

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



Lutheran Concerns Association
149 Glenview Drive, New Kensington, PA 15068-4921

May 2019
Volume 11, Issue 5

Ecclesiastical Supervision in the LCMS

There has always been ecclesiastical supervision in the Church. From Moses to the prophets to the priesthood in the Old Testament all were guided by God's Word. As the cause and outcome of the very first council of the church demonstrates (Acts 15), ecclesiastical supervision has always been a part of the Christian life as submission to scripture was paramount. As the successive councils would affirm, and the experiences of both Luther and Walther would verify, the proclamation of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ and agreement as to its actual content were perennially prone to incorrect interpretations by those who did not employ the whole of Scripture in their studies or introduced unnatural explanations reflecting their own biases. Certainly, faithfulness to the truth of Scripture is required of every generation.

The LCMS exists as defined by its Constitution. The Constitution defines who has power or authority within the Synod. It then provides officers to protect and defend the Constitution. The subscription to Scripture and the Confessions along with the Constitution and its By-laws provides all that is necessary to carry out ecclesiastical supervision. To say we need ecclesiastical supervision is not the issue. The issue is when the agreed upon ecclesiastical supervision established by the congregations of the Synod in its governing laws is dismissed or ignored.

This problem does not only exist at the highest levels of our Synod but has its root problem in the congregations of Synod.

What often sadly undermines ecclesiastical supervision is the practice of operating by one's own rules.

How often is the easier pragmatic path taken in a congregation by pastor or members to deal with an infinite number of challenges to doctrine and practice rather than following their Constitution and By-laws? The answer to this was revealed by the purpose of the Koinonia project. Disagreement as to communion, fellow-

ship, non-approved worship materials, to name a few issues, were those things that have become divisive on the pastoral and congregational level. How do we resolve these and who is responsible to bring resolution? It is provided in the Constitutions of Synod, District and congregations.

Such problems can rise to the District levels which also include supervision over Universities and District entities. Are the Constitution, its By-laws, and officers accepted as the approved instruments to resolve doctrinal matters? That is their intent. Complicating District level issues has been the idea

Continued on page 2, left column.

C.F.W Walther: Still a Fruitful Homiletic Resource His Answers to Questions I Never Thought to Ask

Rev. Joel R. Baseley gave the presentation below on January 14, 2019, at the Lutheran Concerns 2019 Conference in Fort Wayne, IN.

Introduction

Many thanks to the Board of Lutheran Concerns for the invitation to address your convention this year. As an obscure translator and publisher I would like to briefly introduce you to the body of my work over the last 30 years. I published my translation of a German devotional resource first published by CPH in 1877, *Tagliche Andachten*, in 1996 under the title *Luther's Family Devotions* under my own imprint, Mark V (5) Publications. In 2005 I published my translation of Luther's Sermons for the feast days of the Church from a 1584 (Wittenberg) manuscript. Along with *The Festival Sermons of Martin Luther* (2005 AD) I also offered a companion book, *Christ Beyond Reason*, re-sourced exclusively by Luther's festival sermons.

In 2008 four C.F.W. Walther (1811-1887) titles issued in the nineteenth century, *Lutherische Brosamen* (1876), *Ansprachen und Gebete* (1888), *Casual -Predigten und -Reden* (1889), and *Festklaenge* (1892), were translated and published under the titles *From Our Master's Table*, *Addresses and Prayers*, *Occasional Sermons and Addresses*, and *Festive Sounds*. The contents of those four anthologies were edited into the *Walther Treasury Series*, under these seven topics: *Advent-Epiphany*; *Lent-Easter*; *Pentecost (or Trinity)*; *Reformation/Luther*; *Sermons unto Repentance*; *Special Occasions*; and *Synodical Conventions/Congregational meetings*.

From 2008-2014 the first four volumes (years) of Walther's bimonthly publication of *Der Lutheraner* were translated. Volume one was published in 2010. A bilingual publication of volumes 1-3 was offered in 2012 along with two companion books; *Holy Communion*, *Vanishing Mark of the Church* (2010), and *Missouri Synod in Formation (1844-47): Essays of the Founding Fathers* (2012).

