



## An Apologia for the Historic Liturgy

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Why do I support the historic liturgy? Is it because I am drawn to the music? to the pageantry? to the “style”? That I enjoy the singing of Lutheran chorales and Gregorian chant the way that another person enjoys the back beat of a rock song? No, no, no, no.

You see, I am simply convinced that LIFE is liturgical. God created us and placed humanity into this world to be the priest of His creation, to receive from Him His good gifts and to offer up a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. He created us to live in the joy of His presence, to find LIFE in communion with Him. The historic liturgy testifies to this Biblical vision of reality.

“It is indeed meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, Your only Son...and so with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying: Holy, holy, holy...Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!”

These words confess that the liturgy is meant not to be a blip in time or confined to some Church building. They confess that all of our life, when that life is found in Jesus Christ, is to be doxology. St. Paul put it like this: “That we might BE to the praise of His glory” (Eph 1:12). And this fills the Scriptures! Think of it.

Genesis is filled with liturgy from the get go: inside Eden where God walked and talked with men; outside Eden where the way of sacrifice begins and the theme of priest and sacrifice begin to ring through! From Cain and Abel to Melchizedek to the Sacrifice of Isaac. When the Lord was about to bring His people out of Egypt, He told Moses that the sign of being brought out was that “you shall serve God on this mountain.” (Ex 3:12). When Pharaoh is ready to release the people, but not their property, Moses gives a most peculiar answer--and we must believe he spoke the utter truth: “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. Our livestock also must go with us, not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there.” (Ex 10:25,26) And when they arrive at the holy mountain, God explains His purpose to Moses: “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all people, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you shall speak to the people of Israel.” (Ex. 19:5,6) And so the Psalmist could sing: “Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to Your holy name and glory in your praise!” (Psalm 106:47).

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## The Rise and Fall of the Walther League

By Scott J. Meyer

Historically, the Christian training of children and the youth has been an important mission sphere of the Missouri Synod ever since its founding in 1847,<sup>1</sup> in accordance with Scripture<sup>2</sup> and Luther’s teachings.<sup>3</sup> In the congregations of Synod, next to the training received in the family, the chief means of Christian training of children was in the congregation’s Christian day school.<sup>4</sup> Following Christenlehre and Confirmation, the congregations were able to keep track of their youth through young people’s organizations known as Jugendverein (youth group), in some cases the congregations would sponsor Junglingsverein (young men’s group) and Jungfrauenverein (young women’s group).<sup>5</sup> These youth groups would associate for activities and entertainment in a Christian atmosphere.<sup>6</sup>

In 1893, a call was issued for congregations of the Synodical Conference to send representatives to meet at Trinity Lutheran Church, Buffalo, NY, for the purpose of forming an international organization of Lutheran young people.<sup>7</sup> The organization adopted the name Walther Liga (Walther League) in 1894 after a leading founder and first president of the Missouri Synod, C. F. W. Walther. Its constitution stated: “The purpose of this organization shall be to help young people grow as Christians through WORSHIP - building a stronger faith in the Triune God; EDUCATION - discovering the will of God for their daily life; SERVICE- responding to the needs of all men; RECREATION - keeping the joy of Christ in all activities; FELLOWSHIP - finding the power of belonging to others in Christ.”<sup>8</sup> The purpose of the Walther League was also expressed in its motto: Pro Arts et Focis (For Altars and for Hearths, or For Church and for Home).<sup>9</sup>

Two of the major endeavors sponsored by the Walther League were the Wheat Ridge Foundation, which established sanatoria and hospitals in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, and several foreign countries; and the Arcadia Association, which established Camp Arcadia, a summer camp at Arcadia, Michigan.<sup>10</sup> In 1921, the International Walther League moved its headquarters from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to a house at 6438 S. Eggleston Ave., Chicago, Illinois, where it remained until 1942. During the latter year the League constructed new headquarters in a beautiful two-story building, named the

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## The Rise and Fall of the Walther League

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“Lutheran Youth Building,” at 875 N. Dearborn, Chicago.<sup>11</sup> The Chicago building was sold to the Salvation Army in 1971,<sup>12</sup> as part of the dismantling of the League’s organization (discussed *infra*).

