

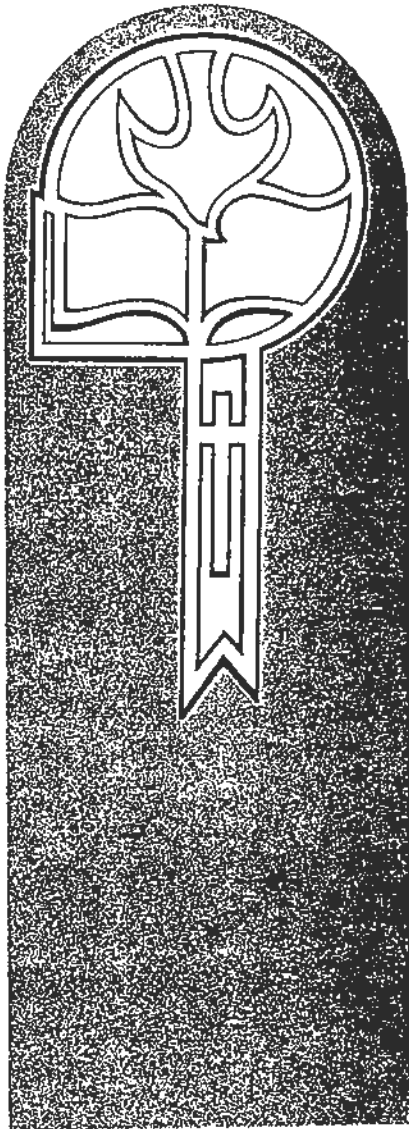
REPORT ON DISSENT

FROM

**A
STATEMENT
OF SCRIPTURAL
AND
CONFESSIONAL
PRINCIPLES**

AND

**Other Doctrinal
Resolutions of
The Lutheran
Church—Missouri
Synod**



*A Report of the
Commission on Theology and Church Relations
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
September 1974*

REPORT ON DISSENT FROM A STATEMENT OF SCRIPTURAL AND CONFSSIONAL PRINCIPLES AND

Other Doctrinal Resolutions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

I. Survey of Materials Received

At the time when this report is being prepared, about 575 communications expressing objections to the adoption of "A Statement" by the New Orleans convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (Resolution 3-01, *Convention Proceedings*, 1973, pp. 127—128) have been received by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. Most of these expressions of dissent came from pastors; some came from parochial school teachers; several came from professors at synodical schools; a few came from pastoral conferences, congregations, church councils, and individual lay people.

The receipt of each of these communications was acknowledged with the promise that, following their careful and serious consideration, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations would make a report to the Synod.

It should also be noted that in response to a request of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations staff, 38 Districts submitted information about the action of their District conventions relative to the adoption of "A Statement" by the New Orleans convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Fifteen Districts report that no specific action was taken by their conventions directly pertaining to "A Statement." Nine Districts adopted resolutions supportive of "A Statement." Four Districts will request the Anaheim convention of the Synod to reconsider Resolution 3-01 of the New Orleans convention, and ten Districts will urge that Resolution 3-01 be rescinded. In no case, however, did Districts asking the Synod to reconsider or rescind Resolution 3-01 do so on the basis of any specific doctrinal objections to "A Statement."

At the outset it should be noted that most of the communications addressed to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations oppose the adoption of "A Statement" on constitutional grounds. The two major constitutional objections are the following:

1. The adoption of "A Statement" in effect amends Article II of the

Constitution without following the procedures set down in Article XIV and adds to the confessional base of the Synod;

2. The adoption of "A Statement" amounts to establishing doctrine by a majority vote contrary to Article VIII, C of the Constitution which provides that "all matters of doctrine and conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God."

The Commission on Constitutional Matters has taken objections of this nature under consideration and has rendered a ruling which has been published in *The Lutheran Witness*, the official organ of the Synod.

While it is not within the province of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to deal with constitutional issues, the CTCR concurs with the opinion of the Commission on Constitutional Matters and supports especially the "Proposal" offered in the concluding portion of its ruling: "Since questions regarding doctrinal resolutions and statements have been distressing the Synod at least since 1953 and have contributed to the unrest within the synodical fellowship, the Commission on Constitutional Matters will recommend to the 1975 convention the appointment of a special committee to draft a proposed addition to the *Handbook* in order to set forth clearly:

- a. The status of doctrinal statements as distinguished from the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions;
- b. The procedures for adoption of such statements;
- c. The procedures for proper expression of dissent and possible revision." (*The Lutheran Witness*, June 16, 1974, p. 24)

It should be noted furthermore that many of the communications which express objections to the adoption of "A Statement" on theological grounds fail to indicate the extent and nature of the theological dissent. In several cases explanations for this failure are offered. Some correspondents plead that the demands of the parish ministry did not permit them to undertake the time-consuming task of preparing a detailed theological critique; some indicate that they would rather share their theological disagreements with "A Statement" with those who have the immediate supervision of their doctrine; some flatly declare that they do not recognize the authority of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations to require a detailed statement of their reasons for dissent; still others even voice the suspicion that the CTCR request for a clarification of their theological objections to "A Statement" is intended to entrap them.

After eliminating those communications which oppose the adoption of "A Statement" on constitutional grounds and those communications which fail to specify the nature of their theological objections to "A Statement," there remain about 50 communications which have been very helpful in the preparation of this theological evaluation of "A Statement."

On behalf of the Synod, which throughout its entire history has paid serious attention to matters of doctrine, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations expresses sincere appreciation to all who, out of their own genuine concern for sound doctrine, carefully studied "A Statement" and candidly shared both their positive and negative reactions. On the basis of

these responses this report will identify the major areas of disagreement with and/or misunderstanding of the theological formulations of "A Statement."

II. General Criticisms

Some criticisms of "A Statement" of a more general nature should be noted first.

