

# The LUTHERAN CLARION



Lutheran Concerns Association  
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## Keeping an Eye on the Nestle-Aland Committee

E. Christian Kopff is Associate Director of the Honors Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Among his publications are a critical edition of Euripides' *Bacchae* (Teubner, 1982), his book, *The Devil Knows Latin: Why America Needs the Classical Tradition* (ISIBooks, 1999) and a translation of Josef Pieper, *Tradition: Concept and Claim* (ISIBooks, 2008).

At the LCMS National Convention in Milwaukee in July, I introduced a resolution, "To Preserve the Authority and Clarity of the New Testament Scriptures," that asked the LCMS President to appoint a task force to review recent and future versions of the standard critical edition of the Greek New Testament and report its findings to the next LCMS convention. Pastor Richard Zeile reinforced my arguments masterfully. The convention voted by a large majority to refer the resolution to the LCMS President.

*Sola scriptura* is a fundamental principle of Lutheranism. By reading the New Testament in Greek Luther discovered that Jesus did not command his followers to "do penance," *poenitentiam agite*, as in the Latin Vulgate, or to do anything, but to "repent," *metanoete*, "change your mind" so as to live one's whole life in penitence. This insight, when published as the first of the Ninety-Five Theses, initiated the Reformation.

Erasmus's early printed editions had their faults but they made the Greek New Testament available. It took a while for scholars to make substantive improvements, but the scholarly goal was always the same. "The object of all textual criticism is to recover as far as possible the actual words written by the author," in the words of New Testament scholar Kirsopp Lake, *Text of the New Testament* (London, 1913), p. 1

In the Twentieth Century a standard text developed under the aegis of a committee of scholars. This common text was published in two forms, the Greek New Testament (GNT) for translators and Nestle-Aland (NA) for scholars.

Now we are told that future editions of Nestle-Aland will be edited with a new editorial committee, a new methodology (the Genealogical-Coherence method), a modified apparatus and a different goal, replacing the "original text" with an *Ausgangstext* reconstructing the common source of surviving manuscripts. There is talk of an online text that can be changed immediately by committee vote. A New Testament text created by a committee with a new methodology and a different goal that no longer seeks "to recover as far as possible the actual words written by the

author" *prima facie* undermines the Lutheran understanding of *claritudo Scripturae*, the clarity of Scripture, defended by Luther in *Bondage of the Will* against Erasmus' skepticism. One committee member, David C. Parker, is the author of *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Oxford, 1997). Americans who know the consequences of viewing our Constitution as a "living document" are uneasy.

The LCMS needs to investigate and analyze possible changes to the text of the New Testament now, not wait to react to a *fait accompli*. The task force should include lay people, literary scholars and editors of ancient texts, not just experts in the theory of textual criticism. The Bible belongs to all of us, not just seminary professors and certainly not just a self-selected cabal of New Testament scholars. To adapt the words of Our Lord, "What shall it profit a denomination to win legal battles for religious liberty and lose the Bible?"

### E. Christian Kopff

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Following is the text of Dr. Kopff's resolution, as printed in Tuesday's (07/12/2016) *Today's Business*, pp. 438f.

#### To Preserve the Authority and Clarity of the New Testament Scriptures

- WHEREAS, "The object of all textual criticism is to recover as far as possible the actual words written by the author." (Kirsopp Lake, *Text of the New Testament* [London, 1913]); and
- WHEREAS, The standard critical edition of the Greek New Testament is *Novum Testamentum Graece*, often called Nestle-Aland, abbreviated NA followed by the number of the relevant edition; and
- WHEREAS, D. C. Parker correctly writes of *Novum Testamentum Graece* (1993) = NA27, "This text was agreed by a committee. When they disagreed on the best reading to print, they voted." (*Living Text of the Gospels* [Oxford, 1997]); and
- WHEREAS, Decisions in Nestle-Aland have sometimes been based on historical-critical dogma, not textual criticism, e.g., in 1971 "the majority of the committee" favored punctuating Romans 9:5 to replace Paul's assertion that the Messiah is God with a doxology (see RSV *ad loc.*) because "nowhere else in his genuine epistles does Paul ever designate *ho Christos as theos*." B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek NT* (London, 1971) 522; and
- WHEREAS, Future editions of Nestle-Aland will be edited with a new editorial committee, a new methodology, a modified apparatus and a different goal, replacing the "original text" reflecting the autographs with an *Ausgangstext* that seeks to reconstruct