By 1920, the League had grown to the extent that it needed a national executive secretary. To fill that position, it called Walter A. Maier, who later became internationally famous as the founder and speaker of “Bringing Christ to the Nations”—The International Lutheran Hour.<sup>13</sup> After he was called to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1922, Maier resigned his office as executive secretary of the Walther League, but continued as editor of the Walther League Messenger.<sup>14</sup>

As editor of the Messenger and speaker of the Lutheran Hour, Walter A. Maier not only was a staunch advocate of inerrant Scripture, but he also strongly opposed atheistic communism. During the World War II era of pro-Russian sentiment, the president of the League “objected to what he thought an overcritical attitude toward communism in certain Maier editorials.”<sup>15</sup> In a letter Maier wrote to Henry W. Buck, 25 May 1945, he said “I was strongly urged to eliminate” an article “written for the Messenger entitled ‘Communism Pressure Increases’ ...and was told that the ‘Walther League cannot afford such efforts.’”<sup>16</sup> Then after serving as editor of the Messenger for 25 years, Maier resigned in 1945, and the “circulation dropped substantially.”<sup>17</sup> The focus of new leadership in the Messenger and in the League itself eventually brought about a “drastic change” in the decade of the Sixties whereby the League “dismantled its entire organization.”<sup>18</sup>

As is well known and reported by many astute observers, the decade of the Sixties was a period of “Modern Liberalism and American Decline,” which was evident in “all human behavior and institutions, including popular entertainment, art, religion, education, scholarship, economic activity, science, technology, law and morality.”<sup>19</sup> One of the many-faceted causes of the decline was the moral collapse of the American family, including the youth.<sup>20</sup> And in comprehensive case studies of seventeen major church-related colleges, including three Lutheran colleges, it was found that over many years, there was a “slow but apparently irrevocable cleavage of colleges from churches” in which the “study of their faith became academically marginalized.”<sup>21</sup> In the publications of the Walther League after the departure of Walter A. Maier, there was “a gradual change in the theological, social and political views expressed in its publications.”<sup>22</sup> The League was caught up in the social revolution.

The culmination of fatal events occurred at the 1965 Delegate Convention of the LCMS in Detroit, Michigan, in which it was debated whether the Walther League should be permitted to have Pete Seeger, an admitted Communist, entertain LCMS youth at its national convention.<sup>23</sup>

Through resolutions adopted at that convention and at a Walther League gathering at Purdue in 1968, the League “underwent a drastic change...it was officially replaced by an entirely new concept in youth activity and ministry...[and] in 1977 the LCMS ceased to recognize the Walther League as an auxiliary organization of the Synod.”<sup>24</sup> The demise of the League was complete.

*The above article by Scott J. Meyer was background information for Rev. Jonathan Fisk’s presentation at the January 17, 2011, LCA Conference in Fort Wayne, IN.*

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Art. II. 6 on Christian education of children; Art. V. 9 on support of institutions for the training of pastors and teachers; and Art. II. 4 on exclusive use of doctrinally pure schoolbooks, per English translation of “Our Synod’s First Constitution,” Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly (hereinafter abbr. CHIQ) XVI, No. 1 (April 1943), pp.1-18.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; and John 21:5.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Luther’s Works, Amer. Ed. 46 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp.207-58.

<sup>4</sup> For roots of the Missouri Synod’s Christian day school system, see CHIQ 80, No. 1 (Spring 2007), pp. 40-68.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., the founding of such youth groups in 1888 by Rev. W. C. Kohn, Festschrift... St. Andreas-Gemeinde.... Chicago, Illinois (St. Louis: CPH, 1913), p.31.