A. OMISSIONS AND INADEQUACIES

"A Statement" is faulted for omitting some topics and for failing to treat others adequately. For instance, topics not treated at all are the first use of the law, the sacraments, and liturgical forms. A topic not explicitly treated is the work of the Holy Spirit. Had "A Statement" been intended to offer an exhaustive presentation of the entire body of Christian doctrine and an exhaustive discussion of Christian ethics such a criticism would be understandable. The expressly declared purpose of "A Statement," however, was to assist in identifying areas which may need further attention in terms of the Synod's doctrinal position. In other words, "A Statement" focused on issues in controversy and, therefore, quite naturally omitted topics which do not require special attention at the present time. One may as well fault the Apostles' Creed for not including in the Third Article a lengthy exposition of the Holy Spirit's work in the justification and sanctification of the sinner or criticize Melancthon for not treating every topic of Christian doctrine in his "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope."

B. IMBALANCE

"A Statement" is criticized for its "imbalance." Much more space is given to the section that deals with Holy Scripture than to the section which confesses Christ as Savior and Lord. While it is inconceivable that even the most limited discussion of Lutheran theology should omit a confession of Christ's saviorhood and lordship, it is nevertheless in the very nature of the case that in a document addressed principally to issues in controversy those topics concerning which there is disagreement should receive more detailed treatment than others. Most of the disagreements in the Synod center in questions pertaining to the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Scriptures. If "A Statement" is to serve the purpose of identifying areas of the Synod's theological position which need further clarification, it is simply inevitable that disputed points receive the most attention.

III. Specific Criticism

Besides these criticisms pertaining to the whole scope and format of "A Statement," other more specific strictures have been made against each of the six parts of "A Statement." In the interest of fairness it ought to

be pointed out that the objections to "A Statement" treated in this report were gathered from the total correspondence and that it must not be assumed that everyone who expressed disagreement with "A Statement" on one or the other point wishes to be identified with every criticism submitted to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. The major criticisms of each part of "A Statement" are noted in the following section of this report and are accompanied by a response.

A. CRITICISM OF PART I

1. Universalism

The most serious objection to Part I of "A Statement" has to do with the declaration "that all who die without faith in Him [Christ] are eternally damned." This assertion is deemed untenable in view of the consolation traditionally offered to the parents of an infant who died without opportunity to be baptized and on the basis of the contention that both the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions teach only that those who reject Christ will be damned.

Relative to the eternal state of infants who die before being baptized, it must be noted that traditional pastoral practice is not the foundation of church dogma. It is a basic principle of Lutheran theology that we must carefully distinguish between what is revealed in God's Word and what is not revealed (FC SD XI, 52). Concerning what is not revealed, "we should accustom ourselves not to speculate" (FC SD XI, 13), always mindful of the rule "that it is only from the Word of God that judgments on articles of faith are to be pronounced" (FC SD II, 8). While Lutheran theology on the basis of revelation comforts the parents of infants who died without baptism with the assurance that God is just and upright in all His doings and exhorts them to commit their child into God's hands with the full confidence that all He does is good, Lutheran theology stops short of making pronouncements about God's dealings with such children which go beyond what is revealed in the Word.

It is the opinion of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations that it is in full accord with the Scriptures and the Confessions to teach that *all* who die without faith in Christ are eternally damned:

The Great Commission suggests no other way to make disciples of the nations than by baptizing and teaching (Matt. 28:19-20). St. Paul describes the condition of the Gentiles prior to the time when God "came and preached peace" to them (Eph. 2:17), and therefore prior to any opportunity to reject the Gospel, as "separated from Christ . . . strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Immediately following the marvelous Gospel assurance of John 3:16-18a that whoever believes in the Son of God is not condemned, the evangelist states categorically, "He who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." (John 3:18b; cf. 2 Thess. 1:8)

When the Formula of Concord discusses "how man is converted to

God, how and by what means (namely, the oral Word and the holy sacraments) the Holy Spirit wills to be efficacious in us," it says: "God provides for the public proclamation of his divine, eternal law and the wonderful counsel concerning our redemption, namely, the holy and only saving Gospel of his eternal Son, our only Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Thereby he gathers an eternal church for himself out of the human race and works in the hearts of men true repentance and knowledge of their sins and true faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. And it is God's will to call men to eternal salvation, to draw them to himself, convert them, beget them anew, and sanctify them through this means and in no other way – namely, through his holy Word (when one hears it preached or reads it) and the sacraments (when they are used according to his Word) . . . All who would be saved must hear this preaching, for the preaching and the hearing of God's Word are the Holy Spirit's instrument in, with, and through which he wills to act efficaciously, to convert men to God" (FC SD II, 48–52). "We must condemn with all seriousness and zeal, and in no wise tolerate in the church of God, the enthusiasts who imagine that without means, without the hearing of the divine Word and without the use of the holy sacraments, God draws man to himself, illuminates, justifies, and saves him." (FC SD II, 80; cf. FC Ep II, 13)

In these words the Formula of Concord simply repeats the doctrine of the earlier symbols. Almost word for word the Augsburg Confession says the same thing, including even the condemnation: "Through the Word and the sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith . . . Our churches condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Spirit comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works." (AC V, 2–4)

The Apology states it as axiomatic that "one cannot deal with God or grasp him except through the Word" (Ap IV, 67). "The Holy Spirit works through the Word and the sacraments" (Ap XXIV, 70; cf. Ap XIII, 5). The Smalcald Articles emphatically declare that "we must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word" (SA III, viii, 3); "we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament." (SA III, viii, 10)

The Large Catechism explains that "although the work was accomplished and forgiveness of sins was acquired on the cross, yet it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word. How should we know that this has been accomplished and offered to us if it were not proclaimed by preaching, by the oral Word? Whence do they know of forgiveness, and how can they grasp and appropriate it, except by steadfastly believing the Scriptures and the Gospel?" (LC V, 31) "Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him and take him as our Lord, unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit." (LC II, 38)

The Formula of Concord sums up what the symbols have said on this subject when it quite categorically declares, "God does not call without

means but through the Word, as indeed he has commanded the preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sin" (FC SD XI, 27), and "wills that all men should hear this proclamation." (FC SD XI, 68)

Finally, we must ask whether the statement of the Apology that the promise of salvation "does not apply to those who are outside of Christ's church" ("*extra ecclesiam Christi*") (Ap IX, 2), and the statement of the Formula of Concord that "it is God's will to call men to eternal salvation . . . through this means and in no other way" ("*visum est Deo per hoc medium, et non alio modo . . . homines ad aeternam salutem vocare*") (FC SD II, 50) do not in fact translate into a) *only* within the church is there salvation (*solum intra ecclesiam salus*), and b) *only* "in the manner just recounted" [*solo* "eo modo (*quem iam recitavimus*)"] will God bring men to eternal salvation (FC SD XI, 23). These two "only's" deserve further attention.