In this Issue of the **Lutheran Clarion**

Keeping an Eye on the Nestle-Aland Committee.....	1
Dr. Scott Meyer, A True Servant of Christ.....	2
Matthew L. Becker's Theological Vision, Part II.....	3
Registration for 2017 LCA Conference .....	7

the common source of surviving manuscripts; therefore be it *Resolved*, That a New Testament text created by a committee with a new methodology and a different goal that no longer seeks "to recover as far as possible the actual words written by the author" *prima facie* undermines the Lutheran understanding of *claritudo Scripturae*, the clarity of Scripture, defended by Luther in *Bondage of the Will* against Erasmus' skepticism; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the President of the Synod appoint a task force to evaluate the methodology of NA28 and future editions and its implications for Lutheran theology; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the task force report its conclusions and recommendations to the 2019 LCMS Convention; and be it finally

*Resolved*, That the editorial committee will include textual scholars who have edited critical editions of ancient texts, made emendations accepted by editors of critical editions of ancient texts and/or have published books or a substantial corpus of articles on textual criticism. Committee members will each have one or more of these qualifications.

Submitted by: Christian Kopff  
Lay Delegate, Rocky Mountain District

After the resolution motion was seconded and during discussion, a motion was introduced to refer the resolution to the President of the Synod. A motion to end debate was introduced and carried [Yes: 823; No: 181] and the motion to refer was carried [Yes: 878; No: 137] (Source: [http://www.lcms.org/convention/downloads\\_Convention\\_Minutes](http://www.lcms.org/convention/downloads_Convention_Minutes) as found in "2016-LCMS-Convention-Minutes-Final.pdf", p. 22).

## Dr. Scott Meyer, Esq.— A Classic Example of a True Servant of Christ

Mr. Scott J. Meyer, on September 1, 2016, fell asleep in Jesus at the age of 88. It was as recent as the June 2016 *Lutheran Clarion* that Synod Vice President Rev. Dr. John Wohlrabe wrote in part, "Church historians frequently write about significant clergy figures impacting the course of ecclesiastical events. However, it is often through the day-in-day-out service of devoted laymen, working behind the scenes in their specific churchly vocations that God does His greatest work. Such is the case with Dr. Scott Meyer."

Scott was married to Eunice H, Meyer (nee Helmreich); he is the father of William Meyer, a career CIA man, and Richard Meyer, the Appalachian and Southwest Manager for the Forest Resources Association.

Mr. Meyer was an outstanding member of the Board of Directors of Lutheran Concerns Association. He not only was a presenter at an annual Conference of LCA, he wrote multiple superlatively crafted articles for the *Lutheran Clarion* that were not only well documented but fully in accord with Scripture and the Confessions.

Scott was a life-long Lutheran who was the grandson of Dr. William Christian Kohn, who was a former President of Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, IL, from 1913-1939. Scott served in the United States Marine Corps and from there earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Purdue University, a Master of Business Degree from Indiana University, and a Doctor of Jurisprudence Degree from Northwestern University. When he retired from Monsanto Company at age 77, he was General Counsel, Intellectual

Property.

He was active for many years at his congregation, served on the Missouri District Constitution Committee and for many years served on the Board of Governors of Concordia Historical Institute (CHI) including multiple years of service as Chairman thereof. Synod Vice President Wohlrabe in June 2016 observed that Scott was, "Dubbed the American Lutheran lay historian...". One will find very informative articles by Scott in the *Concordia Historical Quarterly* published by CHI, such as "Historical Roots of the Christian Day School in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" (CHIQ vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 40-68) and "Loss of Missouri Synod Churches in Chicagoland" (CHIQ vol. 80, no. 3, pp. 152-202).