<sup>6</sup> A typical purpose of the entertainment was to raise funds for a Christian need, e.g., to provide aid for needy students at Missouri Synod institutions. See article on the St. Andrew’s Young Men’s Group in Concordia, July 1894.

<sup>7</sup> The Concordia Cyclopaedia (St. Louis: CPH, 1927), p.806; CHIQ 62, No. 3 (Fall 1989), p. 106-08.

<sup>8</sup> Lutheran Cyclopaedia, Rev’d Ed (St. Louis: CPH 1975), p.836.

<sup>9</sup> The Concordia Cyclopaedia, supra note 7.

<sup>10</sup> Supra note 8.

<sup>11</sup> See photos of the Chicago headquarters, CHIQ 69, No. 3 (Fall 1996),

p.151; CHIQ 73, No.3 (Fall 2000), p.137-8.

<sup>12</sup> CHIQ 69, No. 3 (Fall 1996), p.151.

<sup>13</sup> Paul L. Maier, “A Man Spoke, A World Listened,” (New York McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc, 1963), p.37.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, at 56.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, at 245.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Shuta, Ph.D. Thesis, 1990, Drew University, “Militant Evangelist of Missouri: Walter Arthur Maier and His Theological Orientation,” p.322 and note 91.

<sup>17</sup> Supra note 13, at p. 245.

<sup>18</sup> See “Youth Work, LCMS” in Christian Cyclopaedia, (St. Louis: CPH, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Robert H. Bork, Slouching Towards Gomorrah (New York: Regan Books, Harper Collins, 1996), subtitle and p.2.

<sup>20</sup> William J. Bennett, The Broken Hearth (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> James Turnstead Burtchaell, The Dying of the Light, (Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmans Publishing Co., 1998), p. 837.

<sup>22</sup> “What is Troubling Lutherans,” Part III, in News & Views 24, no.7 (June 1961), Wheaton, Illinois, p.21 -24 and note 113, p. 51; Ibid., Part IV (May 1962), p.41-42 and 69.

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., Convention Proceedings 1965. 46th Regular Convention, LCMS, Detroit, Michigan.

<sup>24</sup> Supra note 18.

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## An Apologia for the Historic Liturgy

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Being a priestly people was fraught with difficulty. For due to the fall, it was entirely possible for the cultic to come unglued from the spiritual reality of the heart. God through His prophets everywhere decries this: “This people draws near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men.” (Isaiah 29:13) Despite the carefully given instructions and the warning that circumcision must be of the heart and not only in the flesh—that is, that inner and outer self should not come disconnected, yet the old covenant hobbled along only able to point toward the true liturgical life, and being itself but a most imperfect sign of it. It clearly taught that all is gift of the Lord, that He has claim over all things, that the wage sin pays is death, that the gift God would give is life, that thanksgiving is what we were made for.

Consider especially the way that Eden is described in Isaiah 51:3: “For the Lord comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.” So where Zion, there a taste of Eden restored, there joy (always the byproduct of the Lord’s presence - see Psalm 16:11), there thanksgiving and there the voice of song. Get that and you’ll understand then what the Lord is up to in establishing His Church in this fallen world (amid the waste places and the wilderness and the desert). He’s planting here on our fallen soil a colony of Eden, a piece of the age to come, where the thanksgiving is perpetual,

where the songs never end.

And so in the vision of the NT, as all that was imperfect in the Old Covenant and its worship is brought to completion and filled to the brim and then overflowing by Christ our Lord, we see that His whole life is liturgy, is praise, is thanksgiving, is communion with the Father, is offering of sacrifice that never comes unglued out from the inner, that is whole and complete and perfect. He is PRIEST. Dr. Luther once said of this: "Priest is a strong and lovely word. There is no lovelier or sweeter name on earth. It is much better to hear that Christ is called 'Priest' than Lord, or any other name. Priesthood is a spiritual power which means no other than that the priest steps forth, and takes all the iniquities of the people upon Himself as His very own. He intercedes with God for them and receives from Him the Word with which He can comfort and help the people. By being priest He makes God our Father and Himself our Lord... He offered Himself once for all, so that He is both Priest and Sacrifice, and the Altar is the Cross. No more precious sacrifice could He offer to God than that He gave Himself to be slain and consumed in the fire of love. That is the true sacrifice." (Exposition of Genesis 14, Day by Day, p.151).