a. *Only within the church is there salvation.* "Where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian church, and outside it no one can come to the Lord Christ" (LC II, 45). "Although the whole world has sought painstakingly to learn what God is and what he thinks and does, yet it has never succeeded in the least" (LC II, 63). "All who are outside the Christian church, whether heathen, Turks, Jews, or false Christians and hypocrites, even though they believe in and worship only the one, true God, nevertheless do not know what his attitude is toward them . . . Therefore they remain in eternal wrath and damnation, for they do not have the Lord Christ, and besides, they are not illuminated and blessed by the gifts of the Holy Spirit." (LC II, 66)

b. *Only in this way will God bring men to eternal salvation.* The Formula of Concord, in setting forth what the Scriptures teach about predestination, enumerates eight points that must be taken together if we want to think or speak correctly and profitably about the eternal election and ordering of the children of God to eternal life. Points 2, 3, and 4 say that God has ordained

2. That this merit and these benefits of Christ are to be offered, given, and distributed to us through his Word and sacraments.

3. That he would be effective and active in us by his Holy Spirit through the Word when it is preached, heard, and meditated on, would convert hearts to true repentance, and would enlighten them in the true faith.

4. That he would justify and graciously accept into the adoption of children and into the inheritance of eternal life all who in sincere repentance and true faith accept Christ. (FC SD XI, 16–18)

The Formula goes on to say that God has "ordained that in the manner just recounted he wills . . . to bring them to salvation" and then adds, "According to the Scriptures all this is included in the teaching of the eternal election of God to adoption and to eternal salvation. It should be understood as included therein and never be excluded or omitted when we speak of the purpose, foreknowledge, election, and ordinance of God to eternal salvation." (FC SD XI, 23–24)

The consistent use by the Lutheran Confessions of what may be called

the "exclusive particles" in setting forth the Scriptural teaching about whom God will bring to eternal salvation and in what manner He will do this, leads to the inescapable conclusion that according to the symbols outside of the church there is no salvation (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) and that the notion of salvation apart from faith in Christ cannot be reconciled with the confessional doctrine.

2. Interim State

Another criticism of Part I of "A Statement" has to do with the assertion: "We believe that those who believe in Christ will enjoy a blissful relationship with Him during the interim between their death and His second coming." It is objected specifically that recognition of Christ's saviorhood and lordship does not depend on one's acceptance of a particular view about the state of the soul between the death of a believer and his resurrection.

It is true, of course, that it is possible for one to hold erroneous opinions about the life after death and still genuinely acclaim Christ as Savior and Lord. This is not to say, however, that it is a matter of indifference if one adopts a position on this point that is contrary to the Scriptures and the church's confession and does so on the plea that neither the Scriptures nor the Confessions have a position which must be recognized. The language of "A Statement" intends to assert that the lordship of Christ extends also over the blessed in the life to come.

As to the state of the soul after death "A Statement" affirms that from the moment of death believers enjoy a blissful relationship with their Savior. In a document adopted in 1969 and commended by the Synod to its membership for reference and guidance (Resolution 2-03, *Convention Proceedings*, 1973, p. 109), the Commission on Theology and Church Relations stated:

The Old Testament Scriptures contain many references to the continuation of life after death. For example, the patriarchs believed that after their death they would be "gathered to their fathers in peace." This expression did not imply interment in a family grave, for it is used of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, even though they were buried far from the land of their fathers (Gen. 25:8-10; 35:29; 49:33; Num. 27:13; Deut. 32:50). The expression "he was gathered to his people" or "he slept with his people" shows the intense hope of the Israelite to be united with his ancestors, even in death. Our Lord summarized the Old Testament hope when He reminded the Sadducees that God was not the God of the dead but of the living. (Matt. 22:32)

Sheol, despite its often grim and shadowy character, was a place of continued existence in some form (Job 26:5-6; Num. 16:30; 1 Sam. 2:6). Some passages describe *sheol* as a place of darkness (Job 10:20-22); or a place to hide (Job 14:13); or a place of hopelessness (Is. 28:18) from which there is no return (Job 7:9). Other passages contain a more positive affirmation about life after death and assure the pious Israelite that God will not abandon His saints in death but will abide with them, deliver them from *sheol*, and receive them to glory. (Ps. 16:9-11; 49:15; 73:24)

Jesus knew that death could not annihilate Him but that He would arise and through His rising destroy the power of death (John 11:25 ff.; 14:6; Mark 9:30-32; see Acts 2:22-28; Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:20). St. Paul cherished this same confidence (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8). Other passages describe the departed faithful as being with God. (Matt. 22:29-32; Rev. 6:9-11)

The New Testament speaks of the departed faithful as existing in a conscious and blessed state which at the very least can be described as the persistence of the individual's identity before God. The faithful are described as being in the presence of God and of enjoying peace and rest with Him. They are also described as sleeping (1 Thess. 4:13 f.) or of being in the tombs (John 5:28 f.; Matt. 27:51-53). The inspired writers speak of death variously as the separation of body and soul (Gen. 35:18) or as the departure of the spirit (Acts 7:59; Luke 23:46) or as the passing of the "I," the total person (Phil. 1:23), "to be with Christ." The New Testament also teaches the physical resurrection of the body in several passages (John 5:28 f.; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:51-54). Finally, the New Testament affirms that the physical bodies of the departed faithful will be glorified. (1 Cor. 15:51-54; Phil. 3:20-21) ("A Statement on Death, Resurrection, and Immortality," pp. 1--2)

In this same document the Commission on Theology and Church Relations has also said:

The *Lutheran Confessions*, the normative statement of Biblical doctrine for Lutherans, speaks, like Scriptures, of man as having a body and a soul (*Formula of Concord, Epitome* IX, 1: *Large Catechism, Baptism* 45; *Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. 1, 11*). But the references cited here clearly teach that man's body and soul are integrally united; both are corrupted by sin and subject to death (*F.C., Epit. I, 4; S.D. I, 2, 46 f.; S.A., Part III, Art. I, 11*). Together they constitute man's essence or nature (*F.C., S.D., I, 2*). According to the Athanasian Creed the rational soul and the flesh are one man, as God and man are one Christ (35).