With Scott, what you saw is what you got—a man without pretense and with a very strong Christian faith that he lived. In 2016 his health deteriorated and he moved to the Lutheran Laclede Grove Manor in St. Louis where he died. Only a very few weeks before his death in a telephone conversation Scott said that his days left on earth might be few and that was up to God but he trusted completely in God and that whatever God ordained was good. When Bill Meyer called me the morning of September 1, telling me that his father had died, was it any wonder that the hymn, "Oh, Rejoice Ye Christians Loudly" [*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 96.] immediately came to mind? Scott will be sorely missed at LCA.

Walter C. Dissen

### "Oh, Rejoice, Ye Christians, Loudly"

by Christian Keimann, 1607-1662

1. Oh, rejoice, ye Christians, loudly,  
For our joy hath now begun;  
Wondrous things our God hath done.  
Tell abroad His goodness proudly  
Who our race hath honored thus  
That He deigns to dwell with us.



*Refrain*

Joy O joy, beyond all gladness,  
Christ hath done away with sadness!  
Hence, all sorrow and repining,  
For the Sun of Grace is shining!

2. See, my soul, thy Savior chooses  
Weakness here and poverty;  
In such love He comes to thee  
Nor the hardest couch refuses;  
All He suffers for thy good,  
To redeem thee by His blood.

*Refrain*

3. Lord, how shall I thank Thee rightly?  
I acknowledge that by Thee  
I am saved eternally.  
Let me not forget it lightly,  
But to Thee at All times cleave  
And my heart true peace receive.

*Refrain*

4. Jesus, guard and guide Thy members,  
Fill Thy brethren with Thy grace,  
Hear their prayers in every place.  
Quicken now life's faintest embers;  
Grant all Christians, far and near,  
Holy peace, a glad New Year!

*Refrain*

### Thank You Balance-Concord, Inc.

Balance-Concord, Inc., has been a most faithful contributor to *The Lutheran Clarion* in honor of the sainted **Rev. Raymond Mueller** and the sainted **Rev. Edgar Rehwaldt**, both of whom faithfully served the Synod and Balance-Concord, Inc., for many years.

*The Clarion* is most appreciative of such continued support from Balance-Concord, Inc., as well as the wonderful support of our readers. These contributions make it possible to bring you substantive articles by respected and qualified authors on issues affecting YOUR Synod. Please continue your support. It is both appreciated and needed.

## Matthew L. Becker's Theological Vision: Revisionist and Provisionist (Part II)

In the previous issue, Dr. Kilcrease showed how Johannes von Hofmann, a provisionalist (the apprehension of God and his truth are constantly in a state of revision), was an influence on Dr. Becker's theology. Dr. Kilcrease continues by showing how Dr. Becker applied this influence to his work. If you want to review Part I of this article, you can find the online version of the September 2016 *Clarion* at <http://www.lutheranclarion.org>.

Turning to Becker's own work, it is not difficult to see how Hofmann's influence plays itself out in his understanding of the truth of the faith. In his most recent work *Fundamental Theology*, a text-book intended for college students, Becker gives a lengthy discussion of a variety of different theories of revelation. Predictably, he favors the salvation history model and in particular, the version of it proposed by Hofmann.

In favor of this view of revelation, Becker cites the provisional nature of revelation. In his view, the Bible is a human document and the byproduct of a long series of developments in Israel and the Church's apprehension of its God. Some earlier interpretations of God's ways and will turned out to be false. Hence, they can be discarded by newer and clearer apprehensions of revelation as the historical process continues. Becker gives the example of the Old Testament's acceptance of slavery, polygamy, and the subordination of women.

The difficulty with Becker's theological perspective is that it presupposes that on some level God bungled the communication of his revelation in some earlier eras of salvation. Then later on, he somehow became more competent in communicating it and people were able to discard the earlier mistaken interpretations of revelation. Moreover, Becker assumes that he himself in the present possesses within the seat of his own heart the ability to discern which parts of the Bible are to be taken seriously as revelation and which are not. Interestingly enough, the discarded revelations seem to consistently correlate to things that upper-middle class, white Americans would find objectionable.

Such a notion of revelation dovetails with Becker's conception of scriptural authority and inspiration. Much like Karl Barth, Becker sees Scripture as a witness to the Word of God rather than the Word of God itself. The Bible can be called "the Word of God" in an indirect sense, not because it is verbally inspired and inerrant, but because it is a primary source for the Church's witness to the gospel. The most he will grant to a notion of inspiration is that this witness possesses the existential force to inspire faith.

