

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



Lutheran Concerns Association
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Op-Ed Commentary

Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v Cuomo, 592 U.S. __, (No. 20A87, November 25, 2020) (per curiam) *

As we saw throughout 2020, unusual times prompt unusual actions. States throughout America have imposed restrictions on travel, business, and gathering. The State of New York, acting through its governor, issued certain Executive Orders restricting the assembly of people. These orders not only impacted its businesses but also specifically regulated places of worship. They restricted attendance at services to ten persons in areas declared “red” zones, and to twenty-five if the zone was labeled “orange.” Prior to these orders both the Diocese and the synagogue (in the consolidated case) had complied with all guidelines and operated at 25 to 33% capacity for months without an outbreak. The Diocese brought suit to enjoin the enforcement of these orders on the basis of the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or *prohibiting the free exercise thereof*.

Their request for preliminary injunctive relief, meaning an injunction before trial, was denied in both the trial court and in the court of appeals. An emergency application for injunctive relief was sought in the Supreme Court. The Court accepted the application and issued a *per curiam* opinion granting the temporary injunction. A *per curiam* opinion is one that is issued by the Court in its own name, rather than by a particular jurist.

The Court found that the Diocese had met the necessary conditions. First, they were likely to prevail at trial. Second, they suffered an irreparable injury. That is, once a day of worship is past, that day cannot be brought back. Third, the relief they requested would not burden the public interest.

The orders were found to meet the threshold requirement of neutrality to religion. A regulation must apply to religious activity on an equal basis as it does to other activities or entities. These orders on their face, that is, in explicit terms, singled out houses of worship for treatment. Even within the most restrictive red zone, while churches were limited to an attendance capacity of ten, there was no limit on businesses and services which the government had deemed “essential.” The evidence which had been produced showed that the convergence of people at factories

* Wording from the opinion has been used without further attribution or quotation.

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Why We Need the Synod

Introduction

One of the signs that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (hereafter LCMS) is succumbing to the attitudes of American Evangelical sectarianism are laymen and clergy who have no interest in associating with, supporting, or seeking the counsel and aid of the church-at-large. Although claiming to be Lutheran, they think that their congregation, big or small, is self-sufficient and that they have no need for the synod.

Among pastors, this attitude is found among those who:

- 1) don't like mutual accountability to fellow pastors, because—maybe—they have something to hide in their doctrine or behavior; or
- 2) who are building for themselves a little kingdom of obedient followers and “yes men” officers, and don't want outside interference; or
- 3) who administer such a large and prestigious congregation that they think they are superior to the common parish pastor, and see the synod as a waste of their time and their congregation's treasury; or
- 4) who simply have no concern for what will happen to their flock after they are gone.

Other reasons for such “anti-synod” attitudes among pastors can be cited. Among laymen, this is often found among folks who see the church as a mere social fellowship, not as a place where the Word of God is preached and taught, and the sacraments administered; or they were influenced by a pastor who had nothing good to say about the synod. I have seen cases of all the above, both clergy and lay.

This phenomenon is happening now because American religious culture changed significantly in the latter part of the 20th century. Where America used to be a nation of denominations,¹ today it is increasingly a nation of “non-denominational,” i.e., independent, congregations. Almost all the mega-churches that get all the attention in metropolitan areas are non-denominational. They seem to be the “wave of the future,” and the “mainline denomination” increasingly seems to be irrelevant to the religious needs

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and schools had contributed to the spread of the virus, yet these remained less restricted. (Remember, there had been no outbreaks attributable to worship services of the Diocese).

Because the order was not generally applicable to all and lacked neutrality, it would be examined under the standard of strict scrutiny. Strict scrutiny requires that restrictions must be narrowly tailored and also serve a compelling state interest. The Court found that the order was not narrowly tailored because a less restrictive alternative was available. "It is hard to believe that admitting more than 10 people to a 1,000 seat church ... would create a more serious health risk than the State allows."

The State also argued that the case was moot, meaning there was nothing left to determine, since during the course of the litigation the zone of the Diocese had been re-categorized from "red" to "yellow," and 50% capacity was now permitted. However, the order itself remained in place, the zone of the Diocese's churches could be classified as "red" again, thereby reinstating the ten person limit. Thus the risk of imminent harm remained. "The loss of First Amendment freedoms, for even minimal periods of time, unquestionably constitutes irreparable injury."