Continued on page 3, left column

In this Issue of the **Lutheran Clarion**

Ecclesiastical Supervision in the LCMS.....	1
C.F.W. Walther: Still a Fruitful Homiletic Resource	1
Ecclesiastical Supervision at a Glance	2
About our Recent Report, Congregations Matter	7

Ecclesiastical Supervision in the LCMS

Continued from page 1

that Districts can function apart from Synodical supervision. This concept was promoted strongly beginning in the 1980s resulting in increasing powers given to the Council of Presidents. The effect of this has been to embolden those who prefer little or no doctrinal supervision. Thus, some ask if the actions of a District President should be accountable to the Synod and its President or only to that District regarding doctrinal discipline of a rostered clergyman. Logically, since Districts comprise the synod, these parts must support the whole as the Constitution and By-laws require.

The answer to settling these challenges is not necessarily found in rewriting the rules either. The issue of ecclesiastical supervision did not change by the major restructuring of the Synod that took place a few years ago. The fundamental issue of non-compliance at all levels still exist today that existed prior to the restructuring.

What often sadly undermines ecclesiastical supervision is the practice of operating by one's own rules. As has been said, "There are rules and then there are rules." A reading of Dr. Scaer's recent publication [Editor's Note: "Surviving the Storms: Memoirs of David P. Scaer," Luther Academy, 2019] reveals how this has worked on every level and in all circles of our church body. The Lutheran Concerns Association had its beginnings rooted in the effort to bring about "full disclosure" of Synod's finances in the 1990's resulting in convention action to provide such practice. But even with its acceptance by Synod's Convention the Treasurer of Synod stated it would not change a thing. And at the time, it did not.

The challenge of ecclesiastical supervision involving almost every issue comes down to submitting or not submitting to the foundation and rules established in one's Constitution. To rewrite or write more rules only puts a band-aid on the current issue and often opens the door to more conflict. All - members, congregations, pastors, teachers, and administration, must abide by the rules established and practice them evangelically, not pragmatically. Then we can truly strive for peace and do what we are supposed to do – proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the nations.

Rev. Thomas J. Queck

Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Annandale, MN

A Correction!!

The March 2019 *Lutheran Clarion* at page 11 contained an article Indiana District President Rev. Dr. Daniel Brege graciously permitted us to reproduce.

In the penultimate paragraph, last sentence, the word "I" should have appeared after the last dash and before the word "am." The sentence should have read, "Bless the Lord—I am forgiven and thankfully nothing can separate me from the Father's love in Christ."

Further, the last paragraph unintentionally repeated the second paragraph of the article. The Chairman of the Editorial Group apologizes to President Brege.



ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERVISION at a Glance
As it relates to Doctrine in the LCMS

LCMS Constitution:

The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation:

Article II.1: The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice.

Article II.2: All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

The Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall—

Article III.7: Encourage congregations to strive for uniformity in church practice, but also to develop an appreciation of a variety of responsible practices and customs which are in harmony with our common profession of faith;

Article III.8: Provide evangelical supervision, counsel, and care for pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers of the Synod in the performance of their official duties;

Conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod are the following:

Article VI.1: Acceptance of the confessional basis of Article II.

Article VI.2: Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as:

- a. Serving congregations of mixed confession, as such, by ministers of the church;
- b. Taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession;
- c. Participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities.

Article VI.3: Regular call of pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music deaconesses, certified lay ministers, and parish assistants and regular election of lay delegates by the congregations, as also the blamelessness of the life of such.

Article VI.4: Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school.

Article XI.B.1: The President has the supervision regarding the doctrine and the administration of

- a. All officers of the Synod;
- b. All such as are employed by the Synod;
- c. The individual districts of the Synod;
- d. All district presidents.

Article XI.B.3: The President has and always shall have the power to advise, admonish, and reprove. He shall conscientiously use all means at his command to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the districts of the Synod.

Article XII.7: The district presidents shall, moreover, especially exercise supervision over the doctrine, life, and administration of office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of their district and acquaint themselves with the religious conditions of the congregations of their district. To this end they shall visit and, according as they deem it necessary, hold investigations in the congregations. Their assistants in this work are the circuit visitors, who therefore shall regularly make their reports to the district president.

Article XII.8: District presidents are empowered to suspend from membership ordained and commissioned ministers for persistently adhering to false doctrine or for having given offense by an ungodly life, in accordance with such procedure as shall be set forth in the Bylaws of the Synod.

Article XIII.1: Members who act contrary to the confession laid down in Article II and to the conditions of membership laid down in Article VI or persist in an offensive conduct, shall, after previous futile admonition, be expelled from the Synod.