According to Becker, since the central mission of the Church is the proclamation of the gospel, it is only minimally necessary to believe the content of Scripture to the extent that it makes the gospel capable of being proclaimed. Implicitly, this means that in Becker's mind scriptural doctrines like the Trinity and the Incarnation are still necessary, insofar as it would be impossible to proclaim the gospel without them. Nevertheless, one may also infer that Becker sees little need to maintain male-headship, a literal reading of Genesis 1–11, and the biblical strictures against homosexuality in order to logically maintain a belief in justification by faith alone. In this, Becker largely affirms a version of "Gospel-Reductionism," though perhaps not as reductive as other ones. In his public statements on the subject on the Internet, he has assured his readers that his acceptance of Gospel-Reductionism is in accordance with Luther's own teaching.

Since according to Becker, the clarity and validity of revelation progresses throughout the scriptural witness, there is a hierarchy of scriptural normativity within the canon. The gospel is the actual norm of all revelation. Consequently, the writings in the apostolic witness that most directly relate the historical Christ are the clearest and most noble witnesses to revelation. These can be found in the *homologoumena*, that is, those books of the New Testament universally attested as apostolic and authoritative in the early Church. Below these rank contested books of the New Testament, the *antilegomena*. Still lower in the hierarchy rank the books of the Old Testament, in large part a superseded revelation, since they contain practices and norms rejected by Jesus and the New Testament authors, and only indirectly witness to Christ and his gospel.

If Becker were merely suggesting the *homologoumena* have interpretative priority over both the *antilegomena* and Old Testament, he would be on fairly solid ground. Such a position is not only in keeping with the logical unfolding of salvation history, but also the historic Lutheran tradition as

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taught by Luther and the subsequent fathers of scholastic orthodoxy. Nevertheless, this is not what Becker means. Under the principle that the Bible is not actually the Word of God (or perhaps only in a very qualified sense!), Becker posits that those earlier eras' written witness to revelation can, in many cases, be discarded altogether in favor of the better human apprehensions of God and his ways during later stages of salvation history.

Becker cites in favor of this conclusion the fact that Jesus and Paul reject portions of the Old Testament revelation as being no longer authoritative. I would make several observations about this point. First, the idea that aspects of the Old Testament are no longer authoritative (for example the ritual laws of Leviticus) does not mean that they are any less divinely inspired and therefore the Word of God—something repeatedly implied by Becker, though never directly stated. It merely means that within the historical development of his relationship with humanity, God placed persons and peoples under the authority of different revelations for a variety of purposes.

Hence, Jesus and Paul do not use human reason to prove certain revelations found in the Old Testament were not genuine revelation. Rather, they use scriptural arguments to prove the temporary authority of these revelations. In Jesus' cases, Moses' allowance of divorce (and implicitly also such practices as polygamy) lack binding force because they were concessions to sin and not in keeping with God's original creative purposes expressed in Genesis 2. Likewise, for Paul, the Abrahamic covenant promised Christ and communicated salvation through faith long before the curses of Deuteronomy (which were exhausted in the cross of Jesus) were put into place. Hence, Jesus' and Paul's teachings do not so much represent a criticism of Scripture as the recognition that certain portions of Scripture relativize others in light of God's variegated purposes within the economy of salvation.

What is perhaps even more disturbing is that Becker asserts that Scripture can be criticized on the basis of what he calls "contemporary experience." The scriptural authors lived in a different environment where slavery, polygamy, the subordination of women, and anti-democratic political structures were the norm. According to Becker, now that we have "discovered" human rights (an odd claim, in light of the present philosophical crisis of foundations of secular modernity), as well as eliminated slavery, the portions of Scripture that seemingly validate slavery or the subordination of women can be eliminated or rejected. Indeed, the conflict between Scripture and "contemporary experience" (read: upper-middle class white American values) is one of the reasons that Becker

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cites for rejecting the notion of scriptural inerrancy.