Christ offers the perfect liturgy, receiving all as gift, offering all in thanksgiving to the Father. Because of the fall, we imagine vainly that life is something we have to cling to to possess; Christ flat out tells us that's a lie. That it is in the pouring out of life that one receives a life that never can be taken from you. The One who is consumed as an offering in the fire of divine love is given a life that can never ever end!

And this is the life that He has baptized us into—His own indestructible life. This is the life that He has poured down our throats in the Eucharist—His own indestructible life. And so it is and must be the shape of our lives in this world: sacrifices! For we have no other life than HIS, and His life is constantly a life for others, a life given away and so eternal.

So note the sacrificial, liturgical language of the New Testament writers! It's everywhere. Here are but a few:

- "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM who called you out of darkness, into His marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9
- "To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His own blood and MADE US A KINGDOM, PRIESTS TO SERVE HIS GOD AND FATHER, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Rev. 1:5,6
- "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." Romans 12:1
- "Because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:15,16
- "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31
- "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who for their sake died and was raised." 2 Cor. 5:14,15
- "For we are the temple of the living God, as God said...Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 6:16-7:1
- "Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Eph 5:2
- "Let there be no filthiness or foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving." Eph 5:4
- "Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus." Eph 5:20
- "Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering on the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all." Phil. 2:17
- "Put to death what is earthly in you." (that is, sacrifice it!) Col. 3:5
- "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." Col. 4:2
- "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances." 1 Thes. 5:16-17
- "I desire then that in every place men should pray, lifting up holy hands." 1 Tim 2:8
- "Everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer." 1 Tim 4:4,5
- We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat...Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." Hebrews 13:10-16

Oh, so many, many more. Does it begin to come clear? LIFE was meant to be liturgy and because we fell from that perpetual thanksgiving and joy of God's presence, our Lord came into the flesh, and He came to be Priest and Sacrifice, to atone for sin, and to open up the way for us to find LIFE again—and that life, as His life, will be liturgical: where all is a gift from a God who loves and where the praise and thanksgiving redound to Him for the gifts received and where we are privileged to suffer and offer our sufferings under His own as praise to the Father of lights. Liturgy is LIFE and Life is Liturgy. This the Church's historic liturgy witnesses to us with great faithfulness—for life is all about praise of God, listening to God's Word, confessing the faith to others, offering prayers of intercession and gifts of love—thus carrying the burdens of others—and receiving from His nail-scarred hands the gifts of His body, His blood, His forgiveness, His life, communion with Him and in Him with all the saints and angels. Do you see? It's not merely the Church service I've described; it's LIFE, life as God meant it to be and as He is restoring it to be in His Church.

And then there are the glimpses we get of the heavenly worship - Hebrews 12 and Revelation - and it all is very familiar. The throng of all peoples gathered with angels and archangels around the throne of the Lamb and acclaiming the blood that has purchased them for God, falling down before Him, giving glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Spirit forever and ever! The white robes, the golden censors, the prayers of the saints, the martyrs and angels. It's where all of life is headed: a world of endless doxology, communion, and joy in the Lamb.

# The Relevance of the Atonement

Rev. Andrew Preus

Sinful man is declared righteous before God through faith alone when he believes that his sins are forgiven and he is received into favor for Christ's sake (Augsburg Confession, Article IV). This is the chief topic of Christian doctrine (Apology IV, 2). Everything we say about the law, who God is, what prayer is, what the gospel is, what Baptism is, what the Lord Supper is, and what the Christian life is will be affected by the way we understand how sinners are forgiven and declared righteous before God. And at the center of this central article is the Atonement. The Atonement is what Jesus did to justify sinners before God. St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses against them." This is what our faith rests on, which is precisely why we may stand righteous before God through faith in his "word of reconciliation."