Writing a separate concurring opinion, Justice Gorsuch provided insightful observations about the case and the holding. Government is not free to disregard the First Amendment in time of crisis. No apparent reason exists why people may not gather, subject to identical restrictions, in houses of worship, especially when the religious institutions have made plain they stand ready, willing, and able to follow all safety precautions of the "essential" businesses. The only explanation seems to be that religious places are not as essential as secular ones.

"Even if the Constitution can take a holiday during this pandemic, it cannot take a sabbatical." The willingness of the judicial branch to defer to the political branch of government in the early days of the pandemic are gone. Those early days referred to the Court's decision of May 30, 2020, *South Bay United Pentecostal v Newsome*, an appeal by a church in California concerning attendance restrictions imposed by Governor Newsome. *South Bay* was also an application for preliminary injunctive relief, after the injunction had been denied by the trial court and the court of appeals. The Supreme Court denied the application by order, so no opinion of the court was entered. However, Chief Justice Roberts filed a concerning opinion in the denial of the injunction.

In the present concurrence of Justice Gorsuch here, he finds that the reasoning in the *South Bay* concurrence was based largely on the case of *Jacobson v Massachusetts* (1905) concerning the smallpox pandemic of the time. While *Jacobson* concerned government actions during a pandemic, it was not a First Amendment case. It involved a different claimed right, a different standard of review, and a different restriction. A regulation at the time required citizens to receive the smallpox vaccination, or show that they qualified for certain exemptions, or pay a

\$5 fine. Mr. Jacobson argued that under Due Process of the Fourteenth Amendment he had a right of bodily integrity and could refuse the vaccine. Thus *Jacobson* did not involve religious liberties, nor did it invoke other First Amendment issues. Second, *Jacobson* was decided under a different and simpler standard: rational basis. The State was not held to the strict conditions, but only needed to show a rational basis for its regulation. Finally, the restriction was not a blanket one: Mr. Jacobson had a choice of three options: get the vaccine, show exemption, or pay the fine. Mr. Jacobson was arguing that he need not do any of the three. Therefore, while the *Jacobson* decision does address some of the government's authority to combat a pandemic, it is not a religious liberty case. In fact, the *Jacobson* opinion itself said that the challenged vaccine regulation withstood the challenge only because it did *not* contravene the Constitution or infringe on any right.

Just what is the scope of the *Diocese of Brooklyn* decision? Only time will fully tell. Its procedural posture is quite unusual. The Supreme Court issued a pre-judgment injunction. That means that the litigation pending in the trial court had not been concluded. Why is that significant? Because in the ordinary course of things the trial court might reach a different judgment after all the evidence has been gathered and all the witnesses heard. It is also significant because although an appeal on the issue of the early injunctive relief had been taken to the Court of Appeals, that court had not completed a full review of the case because the case was still being tried. Final judgment on all matters had not been entered. As Justice Kavanaugh wrote in his concurring opinion: the Court's orders today are not final decisions on the merits.

The trial court had not finished its work, the appellate court had not finished its work, yet the Supreme Court still took the case. The Court found that the Diocese was likely to succeed on its claim, and that the order was not narrowly tailored. Neither the trial court nor the appellate court reached this conclusion. How could both courts miss the ball? This strongly suggests that the Supreme Court saw something new about the essence of the Free Exercise clause: that the inability to meet for worship fell squarely within the scope of the protections of the First Amendment. Unlike *Jacobson*, this involved a "textually explicit right." There may and will be differing views on the outer boundaries of the exercise of reli-

The Lutheran Clarion—13 Years!

In September 2020, we started our 13th year of publishing the *Clarion*. We strive to present and uphold the truth of God's Holy Word. **We could use your help.**

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



Thank You to St. Paul's Lutheran Church Union Grove, WI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Union Grove, WI, generously contributed their Children's Christmas Program and Christmas Eve offerings to the Lutheran Concerns Association. In January we received a check for **\$2,248.50!**



Thank you to each and every member at St. Paul's and particularly to the pastor, Rev. David Ramirez, formerly an LCA Board Member. Your gift will notably help the LCA in our mission to be a clear voice for faithfulness to the one true faith.

gion. But if it does not include meeting for worship, what does it mean, if anything?