There are a number of problems with these remarks. First, in keeping with his notion that revelation is both progressive and imperfectly received by human beings, Becker seems to be positing that the values of contemporary American upper middle class whites are essentially on par with the scriptural revelation—indeed, superior to the Scriptures, insofar as they can serve as a basis and criterion for the criticism of the Scriptures. In this Enthusiasm of historical progress, one hears echoes both of Hegel's concept of the *Geist*, as well as the tagline of the United Church of Christ's cable ad campaign from the mid-2000s: "God is still speaking." Secondly, as noted above, Becker's "contemporary experience" privileges a particular kind of contemporary experience, namely, that of upper-middle class American whites. Indeed, later on in a discussion of how to interpret Scripture, Becker also posits the necessity of taking into consideration the perspective and experiences of oppressed minorities and the poor of the Third World. This is of course in keeping with various Liberationist and Feminist theological interpretative paradigms. Nevertheless, the value of Third World perspectives is limited to economic issues which promote governmental redistributionist schemes that contemporary upper-middle class whites are often all too ready to embrace (Read: David Brook's so-called *Bobos* or Charles Murray's *New Upper Class*). With regard to the status of women, or sexual morality, Becker's interest in affirming the consciousness of contemporary minorities and the inhabitants of Third-World nations (the latter being fairly notorious for their rejection of both women's rights and homosexual behavior) completely fizzles.

This is one reason why "contemporary experience" cannot be revelatory. Not only does it represent a form of Enthusiasm, which Luther identifies as the oldest of all heresies, but it is ultimately a dead end. On the one hand, "contemporary experiences" contradict one another, as the aforementioned examples of differing ideas regarding human rights and sexuality demonstrate. Moreover, if one attempts to overcome this *aporia* by appealing to a particular group's experience of reality (as Becker seemingly does), then theology degrades into a sort of ploy to deify that particular group's set of values. Indeed, as Karl Barth correctly noted, this was the ultimate problem with both the Liberal Protestant support for World War I, as well as the "German Christians'" exaltation of *volkish* consciousness above the Word of God. The result of both forms of Enthusiasm were ultimately a divine mandate for German imperial ambition and, later on, genocidal racism. Though Becker would of course reject all of this, one cannot help but see that his reliance on contemporary experience results in a critical mechanism insufficient to counteract such destructive theologies.

Indeed, that being said, it is perfectly compatible with a doctrine of verbal inspiration and inerrancy to say that slavery, polygamy, and the like do not embody God's ideal purpose for creation. Nevertheless, one comes to recognize this by listening to Jesus when he tells the Pharisees that God made many concessions to sin (as indeed do all civil codes) in giving the law to Moses. In doing this, Jesus

does not appeal to some now-discredited High-Modernist concept of “the Progress of Man,” but rather goes back to the Edenic harmony of the first man and woman (Mt. 19:3–9). Unfortunately for Becker, although the words of Jesus serve as a basis for the rejection of slavery, polygamy, and divorce, they also keep intact male-headship and heterosexual marriage as God’s plan for humanity.

Indeed, in his writings for the *Daystar Journal*, Becker has appealed to the original humanity as posited by evolutionary biology in order to discredit the male/female relationship as suggested by Genesis 1–3. Becker has stated that biological evolution proves that there was no Eve derived from Adam as her head. There is thus no reason to assume that male-headship is valid. Nonetheless, Becker must certainly recognize that, as Jane Goodall showed many years ago, apes are patriarchal, and presumably our supposed hominid ancestors would have been as well. Likewise, homosexuality (which Becker also believes is acceptable) possesses no evolutionary value and therefore stands in contradiction of what Becker considers to be the law of nature. It would seem that in any appeal to the origin of humanity (either theistic evolution or the Bible), one ends up getting more or less the same results.