The Atonement is the answer to our inability to fulfill the law. St. Paul says in Romans 8:3, "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh." The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). But not only did he become flesh, being born of a woman. He also came in the likeness of sinful flesh, putting himself under the same law that rightly condemns us (Gal 4:4). The law cannot be fulfilled by our sinful flesh. But it was fulfilled by the assumed flesh of God, the Word of the Father who was made flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Jesus, the God-Man, fulfilled the law, not merely as the law giver. Instead, he put himself under it as a slave, being numbered among the transgressors (Is 53:12).

There are those who claim that it is legalistic to say that Jesus won salvation by fulfilling the law. In what I have read from Lutheran theologians who make such a claim, they are parroting the assertions of 20th Century Swedish bishop, Gustaf Aulén, who claimed that Luther's students departed from their teacher by speaking of the Atonement in terms of the law.<sup>1</sup> Defining the atonement as Jesus fulfilling the law on behalf of sinners, Aulén argued, makes our salvation dependent upon the law. But this is assuming that the law is simply a bunch of rules divorced from God's eternal will (Solid Declaration V, 17).

Those who follow this same line of thinking are often fine with the idea that Jesus' Atonement took away our sins. This is called expiation. And yet, they don't like the idea that Jesus' Atonement turned God's anger away and made him favorable toward sinners. This is called propitiation. The problem, they quip, isn't God; it's us. God doesn't need to fulfill the law in order to be merciful. Instead, Jesus' death is a way to free us from depending on the law.

Well, that all sounds very pious. But underneath it all is an empty shell. You see, if we have a problem, then God has a problem. Just because one has a problem doesn't mean that one is at fault. After all, what kind of a father is going to say after his son talks back to his mother, "Whatever! It's not my problem!" God's wrath against sin is the other side of his deep love.

There is a great mystery to all of this. By God's grace we can only begin to understand how God can be so angry with sinners and yet determine to save them from his own anger. We can only begin to understand how God could care about his law and yet strive to save

and show favor toward those who broke it. We don't solve this puzzle by concluding that God didn't have a problem with his law being broken. God made our problem his problem. Identifying himself as the Seed who would destroy the devil's power, he proclaims that his own heel would be crushed in the process (Gen 3:15). He joined himself to our flesh, not so he could enjoy his own status as a *Übermensch*, free from the cares of earthly cares. Rather, as surely as the Father has loved the Son from eternity, so was he determined to love us, his miserable creatures. The Son not only assumed our nature as his own, but he came in the likeness of our sin, under the law, in order to redeem us who were under the law so that we may receive the adoption as sons (Gal 4:4-5).

If we ignore our Lord's active fulfilling of the law in our place, then we are left with a neutered law amounting to no more than a bad feeling. We are left with preaching that ignores the elephants in the room with a bland, generic, and flimsy presentation of "We're all sinners!" Original sin is not shown to be the deep corruption it truly is. Instead, it remains more of a common imperfection. So why should I care if I'm not perfect? No one's perfect! Meanwhile, the open fornicator isn't rebuked, the drunkard is affirmed in his drunkenness, and men remain carnally secure to steal from their neighbors with a pompous show of right. The widow isn't defended, and the fatherless is exploited, as preachers are afraid to condemn unlawful divorces, abortion, and other perversions of our age. Instead they talk about "struggles," "angst," and being "broken," whatever these might mean to the individual.