"The restrictions at issue here, by effectively barring many from attending religious services, strike at the very heart of the First Amendment's guarantee of religious liberty."

The kernel of this decision might be condensed as being a reminder that while the Constitution does not say everything it means, it means everything that it says.

Although *Diocese of Brooklyn* is not a decision on the merits, the Court has shown that it does have significance, and has used it numerous times to reverse other religious liberty cases for reconsideration. Three of them are helpful in understanding the scope of *Diocese of Brooklyn*.

The case of *South Bay Pentecostal Church* had again made its way to the Supreme Court, and was reversed and remanded for reconsideration. This indicates that *Diocese of Brooklyn*, not the May 30th *South Bay* decision, should be looked to as the guiding, if not controlling, authority. The *South Bay* case has already been reheard in the trial court and on appeal, and another application for injunction relief is presently pending in the Supreme Court. The outcome in *South Bay III* will likely elucidate the contours of *Diocese of Brooklyn*.

Second, two days after granting the injunction in *Diocese of Brooklyn*, the Court declined to intervene in a case concerning a church in Louisiana, *Spell v Edwards* (November 27, 2020). Reverend Spell had been arrested for allegedly violating the state stay-at-home order, and, it is claimed, held services with more than 500 and 1,200 worshippers. The case was dismissed as moot as the order had been lifted. One should not overlook, however, the background factor that the violations of the stay-at-home order in *Spell* were not minimal. This is in sharp contrast to the diligent observation of safety factors by the Diocese of Brooklyn. It should be a reminder that the Free Exercise clause is more of a shield against undue government interference, restriction, or oppression, then it is a sword to use as a trump card to do as one pleases under the mantle of religious liberty.

Third, the Court also declined to intervene in the gov-

LCA Board of Directors Updates

Lutheran Concerns Association (LCA) recognizes with thanks to God the faithful, dedicated service of **Dr. John Rahe** on the LCA Board of Directors and his long service to the Indiana District of our Synod as well as to the Synod. John is a fifth generation "Missourian" who served nine years on the Indiana District Board of Directors, was a delegate to six Synodical Conventions, and served his congregation in multiple capacities. John also served as President of the Indiana Dental Association and on the Board of Trustees of the American Dental Association.

LCA welcomes to its Board **James D. Runzheimer**, Arlington, Texas, who is both an attorney in private practice and a Certified Public Accountant. He was employed by Coopers & Lybrand, Boston, from 1977-1979. He also served as a Captain, United States Army, Airborne Infantry Special Forces, from 1967 to 1971. He has been a lecturer in business law at the University of Texas-Arlington, TX, and with the U.S. Small Business Administration from 1984-2020. He has been both a Synodical Convention Delegate (2013 and 2019) and Texas District Convention Delegate (2012 and 2018). He has been active in many roles in congregations where he was a member.

The Board also wishes to thank **Deaconess Joyce Ostermann**, a true servant of the Lord for the work she has done for many years for the Board of Directors and all members of the LCA. Our annual conferences have been well run thanks to the behind the scenes efforts of Deaconess Ostermann: every year she mailed letters to local congregations, sent out PR notices to media, contacted local congregations, made copies of papers, assembled folders for conference attendees, ensured nametags were printed and ready and welcomed guests with a ready smile and friendly greeting. Thank you, Joyce!

"...Well done, thou good and faithful servant..." Matthew 25:21

ernment's closure of a parochial school in Kentucky in *Danville Christian Academy v Beshear*, (December 17, 2020). At issue was the governor's order closing all schools: public, private, and parochial. The Court denied the application because the governor's closure order was to expire the next day, and schools were scheduled to adjourn for the Christmas recess, effectively making the matter moot. That may be all there is to glean from this case. One should be cognizant, however, that the order and issue here were different. First, the order applied to all schools. Schools were the unified category, and parochial schools had the same treatment as the others. It is logical to treat schools differently than business because they generally involve the gathering of children. There would be a good basis for this order to pass the test of neutrality towards religious activity. Second, temporary closure of a parochial school does not infringe on

religious exercise in the same way nor to the same degree that the closure or severe restriction of worship does. All congregations must meet for worship. The church is known when it gathers around Word and Sacrament. Yet not all churches operate or participate in a parochial school.