The Confessions agree with Scripture and the all but unanimous tradition of the church in assigning significant theological meanings to death. The Confessions rule out the contemporary view that death is a pleasant and painless transition into a perfect world. For them death is destruction: the destruction of the sinful flesh so that believers may arise completely renewed (*Apology XII, 153; F.C., Epit. I, 10*). Death is also the divine eternal judgment on body and soul—a horrible and frightening prospect to contemplate—except for those who live in Jesus Christ.

The Confessions affirm the persistence of personal identity beyond death. For example, the *Smalcald Articles* refer to the saints "in their graves and in heaven." (Part II, Art. II, 28; II, III, 25; see also *F.C., S.D. I, 37; Apology XXI, 9*)

The Lutheran Confessions permit the use of the expression which is so deeply embedded in Christian piety: "The soul of the departed has gone to heaven to be with its Maker." But they require that this phrase be used in a context which includes a true, Scripture-based understanding of the meaning of death, of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of the nature of man's eternal existence.

Concerning the resurrection of the flesh, the Confessions are crystal-clear. The *Formula of Concord* speaks of our flesh rising (*F.C., S.D.* I, 46). The *Large Catechism* affirms that "our flesh will be put to death, will be buried . . . and will come forth gloriously and arise." (*Creed, 57*) (*Ibid.*, p. 2)

This same document includes among its "summary observations" the statement that the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions compel us "to reject the teaching that the soul 'sleeps' between death and the resurrection in such a way that it is not conscious of bliss." (*Ibid.*, p. 3)

B. CRITICISM OF PART II

There are two principal criticisms of Part II of "A Statement."

1. Use of the Law

Part II contains the following sentence: "The Law, as the expression of God's immutable will, is to be used by the church to bring men to a knowledge of their sins as well as to provide Christians with instruction about good works."

It is alleged that to speak in this way of the instructional function of the law is to imply that the law is merely a set of regulations providing Christians with pious directives which they are able to observe and to lose sight of the law's function to reprove sin and accuse the sinner. It is alleged that the sentence in question separates a purely instructional function of the law from its accusing function.

"A Statement" does not *separate* the accusing and instructional functions of the law; it *distinguishes* these functions just as the Formula of Concord does when it says: "The true function of the law remains, to rebuke sin and to give instruction about good works" (FC SD V, 18). "A Statement" and the Confessions teach that the law *always* accuses, but they do not teach the law *only* accuses. It is confessional doctrine that the law accuses "as well as" provides instruction about good works.

The following statement of the Formula of Concord teaches that while the law accuses it instructs, while it instructs it accuses: "But the Law of God prescribes to believers good works in this way, that it shows and indicates *at the same time*, as in a mirror, that in this life they are still imperfect and impure in us." ("*Aber das Gesetz Gottes schreibt den Gläubigen die guten Werke also vor, dass es zugleich [Latin: "simul"] wie in einem Spiegel zeigt und weist, dass sie in uns in diesem Leben noch unvollkommen und unrein seien.*") (FC SD VI, 21, *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 969; emphasis ours)

When "A Statement" refers to the law "as the expression of God's

immutable will" and speaks in the first place of its use "to bring men to a knowledge of their sins," it echoes the language of the Formula of Concord which says: "We unanimously believe, teach, and confess . . . that, strictly speaking, the law is a divine doctrine which reveals the righteousness and immutable will of God" and which then quotes Luther's words, "The proper function of which [the law] is to condemn sin and to lead to a knowledge of sin." (FC SD V, 17)

When "A Statement" then goes on to affirm in the second place the instructional function of the law, this is by no means to be understood as in some way playing down the accusing function of the law which is affirmed in the first place. If "A Statement" had inverted the order in which it designates the uses of the law, then it might justly be said that its formulation leaves the impression that the instructional function is primary and the accusing function only incidental. As it is, the language of "A Statement" properly understood cannot justly be construed as in any way contrary to the confessional emphasis that the law always accuses (Ap IV, 38, 128, 167, 204, 260, 270, 285, 295, 319) and that "to reprove is the real function of the law." (FC SD VI, 14)

2. The Law and The New Man in Christ

It is alleged also that the sentence in question implies that the "new man in Christ" is without moral direction until the law is proclaimed to him.

"A Statement" says the law provides *Christians* with instruction about good works; it does *not* say that the law provides the "new man" with instruction about good works. This entire matter is clearly explained in the following quotation from the Formula of Concord:

It is also necessary to set forth distinctly *what the Gospel does, creates, and works in connection with the new obedience of believers and what function the law performs* in this matter, as far as the good works of believers are concerned. The law indeed tells us that it is God's will and command that we should walk in the new life, but it does not give the power and ability to begin it or to do it. It is the Holy Spirit, who is not given and received through the law but through the preaching of the Gospel (Gal. 3:2, 14), who renews the heart. Then he employs the law to instruct the regenerate out of it and to show and indicate to them in the Ten Commandments what the acceptable will of God is (Rom. 12:2) and in what good works, which God has prepared beforehand, they should walk (Eph. 2:10). He also admonishes them to do these, and when because of the flesh they are lazy, negligent, and recalcitrant, the Holy Spirit reproves them through the law. In this way the Holy Spirit simultaneously performs both offices, "he kills and brings to life, he brings down into Sheol, and raises up." His office is not alone to comfort but also to rebuke, as it is written, "When the Holy Spirit shall come, he will convince the world (to which the Old Adam belongs) of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." Sin is everything that is contrary to the law of God, and St. Paul says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof."

But to reprove is the real function of the law. As often, therefore, as Christians trip, they are rebuked through the Spirit of God out of the law. But the same Spirit raises them up again and comforts them with the preaching of the holy Gospel. (FC SD VI, 10–14; emphasis ours)

C. CRITICISM OF PART III

The Primary Mission of the Church

The principal objection to Part III of "A Statement," expressed in a great number of communications, is that it speaks of the church's ministry to men's physical needs as serving the primary mission of making disciples through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. The objection is that if the church performs works of charity for the purpose of promoting some other objective, this corrupts love at its very heart.