Bylaws:

The Bylaws, among other matters, cover procedures by which doctrinal supervision is carried out in the LCMS. District presidents form the front lines to ensure doctrinal integrity. The President of the Synod, in keeping with his role as the doctrinal supervisor of the district presidents, is kept informed of doctrinal proceedings and may become directly involved if a district president is unable or unwilling to act. An extensive appeals process is in place to ensure that Biblical principles are employed and that those accused of wrongdoing are given every opportunity to be exonerated if wrongly accused.

C.F.W Walther: Still a Fruitful Homiletic Resource

Continued from page 1

Having thus deeply imbibed in Walther's fractured spirit for so many years, today I propose to present you some surprising discoveries as he answered questions I had never thought to ask in three areas: (1) history lessons, (2) dividing law and Gospel in liturgical preaching and (3) encouraging lay churchmanship. My ministry was blessed richly by Walther as a personal resource as I shared my discoveries with those I serve. I hope to encourage you also to read Walther and to rediscover him as an abundant source of some fresh, old ideas that will bring joy and edification to the people of God in our own day.

I. Recovered History

Walther's first years of *Der Lutheraner* were an impressive confessional voice, a rallying cry for scattered Lutherans in mid 19th century America. *Missouri Synod in Formation* contains significant articles from the first three years of *Der Lutheraner* confessing and sometimes battling for Lutheran, Biblical doctrines over and against heterodox apologists. Walther reports numerous theological movements taking place in America and Europe in his day. Today I'd like to feature Walther's deep respect for and grasp of historical events, recounting God's on-going care for His people in every generation that so edified his readers.

For example, you may be familiar with the name Arius († 336 AD), the arch heretic whose damnable heresy with respect to the person of Christ was roundly rejected at the Council of Nicea (325 AD), facilitated by Constantine († 337 AD), the first Christian emperor. But have you ever asked whatever finally came of that heretic? In Walther's *Der Lutheraner* vol. 1, an article by G.H. Loeber (1810-1853 AD) exhumes the bones of Arius to tell us the rest of his story. After his defeat at Nicea, through shrewd politics and deception he cleverly hid his persisting in his false doctrine so that a naive emperor Constantine saw to it that Arius would be reinstated to become a priest and bishop. This was scheduled to take place with great pomp and circumstance in Constantinople. The orthodox bishop in Constantinople, Alexander, was obligated to officiate though he and his church knew it ought not be done, so as that day approached, he begged God to take his life rather than have him install this wolf among God's sheep. So what happened?

And when, on the next morning, Arius would process with his huge, triumphant entourage into the church, all at once, when they drew near the imperial court house, terrible anxiety befell him, and such pain in his stomach that he had to leave the parade to find a place where he might relieve himself. At this, the crowd impatiently waited for Arius to return to them, only – he never returned but was finally discovered dead amidst a most horribly disgusting sight, as all his innards had spilled out. So ends the heretic, Arius, truly an example to give warning to all who walk in his footsteps.¹

Another bit of crypto history; You will recall the temple in Jerusalem's destruction under God's judgement in 70 AD, but who ever asks about the attempt to rebuild the temple

in the fourth century under Emperor Julian, the apostate? Walther includes in volume one of *Der Lutheraner* an article edited by E.G.W. Keyl (1804-1872 AD) recounting Constantine's successor, his nephew Julian's attempt to undermine Christianity. Julian covenants with the Jews and bankrolls the Temple's restoration. They're all ready to begin when....

As the rubble of the previous temple had now been so quickly removed and they laid bare the foundation, they had made such progress that the next day they could begin the new construction. But as they had been surprised the night before, an unexpected earthquake broke forth and dislodged the very deepest foundation stones with all the stones around them. As a consequence of this earthquake

many buildings in the vicinity of the temple site collapsed and many Jews were found dead in the rubble, or had to be pulled out injured. But

this sign of the wrath of a strict, jealous God still did not scare the Jews out of proceeding as they planned. To the contrary, they worked with much greater determination. So God worked a new miracle. A raging fire spewed out of the excavation, burning or singeing workers and destroying many of the building materials. The inferno lasted the whole day. By all this a few Jews were moved to become Christians. They confessed that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah and that he himself had frustrated their attempts to rebuild the temple. But most of the Jews remained, just like Emperor Julian, hardened and blinded and driven out of Jerusalem full of despair. Ever since then there has never again been an attempt to rebuild the temple.²

As fantastic as this sounds, the extant writings of Emperor Julian himself as well as a half dozen secular and church historians that lived in that age are cited in the article as contemporary witnesses (some of which are easily available in translation on the internet) to affirm the historicity of this event.