The Free Exercise clause is still alive and viable. But congregations would be well advised to analyze their particular situations. Is the law or regulation applied to religious institutions in a particular manner? Does it impact the essence of being the Church? The more attenuated it is, the less likely it violates Free Exercise. Finally, is one complying with the state regulations to the fullest extent that one can, or is one defying the regulations because one thinks or claims that he can? Both the Christian and the Holy Church live and exist in the two kingdoms, right-hand and left. The pandemic will end, but that struggle of duality will remain. And the Holy Church and the Word of God will endure until Christ's return.

Editorial Note: On Friday, February 5, 2021, a divided United States Supreme Court enjoined California's total ban on indoor worship services while allowing secular gatherings of comparable size and density. *South Bay United Pentecostal Church, ET AL, v. Gavin Newsom, Governor of California*, 502 U.S. ____ (2021). The injunction was denied with respect to percentage capacity limitations and with respect to "...singing and chanting during indoor services..." and the order is without prejudice to South Bay presenting new evidence to the District Court that California is not applying the percentage capacity limitations or the prohibition on singing and chanting in a generally applicable manner.

In the May 2021 edition of the *Clarion* the Editorial Group anticipates publishing an editorial on the *South Bay United Pentecostal Church* Supreme Court decision. This case may well be back before the Supreme Court. Our readers can read the full decision by searching the internet for the case name and United States Supreme Court.

Why We Need the Synod

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of Americans. Pastors and lay leaders who want to be "hip" and "surfing the wave" of the future follow the trends, read the books, go to the conferences, and are moving toward the "non-denominational" way of doing church. But it really isn't new at all!

Robert Browne (1550s–1633) was the founder of the "Brownists," a common designation for early Separatists from the Church of England before 1620. His most important works: *A Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Anie*, in which he asserted the right of the church to effect necessary reforms without the authorization of the civil magistrate; and *A Booke which sheweth the life and manners of all True Christians* which set out the

theory of congregational independence, were published at Middelburg in 1582.² Those who followed Browne's ideas became known as "Congregationalists." Baptist theology and its notion of congregational independence originated with John Smyth (1554-1612), who became Puritan, then English Separatist, and then a Baptist Separatist. He began meeting in England with sixty to seventy English Separatists. The persecution of religious nonconformists in England led Smyth to go into exile in Amsterdam with his congregation.³

Many of these Protestants, who didn't fit into the religious environment of the English church, ended up coming to North America. Congregationalism was the established church in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. Baptists were tolerated in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. After the Bill of Rights disestablished state religions, the "independents" grew in numbers and influence throughout all the states. The Restorationist churches known as the "Churches of Christ," established around 1849 out of the Second Great Awakening, were congregationalist in polity. In a similar mood of revival, the Pentecostal churches known as the "Church of God," established around 1901, were also congregationalist in polity. The recent rise of non-denominationalism came about due to the rise of American Evangelicalism in the 1950s, as most of the largest historic denominations succumbed to liberal theology and ecumenical fervor.

There is thus in Christendom a major division over the question of the status and role of the denomination. The oldest view simply assumes that the term "church" refers to the denomination, i.e., the corporation of congregations and ministers in its fellowship. This position is held by the Eastern non-Chalcedonians, the Eastern Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, the Anglican, the Presbyterian, and the Methodist churches. The "congregationalist" view is held by the churches described in the previous paragraph and by others.

Which is the correct view? Why do we need the denomination, which we call the "synod" in our circles? My thesis is that we should associate with, support, and seek the counsel and aid of the synod because such actions are Scriptural, Lutheran, and practical.

Reasons We Need the Synod from Holy Scripture

The first reason that we need the "church," i.e., the synod, is that Jesus established it. To Peter and the disciples at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus said, "I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). Here Jesus introduced to his disciples the term and idea of the "church." He did not say, "on this rock I will build my churches" in the plural. He referred to his church in the singular. Thus, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds refer to Jesus' church in the singular. The Nicene Creed makes that specific with the phrase "one, holy, Christian, and apostolic church." Thus, the attribute of "association" is part of the nature and essence of the church, however it may be structured or governed.