Beyond Becker’s provisionalist concept of revelation and embrace of Gospel-Reductionism, he considers the orthodox Lutheran doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy to be incoherent. Returning to Becker’s *Fundamental Theology*, our author first suggests that verbal inspiration and inerrancy erase human agency in the production of the Scriptures. Becker claims that Johann Gerhard taught that divine inspiration makes the inspired author like a “flute” played by God. Becker does not provide a citation for the flute remark, and in fact a survey of Gerhard’s writings yields no such analogy. In any case, recent scholarship on the subject has clearly demonstrated that this view of inspiration was quite specifically rejected by the Lutheran Scholastics. In fact, the Protestant Scholastics in general inherited a strong aversion to the notion of inspiration as a kind of mania from the late Patristic and Medieval theologians. This manic concept of inspiration would be more characteristic of the Ante-Nicene Fathers than it would be of the Protestant Scholastics. In fact, the flute analogy was used by a number of the second century Apologists and not by any known Protestant Scholastic.

Secondly, Becker also posits that prior to affirming scriptural inerrancy and verbal inspiration one would have to thoroughly examine every jot and tittle before believing that Scripture was true on every point. Instead, we are converted by the gospel and acknowledge God prior to believing in any theories of inspiration. Seemingly Becker wishes to prioritize the centrality of the gospel in his con-

**“Beyond Becker’s provisionalist concept of revelation and embrace of Gospel-Reductionism, he considers the orthodox Lutheran doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy to be incoherent.”**

cept of theological authority.

Nevertheless, if understood properly, acknowledgment of the primacy of the gospel necessarily and logically leads to an acknowledgment of the authority of the whole of Scripture. If I come to believe in Jesus and that his promises are trustworthy, the trustworthiness of Jesus will also necessarily including his promise that the prophets and the apostles are infallible in all they teach (Luke 10:16; John 10:35, 15:26). I can directly affirm that what they teach is true because Jesus tells me that it is, and because God the Father has placed his stamp of approval on all that he has said by vindicating him through his resurrection from the dead. In the same manner, I can believe that his body and blood are present in the Lord’s Supper because he promises that they are, not by rationally verifying them. Here, Becker seems to confuse Scripture’s normative and causative authority.

Lastly, Becker argues that affirming verbal inspiration and inerrancy has a flattening effect on the content of Scripture. If every word of Scripture is divinely inspired, then even the most innocuous historical facts become as important as the chief article of the gospel. First, among the many points that might be made here, Becker seems to be unaware of the steady drum beat of “all theology is Christology” from major proponents of inerrancy in the LCMS, such as David Scaer and Robert Preus. Obviously, whatever he may say about the flattening effect, it does not work out that way in practice!

Secondly, Becker’s concern here represents an obvious category confusion, wherein the category “truthful” is being confused with the category “important.” To illustrate this with a thought-experiment, theoretically, if we posit a husband who was programmed to be utterly unable to tell a lie to his wife, every truthful utterance he made would still not be equally important. For example, the statement “I got gas on the way home from work” would be both equally true and nevertheless, considerably less important than his wedding vows. Moreover, to take another example, if our spouses regularly lied to us about petty things, then we might also begin to doubt their general veracity, even perhaps when it came to their love and loyalty to us. Indeed, often people come to suspect an affair when such small lies are told on a regular basis, often with considerable justification. Becker would probably say in response that all couples lie to one another in small measures, and it does not disrupt the relationship or call into question the love present. Likewise, he would probably argue that the gospel could still be true, even if there are small errors in the biblical reports.

Like Hofmann and later Paul Althaus, Becker seems to implicitly make a distinction between certain historical facts in Scripture that need to be true to make the gospel true (Jesus existed, died and rose, etc.) and others that do not.

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**Be Sure to Register!**

**LCA Conference: January 16, 2017**

Don't forget to register for the 2017 LCA conference at Don Hall's in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on January 16, 2017. The lineup of speakers so far includes:



- Rev. Dr. Daniel L. Gard
- Rev. Paul R. Harris
- Mr. Mark Stern, Esq.
- Rev. Heath R. Curtis
- Dr. Adam S. Francisco
- President Matthew Harrison

Use the registration form on page seven of this issue.

The difficulty with this that it is impossible to draw the line clearly between “essential” and “non-essential” facts in order to differentiate them from one another.

Ultimately though, the gospel does in fact depend on certain historical facts being true and infallibly so. To say that we can only believe them to be true insofar as they are verified by historical science would be to assert that the gospel is only probably true since all secular historical knowledge is merely probable. Nonetheless, since the gospel gives full assurance (“this is most certainly true”), then the history that it narrates must also be fully assured and not merely highly probable. Similarly, since the gospel makes no sense apart from the whole scriptural narrative of creation and redemption, to say that the gospel is certain and true logically entails that the whole of Scripture is inerrant and without falsehood.

