



# FCC Membership Biography

---



## Ron Baer

My conversion was not so much a single catastrophic event, but rather a surging forward in faith at various points in my life. My father was a strictly regimented corporate accountant by trade, an apt characteristic for a respectable Missouri Synod Lutheran Church (LCMS) father. My mother was from a very poor family of twelve, who despite promising academic skills and interest quit school after 8th grade to help care for her brothers and sisters.

I was born in St. Louis, Missouri on August 20th, 1958. This is relevant only in that I was a mid-Boomer baby, blessed with relative world-peace, unprecedented prosperity, and a resultant penchant for rebellion. It also meant that I was

“Baptized” as an infant and raised in a very committed LCMS family and neighborhood. We all went to the same LCMS Church and LCMS school (through 3rd Grade).

My father was promoted and transferred to Chicago in the summer of 1966 (the January '67 Chicago Blizzard, and the '68 Democratic National Convention). I was then in 4th grade. While playing soccer in the school parking lot during recess, I first had someone tell me that they did not believe in God. I was dumbfounded and said that it was like not believing in oxygen (invisible, but obviously real). In hindsight, I don't believe I fully appreciated the Gospel or had necessarily put my faith in Jesus, I just had never been exposed to any alternative worldview.

In Chicago, through 9th grade, my family rarely missed an LCMS Sunday service or Sunday School. I eventually attended confirmation classes, where I asked a lot of questions. Mostly these questions (challenges) were just teenage obstinance, but a few were legitimate. I wanted clarification on the nature of the sacraments and some of the Lutheran traditions. Questions were simply not tolerated. Memorize and repeat, that was the expectation.

We moved to Kansas City before 10th grade started. By this point I was indifferent to “religion”. I knew every LCMS creed, litany, responsive prayer, and confessional by heart. I knew most of the LCMS hymns by heart. The LCMS followed a predetermined 52-week topical sermon plan based on church seasons. No one actually carried (or read) a Bible, and teaching was not expository. I wasn't really hostile about God/church/religion, it was just a family-thing to be endured silently if my dad got angry and ordered me go.

---

In August 1976, my parents drove me the 2 hours to Manhattan, KS (KSU). None of us said a single word on the trip. I never moved back home. I remained passively indifferent to religion, attending church only occasionally, but taking notes fervently when there. Jan and I met in summer semester 1981 and married in May 1982.

We began attending an LCMS church (Denver) when our first son was born in 1986. In 1989, we moved to Los Angeles. During a 1st Corinthians Bible study, I had a literally chilling thought hit me; I could choose to reject it all. I greatly increased my Bible study, and soon became active in church leadership. I eventually served three years as the chairman of our LCMS elementary school, and several years as an elder. Meanwhile, I completed my BA at The Master's University (i.e., John MacArthur) in Santa Clarita, CA. While there I left the LCMS due to irreconcilable differences over the sacraments and traditions of the LCMS. I could not in good conscious remain in LCMS leadership when I no longer believed the distinctives they taught and practiced.

Jan and I joined an Evangelical Free Church in Los Angeles. I continued to study intensely, but remained largely uninvolved. We moved to Atlanta in 2015 and joined a Southern Baptist church. I knew that baptism was not the LCMS' mystic ritual imparting salvation, and came to understand that believers-baptism (preferably by emersion) was a command from Christ and a public confession of what Christ had already done in my life. I was baptized on August 14th, 2016. I have continued to experience surges in faithful growth.