Again, we all recall Luther's refusal to express fellowship in Marburg (1529 AD) over Zwingli's denial of the

Walther was praised after his death as a great preacher whom many, even outside the Church, wanted to hear for the sake of his clarity and eloquence.

The Lutheran Clarion—2019 Convention Issues

We are in our 11th year of the *Clarion* as we strive to present and uphold the truth of God's Holy Word. We hope to help delegates to the 2019 LCMS Convention in Tampa, FL, by providing them with information on the myriad of issues they will face as they vote. We could use your help.



If you can help with our costs, there's an enclosed envelope so you can mail your check to Lutheran Concerns Association, 149 Glenview Drive, New Kensington, PA 15068-4921. Do it now. **Thank you!!**

Sacrament of the Altar. But have you ever asked whence the roots of this disagreement? Who knew, as Walther relates in an article against ecclesial unionism in America, that for many years Zwingli stood unanimous with Luther with respect to the Sacrament against Carlstadt's initial denials³, but that it was nothing other than what Zwingli experienced in a dream that turned this enthusiast against Luther and the true confession of the Sacrament. Walther relates (in a footnote) Zwingli's own account of this:

What had made Zwingli so sure of his heresy he himself relates in the aforementioned "*Sudsidium*." Lit. Diii. That is, after he had reported therein that he had publicly disputed with a certain State Secretary in Zurich on April 11 about the Mass, he goes on to say: "But when April 13th arrived (and I am telling the truth and indeed it is so true that if I should be silent about it my conscience would force me to reveal what the Lord has granted me, even if I knew full well what scorn and ridicule I would be causing myself by it) as, I say, the 13th day of April dawned, I was dreaming that I was once again in heated debate against my opponent, the Secretary of State, and by doing so I had become so unable to speak that I could not spit out what I knew full well to be true, because my tongue refused its service. This impediment appeared to be beyond all comprehension, as dreams in the deceptive night sometimes play such games with us (for we explain what happens to us as no more than a dream even if it is nothing less than what we have learned through the dream by God's grace, to whose glory alone we are reporting this.). Then all at once, a Counselor appeared to me (whether he had been wearing black or white I cannot recall, for I am relating a dream). He said: You shrinking violet, why don't you answer him with what is written in Exodus 12: "it is the Passover" which signifies the exodus of the Lord? As soon as I received that epiphany I awoke and jumped out of bed. First now I considered the passage from the angle of how the Greek is translated and then I explained it as well as I was able before the whole assembly. My address dispelled every cloud for those who received it, who previously had been unsure about it, as now they knew that he was only speaking in parables thereby (that is, "is" was taken as "signifies")." – So that means Zwingli's doctrine is based on a dream.⁴

The last main section of *Missouri Synod in Formation*, "Heros and Villain's," includes some of the many marvelous historical vignettes Walther exhumes and peppers into *Der Lutheraner*. They are wonderful to read! My personal favorite historical character exhumed via Walther is Friedrich Myconias, a contemporary of Luther who also encountered that indulgence peddler, Tetzl, and became a prominent reformer, though no one's heard of him today. His biography is attached in the download of this paper.⁵ [Editor's Note: Please see Rev. Beasley's below "Note from the Author" regarding downloading this article and the sources used herein.]

II. Sermonic / Liturgical Application of Law and Gospel

Walther was praised after his death as a great preacher whom many, even outside the Church, wanted to hear for the sake of his clarity and eloquence. While all his sermons deserve our attention, I've chosen to share a few examples of his preaching. The first is from Christmas. I used to hear our choirs sing medieval hymns extolling the "felicitous fall of Adam" and praising God that we

"gained more in Christ than Adam and Eve had lost in the fall;" I often cynically thought this was just pious hyperbole until Walther, in a few of his Christmas sermons, enlightened me with his gifts and dispelled my darkness. He preached:

Now you tell me yourselves, my beloved, what was all the glory we people possessed back in Paradise compared to the glory that became ours back on this day in Bethlehem? – What a shadow is to the thing itself, what a little ray of sunlight is to the blazing sun, what the highest glory of a creature is to the glory of God himself, that's what our original glory was in Paradise compared to our new glory that shines in Bethlehem.