Overall, this examination of Becker’s dogmatic theology proves illuminating for understanding the positions he has taken in a number of conflicts in the Missouri Synod. As can be observed, at its heart, Becker’s theological vision is essentially provisionalist. Because history is one long sequence of ever greater and greater degrees of divine self-communication, no truth can ever be eternal and final for Becker. Moreover, the progress of secular history and science have the power ever to qualify what is credible in Scripture and what is not. Belief in any historical truth taught in Scripture must also be provisional, since belief in that truth may or may not be falsified at some point in the future. Likewise, the moral teaching of Scripture is ever capable of being revised by Western cultural trends. At the heart of this theological vision is the recognition that, as human beings, we live within the dynamic finitude of history and creation.

In response to my observations regarding his position in a LOGIA review of his work, Becker has in some measure agreed with my assessment. Nevertheless, he has claimed that the provisionality of truth is consistent with Scripture, in that Scripture teaches that truth is eschatological. In other words, for Becker, the ultimate truth of revelation can only be unveiled at the end of time. Until then, we must presumably grasp for truth here and there, hoping that we have in the midst of finitude and the vagaries of history come to some semblance of what God is communicating to us.

Nevertheless, as Luther rightly states in *The Bondage of the Will*: “The Holy Spirit is no skeptic.” Luther goes on to observe in the same passage, although God in his infinite wisdom hid many things from us which will only come to

light on the last day, what he has chosen to reveal to us is perfectly clear. Ultimately, he has revealed the very deepest mystery to us in Christ. Indeed, Christ possesses all God’s glory and wisdom in his humanity, thereby making it possible for us to receive the fullness of God’s revelation through our encounter with him in Word and sacrament.

Therefore, although it cannot be denied that human beings are the products of finitude and situatedness within creation and history, it is the Lutheran claim that even in our relative and finite world, that the infinite God has definitively communicated his fullness to us in Christ. By his eschatological act of death and resurrection, Christ ended all provisionality and vouchsafed the goal and purpose of creation in the unconditional promise of the gospel. In this, he sums up all things in himself (Eph 1:10). Moreover, he promised that the perfection and infinity of his truth would be present in the finite mediums of the Scripture and the sacraments. In light of these biblical and confessional truths, Becker’s provisionalist approach to theology is largely sterile.

**Dr. Jack Kilcrease**

LCMS Layman and Adjunct Professor of Theology at the Institute for Lutheran Theology and of Philosophy at Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI

**Please Help Missionary Pastor Wildauer!!**

Pastor Micah Wildauer has been in West Africa, since August 2015. He teaches at the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies (CLET, acronym of the French title), the seminary of the Lutheran Church of Togo, in Dapaong, Togo. The intent of CLET is to train men to serve as village pastors and be a gathering place for seminars. It serves eight Lutheran Church bodies from seven countries. Students bring their families and study for up to three years. In Pastor Wildauer’s summer newsletter he profiled three students from countries outside Togo.



After Pastor Wildauer arrived in Togo, his initial assignment was to continue to learn French. He has been successful because he is now teaching in that language. He also teaches distance learning and continuing education courses, as needed, throughout Francophone West Africa.

Pastor Wildauer, whose parents are LCMS teachers, was born in Bremen, IN, and baptized there in a charter congregation of the LCMS, graduated from Concordia University Texas and Concordia Theological Seminary. He served dual parishes in Milwaukee, WI.

Mrs. Robin Wildauer was born in Versailles, MO, and was baptized and confirmed at Grace Lutheran Church in Versailles. She graduated from Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, in 2008. The Wildauers have three children, Samuel, Elizabeth and David.

Missionary Wildauer faces a real challenge in raising significant funds to make his mission possible. Checks with a memo showing a designation for Pastor Wildauer should be sent to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,  
P.O. Box 790089, St. Louis, MO 63179-0089.