Deeds of love have their own integrity and certainly ought to be done for their own sake. Nevertheless, it is in accord with the Scriptures to remind Christians that by their good works they prove the sincerity of their love (2 Cor. 8:8), give a winning witness to the transforming power of their faith (1 Peter 3:1-2), and lead men to glorify God in the day of visitation (1 Peter 2:12). The Lutheran Confessions remind us that it is by our service to the neighbor in our regular callings in life that Christ shows His rule before the world, celebrates His victory over the devil, and "in order to keep the Gospel among men, he visibly pits the witness [of the good works] of the saints against the rule of the devil." (Ap IV, 189–192)

When the church meets the challenges that God offers for ministry to men's physical needs, such Gospel-motivated service glorifies God (2 Cor. 9:13) and is one way for the church to become "slave of all" for the sake of the Gospel that it may share in the Gospel's blessings and by all means win the more and save some (1 Cor. 9:19-23). The apostle Paul admonishes the Philipians (Phil. 2:12-16) to exercise their new life in Christ so that their whole conduct as children of God will be an observable testimony to the world about the renewing power of the Gospel which they confess and so that by a manner of life worthy of the Gospel (Phil. 1:27) they will hold forth the word of life and shine as lights in the world.

Since a redeemed life lived to the glory of God and in loving service to the neighbor is a powerful testimony to the transforming grace at work among those who acclaim Christ as Savior and Lord, "A Statement" might well include in Part III another antithesis which rejects any view of the church's mission that fails to recognize the witness value of deeds of love which flow from faith.

D. CRITICISM OF PART IV

The criticism of Part IV of "A Statement" is that large sections of its teaching about the Scriptures are neither Scriptural nor confessional; they are merely traditional. Particularly it is asserted that there is no Scriptural

or confessional support for ascribing to the Scriptures such attributes as divine authorship of every word, complete freedom from errors of any kind, and absolute normative authority which inheres in them by reason of their character as the Word of God.

To these criticisms the Commission on Theology and Church Relations responds by reaffirming statements it has adopted on various former occasions relative to the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Scriptures. Pertinent citations from previously adopted documents are the following:

1. Inspiration

- a. From "Revision of the Study Document on Revelation, Inspiration, and Inerrancy," p. 3:

We see also that the Scriptures, precisely in their historical character, are *Holy Scriptures*, since they are the product of the Spirit who produces in history that which is not of this world. We shall remember that we cannot treat an inspired document as just one more historical document, that we cannot take "laws of history" derived from documents that are wholly of this world and simply apply them to an inspired document.

- b. From "Gospel and Scripture," pp. 10–11:

The Bible is called the "Scripture of the Holy Spirit" (Ap Preface, 9). When the opponents disregarded "passages in the Scriptures," the Symbols asked: "Do they suppose that these words fell from the **Holy Spirit** unawares?" (Ap IV, 107–108; emphasis ours). The Augsburg Confession refers to Scripture passages which forbid "making and keeping human regulations," and asks: "Is it possible that the **Holy Spirit** warned against them for nothing?" (XXVIII, 49; our emphasis)

Because the Bible is the "Scripture of the Holy Spirit" it is "**divine Holy Scriptures**" (AC XXVIII, 28, German; Latin: "Scriptures of God"; see also AC XXVIII, 43, 49). The Apology says that when the opponents manipulate "Scripture passages" they "**twist the Word of God**" (XII, 122–123). Since Scripture is the Word of God, "no human being's writings dare be put on a par with it" (FC SD Summary, 9; see also Ep Comprehensive Summary, 2; all emphases ours. Note the obvious implications of this contrast between Scripture and "human being's writings").

- c. From "A Lutheran Stance Toward Contemporary Biblical Studies," p. 10:

Whatever cognizance needs to be taken—as indeed it must—of the connection between Biblical materials and their background in the whole complex of social, cultural, political, economic, and religious factors of their day, a clear distinction must nevertheless be maintained between the unique, divine, and revelatory character of Scripture and the sheer human and contingent character of Scripture's earthly milieu. Parallelisms between extra-Biblical materials and the

form or substance of Scripture do not as such constitute causal or substantive relations. This is not in the least to deny the genuinely human and earthly dimension of Scripture itself. It is only to say that there is a qualitative difference between the inspired witness of Holy Scripture in all its parts and words and the witness, explicit or implicit, of every other form of human expression.

2. Inerrancy

a. From "Revision of the Study Document on Revelation, Inspiration, and Inerrancy," p. 4:

The Lutheran Symbols confess the inerrancy of the Scriptures with simple and forceful words: "They will not lie to you" (Large Catechism, V, 76, in *The Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, p. 455; compare also the Formula of Concord, Epitome, VIII, 13, ed. Tappert, p. 483; Large Catechism, IV, Baptism, 57, ed. Tappert, p. 444). When we make that confession our own, our faith, a faith created by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures themselves, expresses the conviction that the witness of Scripture in all its parts in their intended sense is true and wholly reliable. These words of the Scriptures are inerrant because they are inspired by God—words taught by the Holy Spirit, written by men moved by the Holy Spirit.

b. From "Gospel and Scripture," p. 11:

In sharp contrast to the writings of the fathers in which there is "great variety" [*magna dissimilitudo*, that is, great difference or diversity], since "they were men and they could err and be deceived," the Symbols regard "passages of Scripture" as "clearer and surer" (Ap XXIV, 94–95). The Symbols do not expect to find in the Scriptures the contradictions which characterize the writings of fallible human authors. In the single instance where the Symbols refer to a seeming contradiction in the Scriptures, they offer a solution which completely removes the difficulty (Ap XXIV, 28). The Symbols do not grant that Jeremiah contradicts Moses. The Symbols, therefore, have no need to account for contradictions in terms of the Bible's historical dimensions or to adopt a view of Biblical authority which holds that since the authority of the Bible resides exclusively in the Gospel, discrepancies here and there in the Scriptures are of no consequence.