In Paradise man bore the image of God. In Bethlehem we see God bearing the image of man. In Paradise we see man created in the likeness of God, yet such that he could also lose this likeness again. In Bethlehem we see God himself bound and united with man in one person eternally, inseparable. In Paradise we see man exalted above everything created on earth. In Bethlehem we see him raised above all angels and archangels, for there we see a man who sits with God the Father, equally great, almighty and glorious, at his right hand upon his throne, Lord over heaven and

earth, over what is visible and invisible, over thrones and rulers, over the principalities and powers. In Paradise we see man as the single creature that knows God, as the single one that worships him. In Bethlehem we observe a man whom all the angels of God must worship, to whom is given a Name that is above all names, that at his Name every knee

shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and whom every tongue must confess as Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In Paradise man bore in himself as perfect a wisdom, righteousness and holiness as a creature can possess, in Bethlehem we observe a man in whom lies hidden every treasury of wisdom and of knowledge, a man beaming of the holiness and righteousness that is proper to God himself. In Paradise we see man related with God through that spark of divine wisdom that shone in his understanding, and through that divine nobility of divine thought that his heart and will had possessed. But in Bethlehem we see a man walking in an eternal, intimate relationship with God, where we see him partaking of the divine nature as we see this man related with God through the most intimate bond, more closely related than is even possible for men to be related to each other, that is, – Oh, that I could express it adequately in words! – even through being related by blood! A human has become God's mother, and all men God's brothers and sisters, not

"Before the fall we were beggars before God, but as we fell into irreconcilable debt, behold, God not only paid all our debt, but now also used the debt to turn us, who had been beggars, into kings and lords of heaven."

C.F.W. Walther, "That We Find More Again in Bethlehem than We had Lost Back in Paradise."

just in the sense of a figure of speech, but really and truly. God has become a man. O you miracle, O you mystery, O you deep, O you infinite, divine love! Through his letting himself be misled by Satan, man fell, not letting himself be satisfied with his glory, wanting to become like God. And what does God do in order to save his creature from this terrible fall? Would he now throw him out of the heaven of his love according to his righteousness like the fallen angels? No, he keeps on loving him. And does he now just forgive him and make him all over again into his image? No, not even that was enough for that eternally loving God. If Satan had planned to make man evil by tempting him, so, on the other hand, God intended to turn that into something good. And what did he do? God grants him the glory after which man had snatched with his thieving hand, by he himself becoming a man, so that truly man would be like him, the great God!

So what have we lost? What we lost has not only been restored, but now the loss has been changed into inexpressible gain. Before the fall we were beggars before God, but as we fell into irreconcilable debt, behold, God not only paid all our debt, but now also used the debt to turn us, who had been beggars, into kings and lords of heaven. Before the fall we were God's servants and maids, but, as we rebelled against our Lord, behold, God then not only forgave us for our unfaithfulness and sins, but used our rebellion against him to turn his former servants and maids into his friends, into his brothers and sisters, yes, to wed himself to our souls as with his bride. Before the fall we were God's dearly loved ones upon earth, but as we despised this love, behold!, God not only kept on loving us, but even used our rejection of his love to serve to demonstrate to us now an even greater love and to raise us up to be his dear loved ones, even in heaven. Before the fall, God was so close to us that he visited us as a friend and spoke with us and dwelt in our hearts as a guest, but when we shut the doors of our heart to him, behold!, he not only did not withdraw from us, but now he himself became a man, a gentle, affable infant, so that we still might now receive him among us and find our joy, and salvation and glory on him and with him and in him, forever and ever.⁶

What else had I never thought to ask? I never thought to ask how the New Testament Pentecost event, the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost, was related to the Old Testament Pentecost which was the occasion that brought those Jews to Jerusalem in Acts 2. Walther makes this contrast plain; a stark contrast between the Old Covenant and the New, in a Pentecost sermon that still preaches well today as follows:

