



Concordia University Texas: Convention Decides, CTX Rejects, and LCMS BOD Acts

The Concordia University Texas (CTX) board of regents (BOR), in an astonishing and inexplicable display of hubris, decided on November 8, 2022 that it was 'divorcing' the LCMS after almost 100 years as an agency of the LCMS. The CTX BOR made this decision unilaterally, violating Synod's Constitution and Bylaws and Texas corporate law, and displaying contempt for the generations of lay persons and church workers who faithfully built, supported and sustained the institution. The voting delegates at the recent Synodical Convention on August 1, 2023 decided overwhelmingly in Resolution 7-03 that the CTX BOD and administrators must be held accountable and repent. The CTX BOR ignored the Convention's decision. On September 1, 2023, the LCMS BOD sued CTX, its president Donald Christian, its BOD chairman Christopher Bannwolf, and the unknown regents who voted for separating from the LCMS in federal court in Austin.

Now what?

I. Introduction

1.1 The governance changes that the CTX BOR finalized on November 8, 2022 were in response to 2019 Resolution 7-03 ("To Direct A Collaborative Process to Propose a New Governance Plan") passed by the 2019 Tampa Convention.¹ That resolution provided that Synod and Concordia University System (CUS) officials would propose a new governance plan for consideration by the 2022 National Convention that would incorporate the objectives of 2013 Res. 5-01A and 2016 Res 7-01B. These objectives included the following:

- strengthen all CUS institutions' connection to the Synod;
- strengthen the confessional Lutheran identity of boards of all CUS institutions;
- review the composition, size, and selection of boards of regents;
- review the process for selecting presidents of institutions;
- review the overall governance of CUS and the boards of regents of the CUS institutions;
- review the financial models for the institutions;²

1.2 It is clear that the CTX BOR and top administrators soon decided that they disagreed with the objectives of the

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"Good Sermon, Pastor!"

The Divine Service ends. The pastor takes his place at the entrance to the nave. The handshake line begins and then it happens! Numerous members shake the pastor's hand and say, "Good sermon, pastor." Gracious and humble, the pastor responds, "Thank you. I'm glad the Lord blessed you through it." On the inside the pastor wonders, "What made that a good sermon?"

On the one hand, the answer to that question is subjective. The sermon was good because it struck a chord with the hearer. The Gospel brought comfort to a troubled soul. A troubling question was answered. All of this makes for a good sermon.

On the other hand, the answer to that question is objective. In his *Pastoral Theology*, John Fritz lists "The Chief Characteristics of a Good Sermon." Fritz writes:

The chief characteristics of a good sermon are: 1. That it contain only the Word of God in all its truth and purity, Jer. 23:28; Mark 16:15; Acts 26:22; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:1, 2; 2. That it rightly apply the Word of God, 2 Tim. 2:16, 17; Rom. 15:4; 3. That it proclaim all the counsel of God for the sinner's salvation, Acts 20:26, 27; 4. That it supply the special needs of the hearers Ezek. 3:17-21; Luke 12:42; 1 Cor. 3:1, 2; Heb. 5:11-6:2; 5. That it give due regard to the present conditions and circumstances (be *zeitgemäss*), Mat. 16:3; Acts 17:22 ff.; 6. That the subject matter be well presented (good sermon sketch; compare public addresses of Christ and the Apostles); 7. That the sermon be not too long; 8. That the sermon be well delivered. (Fritz, 78).

This essay is too brief to comment on each of the eight characteristics. Given this, this essay will focus on the first characteristic: That the sermon contain only the Word of God in all its truth and purity.

Fritz supports this characteristic with the following passages:

- Jer. 23:28: "Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream,

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but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD.”

- Mark 16:15: “And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.’”
- Acts 26:22 (and I will add verse 23): 22 “To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: 23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”
- 1 Tim. 4:16: “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.”
- 2 Tim. 2:15: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”
- 2 Tim. 4:1, 2: 1 “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

From these passages, we learn that a good sermon is biblical, for the biblical text is the focus of the sermon. As the preacher studies the biblical text he should determine what the aim of the text is. That is, what is biblical text asking the hearer to believe or do. This is the aim of the text and it will be the aim of the sermon.

A good sermon has a singular aim. This singular aim, which is also the aim of the biblical text, controls the content of the sermon. Material that relates to the aim stays. Material that detracts from the aim is excluded, for extraneous material inhibits the hearers from realizing the aim.