3. Authority

a. From "Gospel and Scripture," p. 10:

All Scripture Is Authoritative

When Lutherans say that the Gospel is the norm in the Scriptures, they do not mean that so long as the Gospel is not negated it is permissible to employ a method of Bible study which calls into question Lutheran presuppositions about the kind of a book the Bible is, or which in any way qualifies the authority of all Scripture. As our com-

mission explained in an earlier document, Lutherans indeed "hold that all theological questions raised by any interpretation must be posed and answered with reference to this central concern of the Scripture," that is, a "right understanding of the Gospel." However, Lutherans add that "in conformity with the Lutheran Symbols our church confesses and acknowledges the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures to be the Word of God given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit [and] submits unreservedly to them as the sole source, norm, and authority for the church's teaching." Lutherans confess that "the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired source and norm of all Christian preaching and teaching" and recognize that "there is a qualitative difference between the inspired witness of the Holy Scripture in all its parts and words and the witness . . . of every other form of human expression."

b. From "Gospel and Scripture," p. 12:

The Gospel is the norm in the Scriptures in the sense that it absolutely prohibits understanding any passage to teach salvation by works. It is **not** norm in the sense that the center of Scripture becomes a device to sanction a view of the Bible and a method of interpreting it which virtually denies that the **whole** Bible is God's inspired, authoritative Word on all matters concerning which it speaks.

c. From "Gospel and Scripture," p. 10:

Lutheran theology does not appeal to the Gospel in such a way as to relativize the rest of the Scriptures. Gospel is not norm in the Scriptures in such a way as to make only the Gospel the norm of theology. This is a "Gospel reductionism" that Lutherans condemn as a repudiation of the authority of the Scriptures.

d. From "Gospel and Scripture," p. 11:

The Gospel Does Not Limit Biblical Authority

Relative to the role of the Gospel as norm in the Scriptures, however, it is important to observe that it is one thing to say that it is contrary to the Holy Spirit's intent when Scripture is interpreted in such a way that the Gospel is obscured; it is quite another thing to say that since the Holy Spirit's intent in the Scriptures is to proclaim the Gospel, it was never His intent that His Word in Genesis 1–11, for instance, should be understood as relating facts of history, or to say that in view of "the perpetual aim of the Gospel" (AC XXVIII, 66; Latin) apostolic directives for the church's life may be set aside.

e. From "Gospel and Scripture," pp. 17–18:

Our Gospel Is Taken from Scripture

When Lutherans teach that Scripture is the norm of the Gospel, they mean simply that the content of the Gospel and the terms in which this content is expressed must be taken from the Scriptures. The

Gospel is the effective power (*auctoritas causativa*) that begets personal faith in the Savior (*fides qua creditur*); the Scriptures are the authority (*auctoritas normativa*) that establishes and regulates the statement, confession, and proclamation of the Christian faith (*fides quae creditur*).

When Paul preached what was of "first importance," namely, the chief article or Gospel that "Christ died for our sins" and "that He was raised on the third day," he was proclaiming realities that occurred according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Even though Paul could claim that he received the Gospel which he preached by revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12), it was always a major concern of his to show that what he believed and preached was in agreement with the Scriptures (Acts 24:14; 17:2; 18:28). Because Paul appealed to the Scriptures (Rom. 4:3; Galatians 4:30) and because he proclaimed what "Scripture says" (Rom. 10:11; 1 Timothy 5:18) on topics ranging from justification to a pastor's support, his doctrine could stand up under the closest scrutiny. (Acts 17:11)

Paul reminded the Corinthians "in what terms" (1 Cor. 15:1) he preached the Gospel and said he delivered what he had received; moreover, he did this in Spirit-taught words (1 Cor. 2:13). This leaves no room for the notion that even the way Paul expressed the Gospel, or the form in which he preached it, was his own inventive translation into first-century thought patterns of some general idea which came to him out of thin air about a benign divine intent in history. It further repudiates the idea that he then tried to communicate this "gospel" in a meaningful manner by simply borrowing for this purpose some concepts with which people were already familiar from Jewish apocalyptic literature or Gnostic mythology.

In the Lutheran Symbols too, not only the content of the Gospel but the terms in which it is expressed are taken from Scripture. In the Symbols you have not only "they teach" (see, for example, AC IV), but "Scripture teaches" (see, for example, AC XXIV, 28 and FC SD III, 30; our emphases) as authority for **the way the Gospel is formulated**.

It is in accordance with what the apostle Paul says that the Symbols teach the Gospel in terms of substitutionary satisfaction and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner through faith (Ap IV, 179, 305 ff.). The material principle of Lutheran theology (the Gospel) is derived from the formal principle (the Scriptures). The Apology states it as axiomatic that "it is not in the power of man . . . to assert, without a sure word of God concerning God's will, that He ceases to be angry" (IV, 262). Here the material principle is tied inseparably to the formal principle, so that we cannot affirm the former except on the authority of the latter.

f. From "A Comparative Study of Varying Contemporary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation," pp. 14–18:

1. Because Lutherans believe, teach and confess that the words of the Holy Scriptures are from the Holy Spirit (Ap, IV, 107–108;