Hermann Sasse wrote an excellent letter to Lutheran pastors on the topic “On the Relation of the Universal Church and the Individual Congregation in the New Testament.”⁴ In that essay, Sasse explained how the Greek word for church, “*ekklesia*,” designates not only the “one, holy Christian, and apostolic church” but also the local congregation.⁵ He also analyzed how that term “*ekklesia*” is used in the New Testament in five ways:

- 1) signifying the hidden church of all believers;
- 2) referring to the church of Jerusalem, the “mother of all churches”;
- 3) indicating all Christians in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria;
- 4) pointing to a church at a local place, e.g., the city of Philippi; and
- 5) describing a church in a particular building, usually a private house.⁶

The second reason that we need the synod is that the church requires someone to recruit, train, and send ministers of the Gospel. This is clear from Peter’s words to the people at Pentecost when he said: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, and for your children, and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (Acts 2:38-39).

It is possible that everyone in Jerusalem that day could have received baptism and the forgiveness of sins from the twelve apostles, but that apostolic ministry could go only so far. Peter proclaims that the promises are for “all who are far off.” This is the universality of the call, i.e., that the call of the Gospel is intended by God to go to all the nations, to the ends of the earth, and to the end of history.⁷ But how can the nations be called, i.e., “how can they hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:14-15). Therefore, there must be someone, or some institution, to recruit, train, and send ministers to the ends of earth until the end of time.

The third reason that we need the synod is that someone needs to call, ordain, and install pastors in every parish or congregation. Here we follow the example of the Apostle Paul, who at the end of his first missionary journey appointed pastors at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 14:21-23). He did not leave that to chance or to the local congregations’ popularity contest. We also see this in Paul’s work in Ephesus, where he appointed twelve pastors for the city and its suburbs (Acts 19:5-7, 20:17-38). We know what criteria Paul used in selecting pastors, because he gives those criteria in his Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9).

The fourth reason that we need the synod is that someone needs to support godly pastors when they face opposition. Paul warns the newly ordained pastors at Ephesus: “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his

own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:28-29). Even so, no ethical and pious pastor can survive for long without the support, assistance, and counsel of the synod, both its officers and fellow pastors.

The fifth reason that we need the synod is for the settlement of disagreements among the ministers of the Gospel and their congregations. Here we follow the example of the apostolic church in its convening of the First Council of Jerusalem, ca. 50 A.D. (Acts 15:1-31). This is given as one “Reason for the Forming of a Synodical Union” in the Preamble of the LCMS Constitution.⁸ The conciliar letter that went out from that council observed that “some people have . . . troubled you with words, unsettling your minds” (Acts 15:24). The purpose of the council was to SETTLE their minds, to SETTLE the arguments, NOT to prolong them. Luke reports that the result of this council was that “the churches were strengthened in the faith and they increased in numbers daily” (Acts 16:5). When we follow the apostolic example of convening councils or synods, we must also follow its example in their purpose, i.e., the settling of disagreements when and where they exist.

Finally, among the Scriptural reasons for the synod is that God has given a variety of gifts to his church and has appointed a variety of offices for it (1 Cor 12:4-31). This also is given as one “Reason for the Forming of a Synodical Union” in the Preamble to the LCMS Constitution.⁹ No one pastor has all the skills necessary to train competent pastors or teachers for the future church. A faculty with diverse talents and experiences is needed. No one pastor has all the skills necessary to establish a mission field by himself. Even the Apostle Paul had Barnabas and John Mark on his first mission journey. Later Silas, Luke, and many others joined Paul. No one pastor has all the skills necessary to begin and administer a reform of a church. Even Martin Luther had Karlstadt and Melancthon at the beginning. Later Bugenhagen, Jonas, and many others joined Luther. No one pastor has all the skills necessary to oversee and care for a synod. Even President C.F.W. Walther had his colleagues Wilhelm Sihler (Vice-President), Theodore Brohm (Vice-President), and F.W. Husmann (Secretary) in the beginning, and many others later in his career.

