

It's a Great Time To Be the Church

Dr. Dale A. Meyer

Oct. 17, 2020



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

It's a Great Time To Be the Church



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

- **Has church attendance declined?**
- **Has church membership dropped?**
- **Do you know congregations that have closed?**
- **Has public morality changed in America?**
- **Have seminary enrollments declined?**



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

Individualism tends to weaken mediating power centers that stand between the individual and the nation as a whole — from families to local communities (including local governments), (and) religious institutions.... A hyper-individualist culture is likely to be governed by a hyper-centralized government, and each is likely to exacerbate the worst inclinations of the other.” — Yuval Levin, The Fractured Republic, 99-100



**Concordia
Seminary**
ST. LOUIS

“Everyone’s in the dark looking for the switch. When you’re in the middle of history the meaning of things is usually unclear... In real time most things are obscure.... ‘Only slowly did it dawn upon us that the whole world structure and order that we had inherited from the nineteenth century was gone.’”

— Peggy Noonan, *Wall Street Journal*, February 2018



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

- **Wow, the values here are different!**
- **Wow, the people here are different!**
- **Wow, the talk here helps me understand life!**
- **And thank God, I don't leave here feeling condemned!**



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

**Think of your congregation
as a “mediating institution.”**



**Concordia
Seminary**
ST. LOUIS

Let Jesus out of the museum!



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

Put the Bible on the shelf, and...



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

“You” is plural, all ya-all.



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

Don't be holier than thou!



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

**Does “Jesus died for your sins”
communicate?**



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

Interpret reality theologically.



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

“The ultimate soul-forming institutions in a free society are frequently religious institutions. Traditional religion offers a direct challenge to the ethic of the age of fracture. Religious commitments command us to a mixture of responsibility, sympathy, lawfulness, and righteousness that align our wants with our duties. They help form us to be free.”

– Yuval Levin, *The Fractured Republic*, 204



**Concordia
Seminary**
ST. LOUIS

“It is wise to worry about the political consequences of what Matthew Arnold called “the melancholy, long, withdrawing roar” of faith leaving the culture, and leaving it susceptible to feverish quests for redemption through political action.” – George F. Will, The Conservative Sensibility, 482



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

“Formation into a vision of human flourishing requires an environment that embodies continuity, historical memory, rituals marking seasons of life, intergenerational interdependence, and most important of all, common worship.”

– Hunter, 283



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS

It's a Great Time To Be the Church



Concordia
Seminary
ST. LOUIS