- AC, XXVIII, 49), they therefore hold that the Bible is qualitatively different from "human being's writings" (FC, SD, Summary, 9; Ap, XXIV, 94–95). They do not hesitate to call the Bible the "unalterable" and "infallible" divine truth (Preface, Book of Concord, pp. 5 and 12).
2. Confessional Lutheran theology, accordingly, declares that "we base our position on the Word of God as the eternal truth" (FC, SD, Summary, 13); "the Word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of all doctrine" (FC, SD, Summary, 9); "the Holy Scripture remains the only judge, rule, and norm according to which as the only touchstone all doctrines should and must be understood and judged as good or evil, right or wrong" (FC, Ep, Summary, 7); "the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged" (FC, Ep, Summary, 1; FC, SD, Summary, 3).
 - a. These quotations from the Symbols leave little doubt about how they use the Bible, namely, as the *ultimate* and *absolute authority* for all that the church teaches in God's name.
 - b. That is why the Symbols repeat over and over again such formulas as "Scripture teaches" (AC, XXIV, 28; Ap, XXIII, 11; FC, SD, I, 46; FC, SD III, 30), and "it is written" (AC, XXIV, 26; XXVIII, 51; Ap, IV, 263; SA, III, vii, 1–2; III, xiii, 3; FC SD III, 20, 57; VI, 12; VIII, 6; X, 8, 11; XI, 7).
 - c. That is why the Symbols, without concern that some might accuse them of making a legislative use of Scripture, firmly insist that "wherever the Scriptures . . . give us clear, certain testimony, we shall (German: *sollen wir*, i. e., we must) simply believe it and not argue" (FC, SD, VIII, 53).
 3. The Sacred Scriptures are to the Lutheran confessors the source of doctrine.
 - a. In contrast to merely patristic authority, the Smalcald Articles (II, ii, 15) set up the invariable rule: "The Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel." The Augsburg Confession (Preface 8; Epilog to XXI, 2; XXI, 4 German) and the Apology (I, 2; II, 32–43; IV, 5, 166; XII, 16; *et passim*) appeal to the Sacred Scriptures as a whole as well as to individual passages as final authority.
 - b. The "summary and generally accepted concept and form" that the Formula (SD, Summary, 1) regards as essential for basic and firm agreement in the Church is to be drawn from the Word of God. The prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of both testaments are "the pure, limpid fountain of Israel" (FC, SD Summary, 3).
 4. The fathers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod agreed wholeheartedly with the Symbols that the Holy Scriptures are the "final authority" for theology.
 - a. Dr. C. F. W. Walther resisted the idea that the Bible is the kind

of book that one needs to read "with constant sharp discrimination in order not to be led into error" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, p. 76). Echoing the Symbols, he said "It is written" and added, "thereby the matter is settled" (*Lutherstunde*, February 12, 1886).

He also wrote: "Our church has taken for the foundation on which she stands the Holy Scriptures, and on it she stands honestly and squarely; from this foundation she will not depart one finger's breadth. . . . That is her character, that is her charge, that makes her a blessing to all Christendom, that is her crown, of which she will not and cannot let herself be robbed" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1871, p. 11).

For Walther, the Holy Scriptures were to be used as the sole and final authority for theology.

- b. Dr. F. Pieper said: "The Church of the Reformation stands on the rock of Holy Scripture, on the *Sola Scriptura*" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1928, p. 14).
 - c. Dr. F. Bente warned that "the entire theological edifice is undermined and hollowed out if it is no longer borne by the inspired, infallible Word of Scripture . . . If the Bible is no longer the infallible Word of God but a human, fallible record of the things of which it treats, the *loci classici* and *dicta probantia* [i. e. classical proof passages for a position or doctrine] are no longer of any avail. A veritable deluge of all manner of skeptical questions concerning the origin and content of Scripture is unloosed which cannot be checked and controlled" (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1902, p. 130).
5. Lutherans think it is "rash" to teach something that passages of Scripture do not teach (Ap, XII, 138), and that it is "extreme impudence" to teach anything that is contrary to testimonies of Scripture (Ap, XXIII, 63).
- a. Lutherans, therefore, hold "that it is only from the Word of God that judgments on articles of faith are to be pronounced" (FC, SD, II, 8). They accept "without reservation . . . the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice" (Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Constitution, Art. II, 1).
 - b. Lutherans appeal to and use the Sacred Scriptures as a whole, as well as individual passages of Scripture, as the sole and final authority in the Church.

What the foregoing quotations from earlier Commission on Theology and Church Relations documents say on the basis of the Scriptures and the Symbols relative to the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Scriptures may be summarized as follows:

- The sacred Scriptures, having been inspired by the Spirit of God, "are not [merely] of this world"; there is therefore a qualitative dif-

ference between these writings and all other literature; "no human being's writings dare be put on a par with it [Scripture]" (FC SD Rule and Norm, 9).

- Because they are inspired by God the words of the Scriptures are inerrant and, in contrast to writings of men who could err and be deceived, the Scriptures are true and wholly reliable.
- The inspired and inerrant Scriptures are the final and sole authority for all that the church does and teaches in God's name.

4. Other Criticism

Other questions pertaining to Part IV of "A Statement" have to do with the meaning of its reference to the canonical text, with its understanding of prophecy, with the assertion that all Scripture bears witness to Jesus Christ, and with the seeming contention that discrepancies in the Scriptures arise only because of uncertainty over the original text.

a. *Prophecy*

With respect to the question about the section on Old Testament prophecy it must be conceded that in view of the purpose for which "A Statement" was prepared its discussion of *prophecy* is severely limited and that the document would be strengthened by a fuller treatment of this subject. For instance, it ought to be pointed out that the first meaning of the term "prophecy" in the Old Testament is to speak the Word of God to people. This is usually done within the context of God's covenant relationship with His people.

b. *Canonical Text*

With respect to the other questions noted above the following is offered by way of clarification. When "A Statement" speaks of the *canonical text*, this is intended merely as another term for "the text as it has come to us," that is, the only text available to the theologian and the one, therefore, that is authoritative for doctrine. This term as used in "A Statement" is not to be understood as designating an official list of a specific number of Biblical books which Lutheranism has formally recognized as constituting the limits of the canon.

c. *"All Scripture Bears Witness to Jesus Christ"*

When "A Statement" says that "all Scripture bears witness to Jesus Christ," this does not mean that every isolated passage in the Bible testifies concerning the Savior; it means that properly understood the whole Bible is a book about Jesus, and that if you take Christ out of the Scriptures the heart of the Biblical witness has been completely lost.

d. *Discrepancies and Problems*

Finally, the wording of the sentence pertaining to discrepancies and

problems must be carefully examined. This sentence makes two assertions: 1) there are apparent (seeming) contradictions or discrepancies in the Bible; 2) there are problems in the Bible that arise because of uncertainty over the original text. It is a misreading of this sentence to hold that it attributes all apparent contradictions or discrepancies to uncertainty over the original text; it attributes certain problems to this factor and nothing else.

In closing this section of this report, attention should be drawn to the fact that the Commission on Theology and Church Relations recognizes the great complexity of many of the subjects treated only briefly in "A Statement" and is aware that not all concern can be adequately dealt with in a report of this nature. The CTCR therefore assures the Synod that it plans to encourage fraternal discussion of doctrinal issues by continuing to prepare study documents which address themselves to topics about which there have been disagreements and misunderstandings with a view to promoting the unity of the faith in the bond of peace.