The Rev. Dr. Martin R. Noland

Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, San Mateo, CA

Dr. Noland’s essay will conclude in a future issue of the *Clarion*; he will cite reasons for a synod from the Book of Concord. Then, drawing from C.F.W. Walther’s “Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod,” he will give numerous reasons for a synod from a practical perspective.

1. See, e.g., Sidney E. Mead, “Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America,” *Church History* 23 no. 4 (Dec. 1954): 291-320.
2. On Browne, see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

- Robert Browne (Brownist); accessed 17 January 2021.
3. On Smyth, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Smyth_\(Baptist_minister\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Smyth_(Baptist_minister)) and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptists#English_separatist_view; accessed 17 January 2021.
 4. See Hermann Sasse, *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, vol. 1, trans. Matthew Harrison, et.al., edited Matthew Harrison (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 136-148.
 5. Sasse, *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, 1:139.
 6. Sasse, *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, 1:141-144.
 7. On the universality of the call, see Johann Gerhard, *Theological commonplaces. On creation and angels, on providence, on election and reprobation, and on the image of God in man before the Fall*, tr. Richard Dinda, eds. Benjamin Mayes and Joshua Hayes (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 175-196 (Locus X, chap. vii).
 8. See *Handbook: Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation* (Saint Louis: LCMS, 2019), 11 (Preamble, 1) (hereafter 2019 Handbook). The Handbook may be accessed and downloaded for free here: <https://www.lcms.org/about/leadership/commission-on-handbook#handbook-editions>; accessed 6 February 2021.
 9. 2019 Handbook, 11 (Preamble, 2).

Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Egger Called to Serve as Seminary President at Saint Louis

Lutheran Concerns Association and the *Lutheran Clarion* thank and praise God and commend the four Electors (Synod President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, Board of Directors Chairman Rev. Dr. Michael Kumm; Council of Presidents Representative Rev. Dr. John Wille who is President of the South Wisconsin District, and the Board of Regents of Concordia Seminary as a Board) for issuing a divine call to Rev. Dr. Thomas Egger to become President of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Egger is unquestionably committed to Holy Scripture as the inspired, inerrant Word of God and to the Lutheran Book of Concord as a true and correct exposition of Holy Scripture.

He was born in 1971 in Muscatine, IA. In 1993 he graduated from Central College, Pella, IA; received his Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1997 and his Ph. D. in Biblical Studies from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 2019. He holds the Gustav and Sophie Butterbach Chair of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Seminary where he became Chairman of the Exegetical Department in 2020. From 2005 to 2019 he was an Assistant Professor there. He serves on the Board of Regents of Concordia University, Chicago, and served on the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations from 2005-2019. From 2000-2005 he served as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Storm Lake, IA. He is married (wife Victoria) and they have two sons and four daughters.

This divine call to the Rev. Dr. Thomas Egger surely offers great hope and expectations for the future of The

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Concordia Seminary as a Biblically solid Synod and Seminary that very energetically and unabashedly proclaim both Law and Gospel to a world desperately needing such proclamation.

Dr. Daniel Preus, Interim President of Concordia Seminary, is to be commended for his dedicated and faithful service.

*Now thank we all our God with hearts
and hands and voices, Who wondrous
things has done, in whom His world re-
joices, Who from our mothers' arms has
blest us on our way with countless gifts
of love and still is ours today.*

Lutheran Service Book #895

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. (CTF), 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. As of December 31, 2020, the fund assets were \$19,096.00. The CTF was formed, independent of Synod, in 1999 to support LCMS students at Concordia Theological Seminary. Total CTF assets are \$7,390,621.00.



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.

Are You a Member of the Lutheran Concerns Association?

If you are already a member, that is great! If you would like to join we would love to have you and your input in the organization. Information about the LCA is at our web page at www.lutheranclarion.org. Refer to [About Us] for more details. The membership fee is \$35.00 per year, which you can mail using the enclosed remittance envelope.