However, the worst effect is when the conscience, weighed down by real sins against a real law that truly needs to be fulfilled, is left with only trite pleasantries. Such a burdened conscience must ultimately fend for itself, since, while the law is emasculated, so is the work of Christ. If Christ came simply to help us find our personal ground of being, then that's just another way of saying that Jesus came to help us cope with a bad conscience by ignoring reality. But Jesus' death is more than some passive struggle joined to our own psychological scuffle to God's goodness. He doesn't ignore the bad news of the law. No, his death is the living and active "It is finished" of his fulfillment of his own law. His resurrection proves it (Rom 4:25). And this means that the message of Christ's obedience is the very favor of God for us.

Those who deny that Jesus actively fulfilled the law of God in the place of all sinners also make the argument that Jesus could not possibly have fulfilled all of the rules for all kinds of stations in life.<sup>2</sup> After all, Jesus wasn't married, and there were many vocations in life he didn't hold. Jesus, they say, could only fulfill his own personal vocation, which was to carry out God's mission to reveal his kingdom. They go so far as saying that Jesus was simply obligated as a man to fulfill the law for himself and that this could not be on behalf of all sinners.

However, those who make these arguments show themselves to misunderstand what the law is. It isn't just a line-upon-line list of arbitrary rules for living (Is 28:10-13). The law requires us to love God above all things with our entire being. It requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Now, this includes various duties in this life, depending on one's particular station. Are you a husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, worker, or master? These are all the situations in which God would have us love our neighbor. We call this the second table of the law. And yet, without the first table of the law (Love God above all things!), these situations are no

more than that – situations. They remain random moral acts with no vision or purpose.

But Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, fulfilled his earthly duties with a clear vision and purpose toward his Father. He came to do the will of his Father, entrusting himself to his good judgment (1st Commandment), confessing his name and Word (2nd Commandment), and teaching what alone gives sinners spiritual rest (3rd Commandment). It was in fulfilling this first table of the law that Jesus also honored his parents and other authorities (4th Commandment) while saving and healing his neighbor (5th Commandment), blessing and defending the institution of marriage (6th Commandment), being generous with what he had (7th Commandment), defending the defenseless and speaking the truth (8th Commandment), becoming poor with nowhere to lay his head in order to bless even those who cursed him (9th Commandment), and urging people to their duties with a good conscience (10th Commandment). Jesus didn't need to meet the criteria as a butcher, a baker, or a candlestick maker to fulfill all the rules for living. He is the eternal Son of the Father who came to do his eternal will.

It isn't legalism to insist that the law must be fulfilled. It is the comforting gospel that the law has in fact been fulfilled for us. As Jesus says, "I did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. (Matt 5:17)" Of course, the law can't give life. It was never meant to (Gal 3:21). And yet, this is not because there are too many rules and regulations to follow. It is, rather, on account of our own sinful flesh, which is hostile to God. It all goes back to the 1st Commandment.

So when the law is rightly accusing you in your failure to honor those in authority (4th Commandment), to help your neighbor in his body and possessions (5th and 7th), to love your spouse (6th), to speak well of your neighbor (8th), and to be content with what God has given you (9th and 10th), this is all a witness that your flesh does not have God as its only treasure (1st), confession (2nd), and rest (3rd). They aren't merely rules. They are God's witness against you (Deut 31:26). But Jesus, who is begotten of the Father with perfect and eternal love, fulfilled this law for you. Love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:10). This love of Christ – this obedient fulfilling of the law – is the very basis of the righteousness your faith receives. You can therefore be confident in all your duties and learn from the law despite its accusations against you. It has been fulfilled in Christ. It must finally say amen to the Atonement and the righteousness your faith receives by God's grace.

The teaching that Jesus fulfilled what we were obligated to fulfill, that he bore our sins and satisfied God's wrath against us, is itself the good news. It is the gospel. Many Lutherans who imagine that they are rather smart claim that this is simply one theory of the Atonement while another theory is that Jesus defeated the enemies of sin, death, and the devil. But it is either stupid, dishonest, or both to pit these two so called "theories" against one another. The truth of the gospel is that Jesus has silenced the devil's accusations precisely by fulfilling the very law of God. This is all summed up in what the prophet records Jesus saying: "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan." He rebukes Satan by appealing to the Lord, submitting to the Father, obeying his law, and thereby winning reconciliation for all sinners (Zech 3:1-5; cf. Jude 9).