The aim should be a simple statement. It should not include qualifiers, conditions, conclusions, and the like. When the preacher can state the aim simply, he can probably get the hearers to understand what the biblical text wants them to believe or do.

The aim is not a secret. The preacher should state what it is so that the hearers know what is. When the sermon is concluded, the hearers should be able to state the singular aim of the biblical text and the sermon, for they are one.

A sermon that contains only the Word of God in all its truth and purity will present both Law and Gospel to the hearer, for the Word of God is divided into these two doctrines. C.F.W. Walther states this plainly in his *Proper Distinction of Law and Gospel*:

Thesis I

The doctrinal contents of the Old and the New Testament, are made up of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other, viz., the Law and the Gospel.

Thesis II

Only he is an orthodox teacher who not only presents all the articles of faith in accordance with Scripture, but also rightly distinguishes from each other the Law and the Gospel.

Concerning the Law, Solid Declaration Article VI from the Formula of Concord informs us that: “The Law of God is used (1) to maintain external discipline and respectability against dissolute, disobedient people and (2) to bring such people to a recognition of their sins. (3) It is also used when those who have been born anew through God’s Spirit, converted to the Lord, and had the veil of Moses removed from them live and walk in the Law.”

The biblical text will determine which use of the Law the preacher is to present. That said, the preacher must remember that the Law always accuses. Given this, when the preacher preaches the Law, God is always saying, “You are cutting yourself off from Me, you are experimenting with death; see its signs! You need help!”

The biblical text will determine the specific application of the Law. In that regard, the preacher will focus on the sins, failures, and shortcomings that the biblical text and its context focus upon. The preaching of the Law is not to be generic and general. Nor is the preacher to condemn symptoms and strawmen with the Law. In a good sermon, the preacher’s proclamation of the Law should address the specific sins of his hearers.

The fact that we human beings need to hear this indictment from God is made evident when one considers that our satisfaction with material things, the preoccupation with physical life, worry, and a host of other maladies are symptoms of our underlying sin problem. Another reason why we need the indictment of the Law is that we are saints and sinners. As such we need the Law to curb our sinful desires, show us our sins, and lead us in the way to live. A good sermon will do this.

Concerning the Gospel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be preached, for if preaching is to be preaching, it must reenact and participate in the defeat and victory of Jesus. To this end, a good sermon will, in the language of the selected text,¹ preach Christ crucified, dead, buried, and risen again for us and our salvation. This message has the power to change lives, for it brings with it God’s power to change the lives of those who hear it.

The preaching of Christ crucified is not optional. As Jesus himself instructs: “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Lk 24:46-47).” A good sermon tells this story of Jesus, namely that he died for our sins and rose again from the dead as the Scriptures foretold. In so doing, he has rescued and redeemed us from sin, death, and the devil. This content is presented to people in every sermon, so that they might be moved toward faith and godly living.

A good sermon contains only the Word of God in all its truth and purity. It does so by proclaiming both Law and Gospel in the language of the text and under the solitary aim of the

text.

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¹An excellent resource for learning how to speak both Law and Gospel in the language of the text is Jacob A. O. Preus, *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000). In this work Preus develops some twenty-three scriptural Gospel metaphors and makes a convincing case that preachers should preach sermons using the metaphor that the preaching text provides.

Concordia University, Texas:

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2019 Resolution 7-03. They would pursue a new governance model in which the CTX BOR would become the sole governing body of CTX. This decision of the CTX BOR culminated in its actions of November 8, 2022. This renegade course of action is clearly documented by CTX on its current website under the heading of "Lutheran Identity."³ CTX's current website lists the "Timeline of Board Decision" that describes the CTX BOR actions beginning in the "Summer to Fall 2020" when it began to review the proposed bylaws.

1.3 By April 2021, the CTX BOR had decided to consider alternatives to its existing governance structure. The CTX BOR accelerated its decision to become self-governing throughout 2021. By December 2021, CTX decided to contact the LCMS to become the sole governing body of CTX. By April 2022, the CTX BOR decided to use LCMS Bylaw 3.6.6.4(i)⁴ as a "starting point." The CTX BOR, LCMS BOD, and CUS BOD exchanged correspondence over the next six months. The CTX BOR was not satisfied with the response it received. On November 8, 2022, the CTX BOR unilaterally decided to amend its bylaws and file an amendment of its certificate of formation with the Texas Secretary of State.⁵ The key changes in this amendment involved Article II Purpose and Article V Board. The key revisions of Article II Purpose state that "Concordia University Texas . . . is dedicated to the support and maintenance of an educational institution of higher learning that is aligned with, but not subject to the authority of or governance by, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod." The key revisions of Article V Board state that "The Management of the affairs of the corporation is vested in its Board of Regents in accordance with the Bylaws. All determinations regarding the university's alignment with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, including but not limited to, the university's subscription and adherence to the Confession of the LCMS as currently outlined in Article II of the LCMS Constitution, and qualifications for board members and the presidency, will be subject to and determined by the sole and exclusive discretion of the Board of Regents."