The Old Testament's Pentecost revelation (the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai) goes like this: "Thou shalt love the LORD your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind, and all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself" and, on the other hand, the New Testament's: "God has so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him should not be lost, but have eternal life. God is love, and whoever remains in love" that is, in the love of God to him, "remains in God and God in him. This is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as the reconciliation for our sins." The Old Testament's Pentecost goes on this way: "Keep all my statutes and retain and carry out all my judgements, for I

am the LORD." But the New Testament's says: "That which the law could not do, God did, and sent his Son." The Old Testament's Pentecost revelation said: "Do this and you shall live." On the other hand the New Testament's said: "Life has been manifested. And this is the witness that God has given us, eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The Old Testament's revelation says: "Thou shalt be holy, for I, the LORD, your God am holy," the New Testament's says the opposite: "I sanctify myself for you, so that you will be sanctified in the truth." The Old Testament's Pentecost revelation demands that a man become and be like God, but the New Testament's proclaims that God has become like man, yes, that God himself became a man, like him in every way, only without sins.⁷

Finally, Walther's preaching might occasionally be judged today as politically incorrect. We often have a "don't ask don't tell" policy about faith, even in our practice of Holy Communion. Although we still acknowledge hypocrites sit among believers in our church pews, do we ever dare even to ask how we might address them in their pew? We may be shocked to hear Walther dare to address hypocrites directly (of course not by name!), warning them of the danger of "delaying their conversion," that is, of stubbornly loving their sinful lives as they despise their Savior and salvation. In a sermon for the annual day of repentance (traditionally the Friday before Advent 1) Walther declares in *We are No Longer What We Were*:

The thought has snuck in among us: I surely believe, so I am righteous and will be saved, even if I am not converted [a changed man] to God. And I remain a saved Christian even if I do not also live in daily contrition and repentance. By this false comfort, girded around us as if it were an iron suit of armor, we come into the church. Now the sharp arrows of serious condemnation and law-preaching may ever sound forth from the pulpit, but those arrows no longer penetrate the armor of our false comfort. We think we can know some secret means of being saved without having to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. So then, those among us who were once zealous Christians become lazy, idle and lapse back into the world and its cares, treasures and joys and, finally, fall into spiritual sleep, impotence and death and the rest, who never were really converted Christians, remain so, without repentance.⁸

III. Admonitions to Good Churchmanship

As Walther and his German Lutheran immigrants made a difficult transition from an often heavy handed system of governance from consistories and other secular authorities in Germany to autonomy in America, Walther understood that if the polity to be adopted invested all power under Christ in the congregation itself, then church membership must be valued as both the highest honor,

Today Christians know only enough about this doctrine [Christian Freedom] to make them dangerous. Erosion of this doctrine threatens the Gospel itself.

but also as deserving their greatest zeal of privilege. He thoroughly expresses this in his writings, speeches and sermons. I am appending two Walther essays that deserve to be read, marked and inwardly digested by every member of our congregations, even today. We don't have time to adequately even summarize them here.

The first article is called *Does Old Lutheranism Lead to Rome?*⁹ This serial article, from *Der Lutheraner* vol. 3 not only responds to criticisms "American Lutherans" heaped upon Pr. F. Wyneken (1810-1876 AD) in Baltimore, claiming what he was introducing looked too "Catholic," but also meticulously lays out the doctrine of Christian Freedom. Today Christians know only enough about this doctrine to make them dangerous. Erosion of this doctrine threatens the Gospel itself. I believe most people today would be surprised to learn that the doctrine of Christian Freedom actually teaches us of situations when, for love of neighbor and God's honor, we are not free to act in any way we choose lest we lose the freedom we have in the Gospel (God's honor) and/or lovelessly harm our neighbor by our license. Who asks about such things today? I also commend to you Walther's admonition to congregational voters to shoulder their responsibility to have their voice heard, especially when the congregation must decide matters not already decided by God's Word. The appended article is titled: *On the Duty to Attend Congregational Meetings.*¹⁰

Finally, in keeping with Walther's aspirations for the formation of pious Christians and competent churchmen I'll close with a brief address included in Walther's *Addresses and Prayers*. In these addresses Walther welcomed, encouraged and admonished all the voters at the opening of their assembly, especially addressing new voters being received at that meeting. I will let this fourth address and Walther's final wishes for his people in this address be the last words to us in this presentation:

To be a member of a Christian congregation and so, also

of the universal Christian church, is considered foolishness by the world, because one is taking upon himself all kinds of new burdens and responsibilities. Others, who think better of it, also, indeed, see entering congregational membership as taking on burdens and responsibilities,

"...it is obviously not enough to only belong to a Christian congregation. In order to partake of her blessing, a person must also have become a living member of the same through true faith."