You may therefore be certain of God's favor for you. You can have confidence that sin, death, and the devil cannot claim you. Because Jesus is the propitiation (Atonement) for your sins! And

not just for your sins, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2)! This full and complete righteousness fills heaven and earth, and it is revealed for you in the gospel, which is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes (Rom 1:16-17).

1 Such a caricature of Lutheran teaching of the atonement espoused by Aulén has at times been accepted even by those who otherwise faithfully teach the vicarious satisfaction. As an example, see:

Robert Kolb, "Not Without the Satisfaction of God's Righteousness," *The Atonement and Generation Gap between Luther and His Students*, Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte: Sonderband: Die Reformation in Deutschland und Europa, Interpretation und Debatten, ed. Hans R. Guggisberg and Gottfried G. Krodel (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1993), pp. 136-56.

On page 153, Kolb mentions Gustaf Aulén's suggestion that this divergence from Luther is found in Melancthon's scheme, which gave the law the final say by insisting that the law must be fulfilled in Christ's act of salvation. He further presents Aulén's argument that for Melancthon the fulfillment of the law is the principle way to salvation, while for Luther the righteousness of Christ is simply a fulfillment of the First Commandment, which demands that we do not rely on our own merits. In part 2 of this article, I will address how Christ fulfilled both tables of the law. Dr. Kolb's insights about the First Commandment helped me dig into this, and for that I am grateful. However, the claim that later Lutherans departed from Luther on this point is not fair. See, for example, Luther's sermon from Trinity 18, A Beautiful Sermon on Law and Gospel from 1537. While the later Lutherans were more systematic than Luther tended to be (a clear exception being Luther's Disputation on Justification), Aulén's assertion amounts to nothing more than a neo-orthodox talking point.

2 16th Century Lutheran theologian, Georg Karg (1512-1576), took this position for a while until he retracted it. The Reformed theologian, Johannes Piscator (1546-1625), pushed this position more stubbornly. Johann Gottlieb Töllner (1724-1774), a rationalist Lutheran theologian, reasserted a denial of Christ's active obedience being substitutionary.

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January 21–23, 2026

### Lenten Preaching Workshop

Pastors, get a head start on Lenten preparation and join us for the annual Lenten Preaching Workshop on Monday, January 19. This year's workshop, led by Dr. Todd Peperkorn, will focus on the hymn "O Love, How Deep" (LSB 544).

Online registration for the Symposia Series or the Lenten Preaching Workshop opens November 1 at [ctsfw.edu/events](https://ctsfw.edu/events).



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# LUTHERAN CONCERNS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## Monday, January 19, 2026

**“Do not be conformed to this world.” Romans 12:2 (NKJV)**

The Conference will be held on Monday, January 19, 2026, on the Concordia Theological Seminary campus at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

**Dine with the Speakers and the LCA Board of Directors!** On Sunday evening, January 18 at 5:30 pm, Luther Hall will be reserved for a private dinner for LCA Conference attendees. Be sure to reserve your place right away on the form below. LCA Dinners afford attendees the opportunity to relax and enjoy fellowship with other participants at the Conference. The Sunday night dinner will consist of Beef Tenderloin and Chicken Marsala served buffet style with salad, vegetable, potato, dessert, and beverage. A cafeteria lunch is included for full-day attendees. Half-day attendees may attend the cafeteria lunch by remitting \$10, as noted on the registration form below.

Forget about the cold winter and enjoy this warm and cheerful occasion with fellow Christians.