II. AFTERMATH OF NOVEMBER 8, 2022 DECISION

2.1 Concurrent with the November 8, 2022, decision of the CTX BOR, Dr. Christian released an explanatory memorandum.⁶ This memorandum is currently accessible. The subject of

the memorandum was "An Important Announcement Regarding the Board of Regents."

Dr. Christian does not, and cannot, make any claim that the CTX BOR action complied with the Constitution and Bylaws of the LCMS. He admits that this decision was in incubation "[F]or over a year . . . to guard and guide the future of the University." He gives no specific, tangible explanation of any kind as to why the historic governance needed to be changed. He cites no facts as to any wrong that the LCMS BOD and/or CUS BOD committed against CTX that had hindered CTX from becoming a "premier institution of higher education." To the contrary, Dr. Christian states: "As you know, Concordia University Texas is in a strong position, with healthy enrollment, exciting academic programs, strong finances, robust community partnership, and meaningful relationships."

2.2 "ALIGNMENT" . . . REALLY?

a. Dr. Christian then proceeds to claim that "we are not leaving the LCMS. We are committing to our alignment with the LCMS." At best, these two statements are misrepresentations. At worst, they are blatantly deceptive. Dr. Christian nowhere defines "alignment." It is a word devoid of legal, theological, or organizational meaning or significance as to any supposed future relationship with the LCMS. The statements that Dr. Christian filed under penalty of perjury in the Certificate of Amendment unequivocally state that CTX's alignment with the LCMS is "subject to and determined by the sole and exclusive discretion of the Board of Regents." This directly contradicts Christian's statement in this November 8, 2022 memorandum as well as CTX's website.

b. The implications of this governance change are troubling because they affect current students of CTX who are in the church work programs. Those students who enrolled in the CTX believing that they would be eligible to receive calls from LCMS congregations as DCE's or Christian day school teachers will no longer be eligible for direct calls. Instead, they will have to complete the colloquium process.

c. There is no indication that the claim by CTX that it is aligned with the LCMS involves efforts by CTX to recruit students for its school of ministry programs. Incredibly, CTX did not have a display booth at the Milwaukee Convention, as did the other universities and our two seminaries. Why not? Why would CTX not want to promote its school of ministry programs at the convention?

2.3 It is clear that the CTX BOR never seriously attempted to comply with Synod bylaws. The CTX BOR had the opportunity to submit an overture to the 2023 convention to get the convention's approval if the Synod's BOD and CUS BOD were non-responsive to CTX BOR's 2021 and 2022 overtures, as claimed. The CTX BOR did not do so.

III. CONVENTION SOUNDLY REBUKES CTX

3.1 CTX's claim that it was no longer subject to LCMS governance was, arguably, the most intensely debated issue at the Milwaukee Convention. The Convention debated Resolution 7-03, To Call Concordia University Texas Leadership to Repentance on Tuesday, August 1.⁷ A Substitute Resolution

7-03, To Work Toward Resolution with Concordia University Texas was proposed.⁸ In general, this substitute resolution focuses on reconciliation efforts that would include an "independent agency from outside of our church body to facilitate this process." Synod Secretary John Sias indicated the Commission on Constitutional Matters had reviewed the substitute resolution and determined it to be inconsistent with Synod's constitution and bylaws.

3.2 The comments of several delegates during the debate were trenchant. Steven Hernandez, a Texas lay voting delegate, stated that 'CTX doesn't belong to Don Christian or the CTX BOD. The University belongs to Synod. It ought to be returned.'⁹ Dr. Bernard Bull, elected two years ago as president of Concordia University Nebraska, gave what he called his new president perspective as to the CTX issue. He indicated that Synod had established a meeting "table" in which the university presidents could meet to discuss matters related to the 2019 Resolution 7-03 collaborate process. Dr. Bull described that this had been a highly beneficial process. However, Dr. Christian did not show up for a meeting but instead asked for a meeting directly with Synod. Dr. Bull described this as a "breach of trust."