C.F.W. Walther, *Addresses and Prayers*

but that these are an essential part of belonging to true Christianity. But, my friends, they are as greatly mistaken as are those first folks. Entering into a Christian congregation is not to anticipate fulfilling some difficult laws, but must be seen as the exercise of the prerogatives of

a shareholder of a company that possesses and administers a great fortune.

A Christian congregation is the highest court in her territory and whoever joins her becomes a part of it. A Christian congregation has the administration of the keys to the heavenly kingdom on earth, and one who joins her becomes a co-administrator of the same. A Christian congregation is a house of God, and one who joins her becomes a member of that household. A Christian congregation is a fellowship that prays, and one who joins her becomes a part of that fellowship in prayer. A Christian congregation is Christ's honored family, or his housewife, and one who joins her becomes a partaker of all her rights and privileges. A Christian congregation has the promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there I will be in the midst of them." Further, the promise: "Wherever two of you agree upon anything on earth that you should pray for, you shall have it from my Father in heaven." Further: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And who knows all of the promises that are given by God to each congregation? But will all those who join, then, take part in all of these promises? A good example illustrating how much one loses when he separates from the Christian congregation is the apostle Thomas. When Christ had died on the cross, Thomas departed from the little church in Jerusalem, which was covered in shame and adversity. But behold, the resurrected Christ mysteriously sought the poor, miserable congregation and revealed to it his glory and poured comfort and peace into the hearts of all her members. But Thomas, who had excluded himself, avoided this visitation of grace and, so, stumbled around for eight more days in his hopelessness and restlessness. Yet, my precious, it is obviously not enough to only belong to a Christian congregation. In order to partake of her blessing, a person must also have become a living member of the same through true faith. Just as a dried out branch, hanging on a tree, does not bud on that tree, nor become green, bloom and bear fruit, but is removed from the green tree and is thrown into the fire, so it does a man no good to hang onto the tree of the church without faith, but he will, finally, when the springtime of eternal life arrives, be separated from the tree and thrown into the furnace of hell.

**New Student Aid Endowment Fund!
Concordia Theological Foundation, Inc.**

In early 2018, in honor of Mrs. Ginny Valleau's contributions to the publication of the *Lutheran Clarion*, a **Concordia Theological Seminary Student Aid Endowment Fund** was established at **Concordia Theological Foundation, Inc.**, which is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) religious charitable organization. Contributions are tax deductible as permitted by federal and state law. The fund now has contributions totaling \$8,971.71.



The Board of Directors of the Lutheran Concerns Association invites *Lutheran Clarion* readers and friends to contribute to the Fund which can be done by sending your check marked Valleau Endowment Fund to:

Concordia Theological Foundation, Inc.
6041 Stellhorn Road, Box 15810, Fort Wayne, IN 46815

or to:

Lutheran Concerns Association
149 Glenview Drive, New Kensington, PA 15068-4921

Donors will receive receipts for their gifts.

So God grant that today you have entered into membership in our congregation by a living faith. Then you will never regret it, and, someday, you will be transplanted, with all the living members, into the new Paradise. JESUS Christ grant this to us all. Amen!

+ + + To God alone be Glory! + + +

Rev. Joel R. Baseley

Pastor, Emmanuel Lutheran Church and School Dearborn, MI

- 1 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Loeber, G.H., "The Heretic Arius and His Demise," *Missouri Synod in Formation* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2012) p. 460.
- 2 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Keyl, E. G. W., "The Interrupted Construction of the Temple in Jerusalem," *Missouri Synod in Formation* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2012) p. 464.
- 3 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Walther, C. F. W., "The Evangelical Church in North America," *Missouri Synod in Formation* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2012) p. 118.
- 4 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Walther, C. F. W., "The Evangelical Church in North America," *Missouri Synod in Formation* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2012) p. 119 note.
- 5 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Meuer, "Friedrich Myconius: An informative and edifying biography newly related from old accounts," *Missouri Synod in Formation* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2012) p. 414.
- 6 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Walther, C.F.W., "That We Find More Again in Bethlehem Than We Had Lost Back in Paradise," *Treasury of C.F.W. Walther, Vol. 1* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2008) p. 94.
- 7 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Walther, C.F.W., "The Glory of the Pentecost Revelation of the New Testament Over that of the Old Covenant," *Treasury of C.F.W. Walther, Vol. 3* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2008) p. 93.
- 8 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Walther, C.F.W., "We are No Longer What We Were!" *Treasury of C.F.W. Walther, Vol. V* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2008) p. 56.
- 9 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Walther, C. F. W., "Does Old Lutheranism Lead to Rome?" *Missouri Synod in Formation* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2012) p. 259.
- 10 Baseley, J., tr., ed; Walther, C. F. W., "On the Duty to Attend Congregational Meetings" *Missouri Synod in Formation* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2012) p. 352.