<b>CONFERENCE SCHEDULE</b>	<b>Bldg: Loehe Hall</b>	<b>Room: Loehe 1</b>
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**MORNING SESSION:**

06:45 am: Registration Opens  
 07:30 am – 07:40 am: **Opening Devotion DP Rick Stuckwisch and Greetings from the Indiana District**

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07:40 am: **Welcome from the LCA** (Mr. Mark Franke)

---

07:50 am – 08:35 am: **Pastoral Formation**  
 Dr. Jon Bruss

08:35 am – 08:50 am: Questions and Answers

---

08:50 am – 09:35 am: **Review of Church and Racism**  
 Dr. E. Christian Kopf

09:35 am – 09:50 am: Questions and Answers

---

09:50 am – 11:15 am: **Break for Chapel Service/Coffee with CTSFW Students & Faculty**

---

11:15 am – 12:00 pm: **International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism and Human Rights**  
 Tim Goeglein

12:00 pm – 12:15 pm: Questions and Answers

---

12:15 pm – 01:30 pm: **\*\*\* LUNCH \*\*\***

**AFTERNOON SESSION:**

01:30 pm – 02:15 pm: **The Calling of Lutheran Higher Education and the Future of Concordia University, Nebraska**

02:15 pm – 02:30 pm: Questions and Answers

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02:30 pm – 03:15 pm: **Christianity in a Metamodern Age**  
 Benjamin Wessel

03:15 pm – 03:30 pm: Questions and Answers

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03:30 pm – 03:45 pm: **\*\*\* BREAK\*\*\***

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03:45 pm – 04:25 pm: **Panel Discussion** (All Speakers)

---

04:25 pm – 04:30 pm: **Closing Remarks**

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04:45 pm – 5:15 pm: **Annual LCA Meeting** – for LCA Members  
 05:15 pm – 6:00 pm: **LCA Board Meeting**

---

06:00 pm: **Dinner**  
 Pay at the line in the Dining Hall

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### 2026 LCA Conference Registration Form

Concordia Theological Seminary – Fort Wayne, Indiana

Name _____	Annual LCA Membership Fee (\$60) enclosed _____
Address _____	Paid LCA Member Conference registration fee (\$110) encl. _____
Phone _____	Paid LCA Member half-day registration fee (\$44) encl. _____
Email _____	Non-Member Conference registration fee (\$120) encl. _____
	Non-Member half-day registration fee (\$49) encl. _____
	Seminary Students & Personnel registration fees waived _____
	Cafeteria lunch for half-day attendees if desired (\$10) encl. _____
	Dinner, Sunday, January 18, 5:30 pm (\$40) encl. _____
	<b>Total Enclosed:</b> _____

**Check box for Dinner on Sunday, January 19.**

Buffet (\$40): beef tenderloin and chicken marsala  
 (price includes tax)

*Even if you pay at the door, please send in your registration form.*  
 Please indicate any dietary restrictions. If your plans change, email [johnflang1000@gmail.com](mailto:johnflang1000@gmail.com) as soon as possible.

Make check payable to the Lutheran Concerns Association. Please detach this registration form and mail to The Lutheran Concerns Association, 609 W. College Avenue, Woodville, Ohio 43469

Lutheran Concerns Association  
609 West College Avenue  
Woodville, Ohio 43469-1335



**Lutheran Concerns Association**  
**December 2025**

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## *In This Issue:*

Published regularly to support issues and causes in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod which build faithfulness to the true Confessional Lutheranism and to be a clear voice of Christian concern against actions and causes which conflict with faithfulness to the One True Faith. LCA consents to readers reproducing articles provided the entire article, plus footnotes, is included in the reproduction and full attribution given.

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Faithful Lutherans who are members of LCMS congregations are invited to submit articles for consideration. Inquiries are welcome. Manuscripts will be edited. Views and judgments expressed in articles are the author's own and do not necessarily represent those of LCA. Please email articles to Rev. Andrew Preus    [ajpreus@gmail.com](mailto:ajpreus@gmail.com)    (563)329.0943  
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