3.3 Several delegates then asked that Dr. Christian be allowed to speak. A majority of 70.55% of the delegates voted to allow Dr. Christian to speak. Dr. Christian spoke for two minutes. He cited no specific, material facts that motivated the CTX BOR to decide to become the sole governing body of CTX.

3.4 The Convention voted to approve Resolution 7-03 by a 71.67% majority, with 28.33% voting against. A majority of this magnitude is an indication that delegates with differing theological and geographic perspective were untied in the belief that the CTX BOR and administration had committed a grievous wrong by their attempt to become self-governing and accountable to no one but themselves. An interesting comparison can be made of the magnitude of this percentage with the results of the election for Synod president. Matthew Harrison was reelected with a majority of 52.32% of the votes cast.¹⁰

3.5 The Convention also elected four new regents to the CTX BOR.

3.6 In the several weeks immediately following, CTX made it immediately clear that it would not seat the four regents elected, nor would it comply with Resolution 7-03. On August 30, 2023, Dr. Christian sent out a memorandum to CTX stakeholders entitled "Concordia University Texas Seeks Next Steps With LCMS."¹¹ This memorandum indicates that the CTX BOR had met on August 24 expressing a desire for a joint meeting with the LCMS BOD to "clarify CTX's governance structure, creating a joint ministry, vision, and fostering spiritual reconciliation." It is incomprehensible the CTX BOR could be so deluded as to think that the LCMS BOD would pursue any course of action that did not implement the clear directive of Resolution 7-03.

IV. LCMS SUES

4.1 On September 1, 2023, the LCMS filed suit against Don-

ald Christian, Christopher Bannwolf, chairman of the CTX BOR, and Concordia University Texas, Inc.¹² In addition, the LCMS sued "John Does 1-12". These are unknown individuals who served as regents on the CTX BOR and voted to amend the CTX Charter, Bylaws, and policy manual. The significant legal effect of this is that all of the regents who voted in favor of the governance change of November 8, 2022 will almost certainly be added as individual defendants in the case.

4.2 The LCMS sued the defendants for legal causes of action that include declaratory judgment, breach of contract, promissory estoppel, breach of fiduciary duty, and violation of the Texas Business Organizations Code. The LCMS is asking for monetary damages against all defendants of \$111,147,678. This amount of \$111,147,678 is the net assets amount of CTX appearing on the Financial Statements and Federal Awards Audit as of June 30, 2022 performed by Baker, Tilly US, LLP. This amount essentially reflects the net value of the land, buildings, and equipment of CTX.

4.3 What is the current procedural status of the lawsuit?

The original deadline for the defendant to file responsive pleadings and motions was November 6, 2023. However, the Synod and defendants agreed to schedule a mediation as an alternative to pursuing litigation. This mediation will take place in the coming weeks. The federal judge is permitting the mediation and has ordered that the defendants will have until January 22, 2024 to answer.

4.4 In general, mediation in Texas and in many other states is the process of alternative dispute resolution in which a neutral third party meets with the parties with the objective of guiding the parties to reach a resolution of their dispute. This is a favorable development in this case.

4.5 The opinion of this writer is that the legal case of Synod is strong, and Synod is likely to prevail. The CTX BOR and Dr. Christian would be well advised to reach a settlement in which they as defendants agreed to restore CTX to its previous governance in accordance with Synod's bylaws and constitution.

4.6 Resolution 7-03 is clear, compelling, and unequivocal as to what the 2023 voting delegates expect President Harrison, the LCMS BOD, CUS BOD, and appropriate district presidents to do. The obligation of these designated officials to act is separate from the lawsuit pending in federal court. It requires ecclesiastical supervision and discipline of the CTX president, any member of the CTX BOR who is a rostered church worker who voted for the illegal actions of November 8, 2022, and CTX administrators who advocated for and supported the change of governance.

CONCLUSION

5.1 President Harrison and the LCMS BOD are obligated to implement Resolution 7-03 in its entirety in accordance with the LCMS Constitution and bylaws. This means that the mediation should result in the return of CTX to the Synodical governance.

5.2 The CTX BOR and administrators who supported the actions of November 8, 2022 must agree to retract, reverse, and

rescind their illegal actions and return CTX to Synod, its rightful owner.

