family. If we ever thought it was harmless gibberish, history has corrected us.

Transgressivism, by its nature, knows no boundaries. It cannot and will not reach equilibrium. As Supreme Court jurisprudence successively [legalized sodomy](#) (2003), [overturned the Defense of Marriage Act](#) (2013), and [redefined marriage](#) (2015), children’s books grew more explicit and more graphic. No longer do they subtly broach indecent subjects. They now promote those subjects obscenely and indecently. They are so sexually explicit that they [cannot be read aloud](#) in public meetings. And this fact makes it difficult for pastors to educate our congregations on the depth of the problem.

But the shuttering of schools in 2020 changed this. Parents everywhere were shocked to learn the scale and depth of the perversion. Wyoming and Nebraska were no exception. If you have not been following developments, understand this: It is no exaggeration—zero—when they are called [pornographic grooming](#) designed to arouse children.

In 2022, pastors of the Southern Illinois District, LC-MS issued a public statement regarding similar perversions in Collinsville and Glen Carbon, IL ([A Statement from local LCMS clergymen. . .](#), Collinsville Daily News, June 3, 2022). Some Wyoming churches have done similarly. So, I brought these developments to the Praesidium. It tasked me to rework the SID document for our own use. While the praesidium suggested the writing, they should not be held responsible for its content.

The resolution before you has as its intended audience the lay members of the Wyoming District both in Nebraska and Wyoming. It seeks to instruct them in their vocational duties toward their own children and toward their neighbor’s children. It also seeks to disabuse our Christian citizens of false doctrines that Satan uses to silence Christian witness toward neighbors and friends.

Any written public teaching will likely be read outside of LCMS circles, as well. Therefore, it should be plain-spoken, informative, evangelical in tone, prophetic in voice, and measured in rhetoric. Box-church evangelicalism is known for soft-peddling doctrine that is unfavored by the culture at large, while fire-and-brimstone preachers push back at the expense of the Gospel. With our unified voice, we can correct these errors both by teaching and by example. Our members will be catechized no matter what we do.

More could be said both in this cover letter and in the resolution. But I am also cognizant that excessive verbosity dissuades readers and could leave the best witness unheard. Therefore, I humbly submit this attempt to balance multiple factors for your consideration. While it is certainly far short of the goal, perhaps it can be an adequate starting point.

Yours in Christ,

Jonathan Lange, Marriage, Life and Family Coordinator