# LUTHERAN CONCERNS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**Monday, January 16, 2017**

## LCA Conference Presentations (Tentative)

...[T]hy Word is truth. [John 17:17]

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...* [2 Timothy 3:16-17]

*[T]he Word of the Lord endures forever.* [1 Peter 1:25]

6:40 a.m. - <b>Registration Opens</b>
7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. - Bible Study
8:00 a.m. to 8:10 a.m. - Opening Devotion
8:10 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. - Welcome and Greetings from the LCA (Mr. Walter Dissen, Esq.) and the LCMS Indiana District
8:20 a.m. to 8:50 a.m. - Guest Speaker - Rev. Paul Harris, "Stand Here Fathers; 'Quit You Like Men' (1 Cor. 16:13)" [Order of Creation, Role of Men in Three Estates]
8:50 a.m. to 9:20 a.m. - Questions and Answers
9:20 a.m. to 9:35 a.m. - Break
9:35 a.m. to 10:05 a.m. - Guest Speaker - President Matthew Harrison
10:05 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. - Questions and Answers
10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. - Guest Speaker - Rev. Heath R. Curtis, "Natural Law and Women in Combat"
11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - Questions and Answers
11:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon - Guest Speaker - Mr. Mark O. Stern, Esq., "My People are Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge: The Vital Need for Christian Higher Education"
12:00 noon - 12:10 p.m. - Questions and Answers
<b>12:20 p.m. to 1:20 p.m. - Lunch Served in the Meeting Room</b>
1:20 p.m. to 2:10 p.m. - Guest Speaker - President Daniel Gard, "LCMS Higher Education in the 21st Century"
2:10 p.m. to 3:10 p.m. - Guest Speaker - Dr. Adam Francisco, "The Challenge of Islam"
3:10 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. - Questions and Answers
3:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. - <b>Panel Discussion with All Presenters</b>
5:00 p.m. to 5:10 p.m. - Closing Remarks and Closing Prayer
5:30 p.m. - <b>LCA Annual Business Meeting</b> (Paid Members Only)

The conference will be held at Don Hall's Guest House. The rates are **\$89.00** + taxes for a standard room or **\$99.00** + taxes for a king room; rates include two breakfast vouchers/day. When making your reservation, mention that you are attending **THE LUTHERAN CONCERNS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CODE: GROUP 115**. To be guaranteed a room, reservations must be made by December 15, 2016. There is free airport shuttle service from the airport to Don Hall's. At the time of check-in, breakfast and dinner coupons (free breakfast and free dinner) will be given for each room (maximum two of each per room). A free lunch will be served in the meeting room (if registration is postmarked by 12/16/2016). You must make your own Guest House reservation.



## REGISTRATION FORM

LCA Annual Conference · January 16, 2017  
Don Hall's Guest House · 1313 West Washington Center Road · Fort Wayne, IN 46825  
260-489-2524 · 800-348-1999 · [www.donhallsguesthouse.com](http://www.donhallsguesthouse.com)  
**Annual LCA Membership: \$35.00**

I will attend the meeting:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

LCMS District \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch Preference:**  Swiss Steak  Chicken [If you have special dietary needs, please indicate on your registration form.]

Annual membership fee (\$35) enclosed \_\_\_\_\_.

Paid LCA member conference registration fee: \$60 if postmarked by 12/16/2016; \$65 if postmarked thereafter. Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_.

Non-member conference registration fee: \$70 if postmarked by 12/16/2016; \$75 if postmarked thereafter. Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_.

Half day (AM or PM) registration fee is 50% less of above fee. If lunch is desired, add \$10; must be postmarked by 12/16/2016. Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_.

**Seminary students and personnel** will have the registration fee waived, but to receive **lunch for \$10**, registration must be postmarked by 12/16/2016.

I will pay at the door \_\_\_\_\_.

**A free lunch will be served to early registrants who pay the applicable registration fee by 12/16/2016, or at the door.**

Make check payable to **LUTHERAN CONCERNS ASSOCIATION**. Please detach this registration form and send to Lutheran Concerns Association · 149 Glenview Drive · New Kensington, PA 15068-4921

**The Lutheran Clarion**

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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

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).

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Lutheran Concerns Association  
November 2016



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New Kensington, PA 15068-4921