The author **James Runzheimer** is a practicing attorney and CPA in Arlington, Texas. He was a lay voting delegate to the 2023 Convention. He is the lay director at large for the Texas District of the LCMS. The opinions expressed in this paper are solely his.

¹ *Convention Proceedings*, 2019, pages 171-172.

² *Convention Proceedings*, 2019, page 172.

³ <https://www.concordia.edu/about/lutheran-identify.html>, accessed on Nov. 29, 2023.

⁴ *Bylaw 3.6.6.4* reads in relevant part as follows:

3.6.6.4 In keeping with the objectives and the Constitution, By-laws, and resolutions of the Synod, the Board of Directors of Concordia University System shall

...

(i) have authority, after receiving the consent of the Board of Directors of the Synod by its two-thirds vote and also the consent of one of: the appropriate board of regents by its two-thirds vote, the Council of Presidents by its two-thirds vote or the Concordia University System Board of Directors by its two-thirds vote, to consolidate, relocate, separate, or divest a college or university.

⁵ *Certificate of Amendment filed by Concordia University Texas*; November 8, 2022.

⁶ <https://www.concordia.edu/about/lutheran-identify.html>, accessed on Nov. 29, 2023.

⁷ Resolution 7-03, "To Call Concordia University Texas Leadership to Repentance," *Today's Business First Edition*, 68th Regular Convention, pages 139-141.

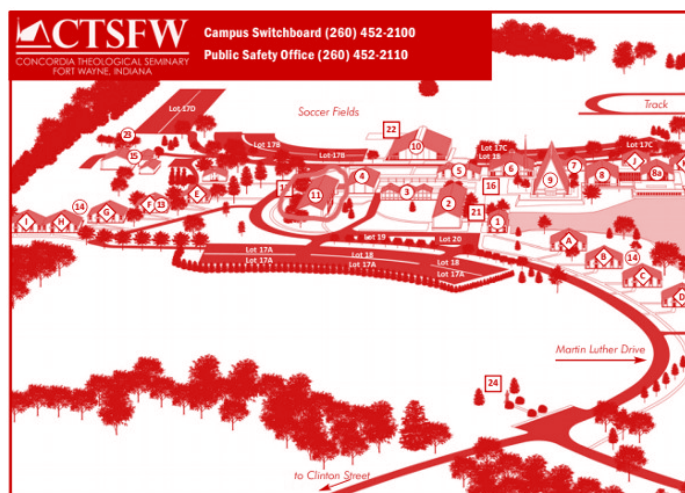
⁸ LC-MS 68th Regular Convention, *Today's Business*, Monday, July 31, Issue 3, pages 395-396.

⁹ See the lcms.org website, Convention tab, for livestream Video & Archives, Tuesday, August 1, morning session.

¹⁰ *2023 Convention Proceedings*, 68th Regular Convention, page 30.

¹¹ Posted under "Lutheran Identify" tab on www.concordia.edu.

¹² *Plaintiff's Original Complaint; The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, a Missouri Nonprofit Corporation, Plaintiff, v. Donald Christian, Christopher Bannwolf, Concordia University, Texas, Inc., & John Does 1-12, U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas, Austin Division; Case 1:23-cv-01042-RP.*



The 2024 LCA Conference will be held in the Loehe Hall in room Loehe 1 on the CTSFW campus. Loehe Hall is circled on the map (Building 11). Parking is across the street.

The Way Forward, Fellowship, Fidelity, Fearlessness

This is the second of three parts of a presentation given by the Rev. Christopher S. Esget at the LCA conference on January 16, 2023

Sacred Marriage

In Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*, the young Franciscan monk Adso has fallen in love with a peasant girl. "This poses certain problems for monks," William of Baskerville observes. Searching the library for a cure for love, Adso finds the work of Avicenna, who proposes this remedy for love: "Uniting the two lovers in matrimony, which would cure the illness."

Marriage has fallen on hard times – and not just recently. The foundation of the world culminated in God's institution of holy marriage, between the first man and the first woman. And the collapse of the world revealed itself in the curse that came upon marriage, where the woman's desire, Gen. 3:16 says, "shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." Marriage, founded in the love of self-giving, becomes corrupted by the love of coercion and control.