E. Criticisms of Part V

Part V of "A Statement" has been criticized as follows: By insisting that Adam and Eve were historical persons "A Statement" leads people to focus primarily on the two original sinners rather than on what the Fall account reveals about our sinfulness. Besides, when we think of Adam and Eve as real, historical persons, then our confession of innate sinfulness results merely from a "deduction" we make about ourselves based on our descent from sinful stock rather than from our own confrontation with the truth about us revealed in the Fall narrative. Thus we actually "underuse" the Fall account by focusing on the sin of people who lived long ago instead of permitting it to strike us with the full impact of our sin.

From Romans 5:12 ff. it is clear that the apostle Paul regarded the man through whom sin and death came into the world to be as real as the Man who brought righteousness and life. In 1 Tim. 2:11 ff. St. Paul bases his teaching about the relationship between man and woman on the actual existence of the first human beings who were created and who fell into sin just as the book of Genesis reports.

From Article I of the Formula of Concord it is obvious that the Lutheran Confessions, too, regard Adam and Eve as actual people, the parents of the human race, whose creation and fall occurred precisely as the Scriptures recount and because of whose transgression we are in sin and death. (FC SD I, 9)

Both Paul and the Confessions bring home to all who truly hear what they say not only the magnitude of the sin of Adam and Eve but also the depth of the corruption of all the children of Adam. Understanding the Fall narrative as a literal account of how the first human beings brought sin into the world, both Paul and the Confessions are able on the basis of that account to confront sinners to this day with the crushing burden of their own guilt as they are brought to see the wickedness of their own rebellion against God.

F. Criticism of Part VI

It is said that Part VI of "A Statement," unlike Walther and the fathers, holds that our *confessional subscription* binds us in every instance to the confessional interpretation and use of each and every passage of Holy Scripture to which reference is made in the symbolical writings.

Properly understood, "A Statement" says precisely what Dr. Arthur Carl Piepkorn said in the January, 1958, issue of the *Concordia Theological Monthly*. "In the public teaching of a Lutheran clergyman or instructor, he must interpret the Sacred Scriptures according to the Symbols and not vice versa. This does not mean that he is in any way prevented from considering every possible legitimate interpretation that can be placed upon any given passage or group of passages of the Sacred Scriptures. If in the process, however, he were to come to a definitive conclusion incompatible with the teaching of the Symbols, he would be bound in conscience and in moral honesty to withdraw from the church which imposes such an obligation upon him." (Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "Suggested Principles for a Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Symbols," *CTM*, 1958, p. 4)

Dr. Piepkorn continues: "We are not bound to the exegesis which the Symbols give of any particular passage which they choose to interpret. Thus we need not believe that Psalm 119:1 refers to the Law in its strict sense (FC Ep VI 2) or that the scope of Gen. 17:4-8, 19-20 includes infant Baptism (FC Ep XII 8). This does not mean, however, that we are free to reject a *doctrinal* conclusion which the Symbols draw from their interpretation (even erroneously) of one or more passages, or that we may justify rejection of a doctrinal conclusion by a disavowal one by one of the passages that the Symbols cite in its support." (*Ibid* pp. 20-21)

Dr. C. F. W. Walther's position relative to the binding nature of confessional exegesis is given in the following quotation from his essay "Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers, and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church?":

However, since the Symbols are confessions of faith or doctrine, the Church necessarily cannot require a subscription to those matters which do not belong to doctrine . . . The same is true of the interpretation of certain Bible passages. The only criterion of an incontrovertible "prophecy," or interpretation of Scripture, which St. Paul demanded is "Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith," Rom. 12:6. If, for instance, an exegete does not reach the specific sense of a Bible passage and yet interprets it in such a manner that his interpretation rests on other clear Bible passages, he is indeed mistaken in supposing that a certain teaching is contained in this specific Bible passage, but he is not erring in doctrine. In like manner he who unconditionally subscribes to the Symbolical Books declares that the interpretations which are contained in the Symbols are "according to the analogy of faith." (C. F. W. Walther, "Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical writings of Our Church," *CTM*, 1947, p. 242)

Conclusion

The very fact that some of the formulations in "A Statement" have been subject to grave misinterpretation indicates that it participates in the limitations of every human attempt to express the content of Christian doctrine. Because even the language of the Augsburg Confession was subject to misunderstanding, Melancthon remarked: "Nothing can be said so carefully that it can avoid misrepresentation" (Ap VII and VIII, 2; cf. XI, 84). In the interest of clarification at certain points in "A Statement," the Commission on Theology and Church Relations makes the following recommendations:

1. That future reprints of "A Statement" add to Article I a footnote explaining the term "anonymous Christians," to wit: people in pagan cultures who through the influence in their lives of the universal lordship of Christ have given themselves to selfless service of others even though they have not yet learned from the preaching of the Gospel the name of Him under whom they live and by whose grace they have been transformed.
2. That Article II, while rightly ascribing an instructional function to the law, express more explicitly the accusing function of the law so that it is clearly stated that the law always instructs in such a way that it at the same time shows the need for constant repentance in the life of Christians.
3. That Article III contain an additional antithesis rejecting any view of the church's mission that fails to recognize the witness value of deeds of love which flow from faith.
4. That Article IV contain a statement on prophecy that recognizes and expresses the broader connotations of the term "prophecy" in the Old Testament.

Since "A Statement" does not presume to be a flawless articulation of the doctrinal issues it treats, it can be freely acknowledged that continued testing of the adequacy of its formulations is not only necessary but will serve to strengthen its witness to the truth which it confesses. This having been said, however, it must also be said that an examination of the major criticisms of the theological formulations and content of "A Statement" has shown no cause why the Commission on Theology and Church Relations should alter its opinion of November 21, 1972:

We find the doctrinal content of "A Statement" to be in accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and to contain nothing contrary to them. We also find the doctrinal content of "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" to be in accord with the doctrinal position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as it has been taught historically and expressed in the official doctrinal statements of the Synod.

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Augsburg Confession
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
SA	Smalcald Articles
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord

All citations from the Lutheran Confessions are taken from the *Book of Concord*, edited by T. G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969) unless otherwise noted.