Note from the author, Rev. Baseley:

As the sources for this paper may not be readily available to you, I am giving you an electronic version that you may download from my website at: https://www.markvpublications.com/documents/2019_LCA_Paper_Walther.pdf



At my website you will easily be able to move from the footnotes to the words quoted from the source document and then back to the footnotes.

You will also find an Appendix of Cited Resources that gives the title, author and page number of each source. All my publications may be read on my website free of charge. My catalogue with links to pages where each book may be viewed and read is at this URL: https://www.markvpublications.com/documents/quick_directory.html.

My web site also gives fair use parameters and conditions under which you may or may not re-publish my works.

About our Recent Report, "Congregations Matter Exposed"

In recent months, an advocacy group, "Congregations Matter," has been doing its best to put a negative spin on everything that President Harrison and his administration have done. It has even gone so far as to criticize him for events in the LCMS over which he has no authority or control.

This is similar to the "wrap-up smear" tactic employed by unscrupulous politicians bent on harming their opponents without any regard to the facts. This tactic consists of accusing someone by artfully mischaracterizing actions, attributing blame where there is none, and asking leading questions which imply a damaging truth hidden by cover-up. Eventually a sympathetic press either reports some of these accusations or reports something in a negative light, which the accuser then jumps on as validation and "wraps up the smear" with follow-up accusations pointing to "validation" by the press.

Though we certainly disagree with the underlying viewpoints of the likely sympathizers of Congregations Matter, we would accept the clear articulation of their viewpoints, free from deception, in appropriate venues as the right of any group to advocate its position. But when the tactic is to cleverly denigrate a Christian, that tactic must be denounced as unbiblical. To say nothing in the face of such sinful action might be to suggest acceptance or acquiescence, which would be wrong.

Hence, the Lutheran Concerns Association sent a letter dated Feb. 25, 2019, to LCMS congregations with a well-documented report, "Congregations Matter Exposed," by Dr. Martin Noland. [See Dr. Noland's article at <http://lutheranclarion.org/newsletter.html> > Document Library.] The facts in that letter have not and cannot be rebutted.

One hopes that those behind Congregations Matter and its sympathizers will withdraw from invective and instead be honest in articulating their real agenda. Misleading accusations against incumbents in office constitute a smoke screen to turn susceptible people against the incumbents without the need to reveal unpalatable positions. If those peddling these accusations can succeed in replacing an incumbent with someone at least incrementally more sympathetic to their cause, they can step-by-step erode Missouri's historic position.

All confessional Lutherans, individually and as part of groups, must continue to promote sound Biblical doctrine, a vigorous missions program, and effective Biblical instruction at our seminaries and schools.

The writer asks for your prayers, assistance, and suggestions in promoting the historic position of our Synod.

John F. Lang

All confessional Lutherans...must continue to promote sound Biblical doctrine, a vigorous missions program, and effective Biblical instruction at our seminaries and schools.

The Lutheran Clarion

The official publication of the Lutheran Concerns Association, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.
Circulation: 6,000



Published regularly to support issues and causes in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod which build faithfulness to 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.

The address for all matters pertaining to the LCA is:
149 Glenview Drive
New Kensington, PA 15068-4921

Editorial Board: Mr. Walter Dissen (Chairman)
Rev. Jerome Panzigrau
Dr. John F. Lang

Mrs. Ginny Valleau: Layout, Printing & Mailing

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 Mr. Walter Dissen (wdissen@aol.com; 757-436-2049).

The Board of Directors for the LCA:

Mr. Walter Dissen (Chairman)
Mr. Mark Franke (Vice-Chairman)
Rev. Jerome Panzigrau (Secretary-Treasurer)

Rev. Joseph M. Fisher Rev. Andrew Preus
Rev. Dr. Kristian Kincaid Dr. John Rahe
Dr. John F. Lang Mr. Leon L. Rausch
Rev. Dr. Martin Noland Mr. Winfried I. Strieter

<http://www.lutheranclarion.org>

Lutheran Concerns Association
May 2019



Lutheran Concerns Association
149 Glenview Drive
New Kensington, PA 15068-4921