This ultimately cannot be remedied by better communication techniques, therapy, or the art of compromise, although those all have their place. This past Sunday's gospel, the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), points ahead to the solution: Jesus visits the wedding, rescues the embarrassed bridegroom, all in anticipation of becoming Himself the heavenly bridegroom. The Bible ends with a wedding (Rev. 19, 21, 22) where Christ the Bridegroom is a Lamb (Rev. 19:9), who has been slain yet lives (Rev. 5:6). He is the healing of every marriage; and not each one alone, but the union of the world with her God.

Love is not romanticism, but self-giving. The self-donation of God on the cross is the foundation of all love.

In short, the institution of marriage is sacred both because it is God's institution and because it is an image of God's own love for the other (Gr. *hetero*). Thus, just as we are called to speak for the voiceless children destroyed in their mother's wombs, so we are called to speak for the preservation of the human race and the icon of the relationship between Christ and the church by speaking winsomely and definitively about natural marriage. This will engender hatred and worse.

"The most influential of Americans, particularly those in law and the media, have been coming increasingly to regard opposition to same-sex marriage as irrational at best and bigoted at worst."⁷ How will we respond? What flag will we fly?

Under suspicion of being German sympathizers, many of our congregations during the first world war began displaying American flags in their sanctuaries to prove their patriotism. Before the second world war, the National Socialists in Germany, acting through their stooges the "German Christians," had churches displaying the swastika to show their allegiance to the

new regime. An abomination of desolation to be sure.

Today's regime demands the display of another blasphemous image: the rainbow, coopted from God's own sign of His covenant with Noah's progeny to the obliteration of the covenant of sacred marriage. Every June most of America's corporations incorporate the rainbow into their logo to demonstrate their fealty to the sexual revolution. Not content to have a month, the LGBTQ lobby wants every day of the year, and every institution to bow the knee. Many churches are already, quite literally, flying the flag. Several churches in my neighborhood not only fly the pride flag—the newest one with all the extra colors and the funky triangle—but they festoon themselves with rainbow colors encircling the building. The goal is to demonstrate to the world that they have capitulated to the revolution. Those who do not hoist the flag are to be regarded as no different than Westboro Baptist.

In this context, what could be more radical than to confess that a man is a man and cannot be a woman? What could be more controversial than to declare marriage is between one man and one woman for life?

What will that entail? It entails far more than speaking the truth that homosexuality and transgenderism are rebellion against natural law and its Creator. It means that the way forward for us is the narrow way of Jesus, who affirmed that adultery of the male-female variety is also damnable. Our toleration of divorce, even among the clergy, is a scandal.

Promoting marriage and strengthening marriages is, after parochial schools, perhaps the most important effort we can undertake outside the Divine Service. It's also a good idea statistically. In the AEI study I mentioned earlier, married people go to church more:

Married adults were more likely than adults who have never married to attend religious services both pre-pandemic and in spring 2022. Both groups also saw an increase in the percentage reporting they never attended services in spring 2022. However, adults who have never married saw a much larger increase in the percentage never attending than married adults did. Those who have never married saw a 14 percentage point increase, compared to a 6 percentage point increase for married adults.

At the core of sacred marriage is the divinely wrought distinction between male and female.

Man and Woman

As the transgender ideology seeks to overwhelm our culture, public education system, and language, the message we are inundated with is that our created selves are malleable, subjected to transformation by our own will. Transgenderism is directly contrary to both natural law and the Christian Faith.

In her essay "Hierarchy, Inequality, and the Mystery of Male and Female," Mary Ford writes,

Within the secular worldview, because being male or female has no meaning and no importance for who I truly am, and because in this view being male or female does not reflect

anything about spiritual realities ... this means that being male or female can't reveal anything important about any aspect of reality, and cannot make any transcendent reality present....

[From this,] it's a very small step to say that since the body is an ultimately unimportant, machine-like container for "the real me," with no meaning transcending its own physical existence, why should it matter what I do with it? Why should fornication or adultery be a problem? Or, since my male or female body is nothing to do with the "real me," why shouldn't I change my body through technology to be whatever I want it to be?⁷

By contrast, the Christian worldview confesses that God made us male and female. The incarnation of the Word, where God Himself takes on a human body, is an additional proclamation that the human body is very good. The fallen human body is brought to baptism, cleansed of its guilt, and promised the resurrection. Creation matters. Therefore you matter, in your specific body, to God. Its illnesses and pains will be healed. The corruption of your nature will likewise be healed. This healing is taking place now in the sacramental activity of Christ through His Church.