Love Him for Us

Book Review: Barbara Marquart Johnston, Lutheran News Inc., <http://www.christiannewsinc.com> \$16.95

"From Fort to Fort" are the first words written by Barbara Marquart Johnston on the back cover of her book about life with the former Rev. Dr. Kurt Marquart. She could have written "From Fort to Fort via Australia" which would have covered almost all of her story beginning with her life in Fort Worth, TX, traveling to Australia to marry Kurt as he served a Lutheran congregation there and finally coming to Fort Wayne Seminary, Indiana, with him as he finished his life as a servant of the Lord as a beloved professor.

Barb begins her story with a brief background of high school and her job as the secretary at her home church. It was during this secretarial job that she met Kurt Marquart who came in for an appointment with her pastor. Because Kurt had accepted a call to Australia, he needed to sell his car and Barbara was looking for one. Talking about and making that deal gave them time to get to know each other enough to recognize mutual admiration. Most of their courtship was via long letters between Texas and Australia. Even Kurt's eagerly awaited proposal of marriage came in the mail!

Barbara traveled by ocean liner to her marriage in August of 1961 in Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. She tells of many interesting incidents about life in the manse (parsonage). Outdoor plumbing, chamber pots, a wringer washing machine, a small refrigerator without a freezer and an outdoor clothesline for drying all of the laundry. She writes that hanging out nappies (diapers) was her private prayer time. She used this uninterrupted time to pray for friends, far away family, her own growing family and members of the congregation. Those of us having grown up with any of these "inconveniences" will easily relate to Barb's stories.

Her flexibility, sense of humor and trust in her Lord served Barbara well through all the joyous and stressful times in her life with Kurt Marquart. This is the story about the life of a pastor's wife written to encourage other clergy wives in their calling as a helpmeet, however it seems to me to also be an enlightening read for others!

- Laity, read it to understand the joys and sorrows of your pastor's wife. You will admire and love her more.
- Pastors, read it to appreciate what your spouse may encounter in the congregation.
- Everyone, read it to get tips on how to gracefully handle sticky situations and all kinds of personalities.

Barbara is like any other Christian, both saint and sinner yet freely redeemed and forgiven by the blood of The Lamb. Praise our Lord!

Greta Zeller Martin
Bristol, WI

Doctrinal Purity?

Christians who are committed to teaching the catholic faith whole and entire have been chided for their interest in "incessant doctrinal purification." Which part of "incessant doctrinal purification" would be troublesome, ungodly, or immoral?

What does "incessant" mean? It means never to stop. Is it wrong to be constantly or without ceasing interested in teaching only and all of that which has come down to the church through the prophets and the apostles? St. John encourages us to remain and abide in the doctrine of Christ (2Jn 1:9). To fail to abide in or remain in the doctrine of Christ would be to cease to be in it. So "incessant" abiding is hardly reprehensible.

So maybe the problem is purity. Purification of teaching is perhaps a bad thing. Is it? Then why does the apostle charge Pastor Timothy to forbid the teaching of any different doctrine (1Tim 1:3)? Or that Titus is to constantly teach "what accords with sound doctrine." Unsound or impure doctrine would not be acceptable to the Apostle. Peter tells us that we should long for pure spiritual milk (1Pt 2:2). Contaminated milk will kill a baby. Impure teaching can be deadly. It appears "purification" is not the problem either.

Could doctrine be the problem? If we could just get rid of that pesky and divisive "doctrine," things would be so much better for the church. Perhaps we could adopt a Rodney King-like ambivalence toward doctrine, "Why can't we all just get along?" Maybe we could be less devoted to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). Yet, our Lord calls on teachers to keep a close watch on their teaching or doctrine (1Tim 4:16). Ultimately, false teaching will corrupt what is to be taught about our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, as Peter warns us (2Pt 2:1). The Lord has given us His own Son, how shall we not in humble faith also see to it that the church that bears His name should always teach only the catholic faith about Him? What exactly is wrong with incessant doctrinal purification?

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The above article, which is Dr. Murray's *Memorial Moment* for January 7, 2016, is used with permission.

Pastors, do Your Church Elders Receive the *Clarion*?

The *Clarion* addresses matters that your elders should be aware of and that can be discussed at elders' meetings. A good example is the above article by Dr. Scott Murray: *Doctrinal Purity*? If your elders are not currently receiving the *Clarion*, we will send free copies to each of them. Please send their names and addresses to gzolson2000@yahoo.com and we will sign them up!



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