With every demand of the culture to accept the moral revolution, make the sign of the cross on your body and confess, "I will not comply with this demonic lie. I am a human being. My God took on my flesh. What I do in the body matters – to God, me, and my neighbor. The Word of God is true. I will not comply with the demonic lie that says otherwise."

The path forward for the church is fidelity to the truth about marriage and our intrinsic maleness or femaleness.

⁷ National Review editorial, 2010.

⁸ Healing Humanity: Confronting our Moral Crisis, pp62f.

Rev. Christopher Esget's presentation will conclude in the March, 2024 issue of The Clarion

CTSFW Hotel Pricing for 2024

Pricing good through 12.31.2024

(Mention Concordia Theological Seminary when making reservations)

Comfort Suites North	260.480.7030	\$99.00
3302 East Dupont Road Fort Wayne, IN 46825 Per Amanda Snyder		
Holiday Inn Express & Suites	260.498.8915	\$104.00
10040 Diebold Road Fort Wayne, IN 46825 Per Brett Aschliman		Complimentary Breakfast
Holiday Inn Purdue, Ft Wayne	260.482.3800	\$129.00
411 Paul Shaffer Drive Fort Wayne, IN Per Stephanie Mays		

LUTHERAN CONCERNS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Monday, January 15, 2024

"Do not be conformed to this world." Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

The Conference will be held on Monday, January 15, 2024, on the Concordia Theological Seminary campus at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dine with the Speakers and the LCA Board of Directors! On Sunday evening, January 14, at 5:30 pm the Dining Hall Mezzanine 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.

Monday night, January 15, a special Seminary Dinner to honor the late Walter C. Dissen will be held. Details are forthcoming.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Bldg: Loehe Hall Room: Loehe 1

MORNING SESSION:

06:45 am: Registration Opens
07:30 am – 07:40 am: **LCA Opening Devotion**
The Rev. Dr. William Weinrich
07:40 am – 07:50 am: **Welcome from the LCA** (Mr. Mark Franke)
and **Greetings from the Indiana District**

07:50 am – 08:35 am: **The Concordia University System:
Opportunities and Challenges**
The Rev. Dr. Dean Wenthe
08:35 am – 08:50 am: Questions and Answers

08:50 am – 09:35 am: **Luther Classical College: Why Now?**
The Rev. Dr. Christian Preus
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: **Evangelism in the LCMS**
The Rev. Dr. Ken Schurb
12:00 pm – 12:15 pm: Questions and Answers

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

AFTERNOON SESSION:

01:30 pm – 02:15 pm: **Demographic Challenges and
Faithful Responses for Lutheran Congregations**
The Rev. Heath Curtis
02:15 pm – 02:30 pm: Questions and Answers

02:30 pm – 03:15 pm: **Recruiting Pastors and the Set Apart
to Serve Program**
The Rev. Dr. James Baneck
03:15 pm – 03:30 pm: Questions and Answers

03:30 pm – 03:45 pm: ***** BREAK*****

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

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

04:45 pm – 5:15 pm: **Annual LCA Meeting** – for LCA Members

06:00 pm: **Seminary Dinner to honor Walter C. Dissen**
Details to be announced

08:00 pm: **LCA Board Meeting**

cut here

2024 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 14, 5:30 pm (\$55) encl. _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Check box for Dinner on Sunday, January 14.	Total Enclosed: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffet (\$55): beef tenderloin and chicken marsala (price includes tax)	<i>Even if you pay at the door, please send in your registration form.</i>
	Please indicate any dietary restrictions. If your plans change, email jpanzigrau@comcast.net as soon as possible.

Make check payable to the Lutheran Concerns Association. Please detach this registration form and mail to
The Lutheran Concerns Association, 149 Glenview Drive, New Kensington, PA 15068-4921

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Lutheran Concerns Association
January 2024

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2024 LCA CONFERENCE

January 15, 2024

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Enjoy an engaging day

On the beautiful

Concordia Theological

Seminary Campus!

Information on page 7

The address for all matters pertaining to the LCA is:

**149 Glenview Drive
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**Editorial Board: Mr. Mark A. Franke (Interim Chairman)
Rev. Jerome Panzigrau
Dr. John F. Lang**

Layout, Printing & Mailing: Mr. Ronald Kabitzke

Faithful Lutherans who are members of LCMS congregations are invited to submit articles of approximately 500 words 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 Dr. John F. Lang (johnflang1000@gmail.com; 419.849.2610).

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