

The Function of Doctrine and Theology in Light of the Unity of the Church

A Report
Plus 15 Papers From an Official Study
Conducted by the Division of Theological Studies,
Lutheran Council in the USA,
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Quotations from *The Book of Concord*, unless otherwise noted, are from: Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959). Abbreviations used with the quotations, following the first reference in each paper, are: AC—The Augsburg Confession, Ap—Apology of the Augsburg Confession, SA—The Smalcald Articles, Tr—Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, SC—The Small Catechism, LC—The Large Catechism, and FC—Formula of Concord.

Contents

Part 1: Report on the Study	7
Part 2: Definitions of Gospel, Doctrine, Theology, and Consensus	
As Used in the ALC — By Warren A. Quanbeck	17
As Used in the LCA — By Robert C. Schultz	19
As Used in the LCMS — By Roland A. Hopmann	21
Part 3: Consensus in the Gospel as the Basis for Fellowship	
ALC View: What Does Agreement in the Doctrine of the Gospel Mean? — By Warren A. Quanbeck	27
How the LCA Understands Consensus in the Gospel as the Basis for Fellowship —	
By Edgar M. Carlson	29
The Position of the LCMS on the Basis for Fellowship — By Ralph A. Bohlmann	32
Our Commitment to the Gospel — By Ralph A. Bohlmann	40
Part 4: The Interrelatedness of the Gospel	
Gospel and Scripture — By Charles S. Anderson	47
Gospel and Church — By Robert C. Schultz	52
Gospel and Doctrine — By H. George Anderson	60
Part 5: Biblical Interpretation	
The Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Confessions and the Historical-Critical Method —	
By Robert D. Preus	65
The Historical-Critical Method and the Method of the Lutheran Confessions —	
By Duane A. Priebe.....	76
Part 6: Theological Diversity in a Confessional Church	
LCMS Doctrinal Position — By Albert M. Marcis	83
Limits of Theological Diversity — By Warren A. Quanbeck	87
The Nature of Biblical Unity and Its Implications for the Unity of the Church —	
By Duane A. Priebe	89

Part 4

The Interrelatedness of the Gospel

Gospel and Church

By Robert C. Schultz

This paper presents a perspective on and interpretation of Articles VII and VIII of the Augsburg Confession different from that commonly taken for granted. The following interpretation presupposes that documents are to be understood in terms of the historical situations to which they respond. The kinds of questions that arise later are secondary factors in determining meaning. The traditional interpretation of Articles VII and VIII has reversed the process and thereby interpreted these articles in ways that detract from and obscure their original meaning. Large parts of this paper are an attempt to recover the historical context of these articles and thus clarify their meaning.

The Augsburg Confession's emphasis on the pure teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution is expressed in the context of its statement about the unity of the church. This is entirely appropriate, for the church is created and extended by the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. This characteristic distinguishes the congregation of believers from every other group (see the explanation of the third article of the creed in the Large Catechism and also the Apology, VII, 13). This emphasis on the interrelationship between the gospel and the church is essential to any definition of the church.

Appropriately the Augsburg Confession defines the unity of the church in terms of the definition

of the church as created through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. The two sentences describing the church and the basis for unity are remarkably similar, even repetitious: "The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments." The last sentence might be paraphrased: "For the unity of the church, it is enough to agree on what distinguishes the church from all other groups." Such a paraphrase, however, assumes agreement on what makes the church the church. If we cannot agree on the unity of the church,

we may be able to express differing opinions of what it is that makes the church the church.

The Roman Confutation expresses such a differing opinion when it criticizes the Augsburg Confession's definition of the church for seeming to exclude from it the wicked and the sinners. As the Apology indicates, there are obvious differences both about what the church is and about the preaching of the gospel. The Apology responds by differentiating two definitions of the church:

—"The church is not merely an association of outward ties and rites like other civic governments . . . but it is mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts. To make it recognizable, this association has outward marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the Gospel of Christ" (Apology, VII, 5).

—" . . . the church in the proper sense is the assembly of saints who truly believe the Gospel of Christ and who have the Holy Spirit" (Ap, VII, 28).

—"We are not dreaming about some Platonic republic . . . but we teach that this church actually exists, made up of true believers and righteous men scattered throughout the world. And we add its marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the sacraments" (Ap, VII, 20).

The definition of the church in Article VII is clear. It is the one holy church that will "continue forever" (Augsburg Confession, VII, 1). This oneness does not need to be established or created apart from or in addition to the church. It is given with the gospel and the sacraments. This oneness can be destroyed only by stepping outside the church. For there is only one church, hearing the voice of one shepherd, in one gospel. Article VII of the Augsburg Confession asserts this of the church's unity when it quotes Ephesians 4.4-5: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

The assertion that there is "one, holy church" is the correlate of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." If there can be two churches, that is, two "assemblies of believers," two faiths obtained through two ministries "of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments" (AC, V, 1), there are two Christs. Therefore, Luther's statement that those papists who find their holiness in "surplices, tonsures, albs, or other ceremonies" rather than in the gospel are not the church (Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article XII, 3) is entirely appropriate. Their exclusion from the church, however, does not invalidate their proclamation of the gospel and their administration of the sacraments (AC, VIII). For the church preaches but does not create the gospel, administers but does not create the sacraments.

In drawing this line, Luther follows the example of Paul in Ephesians, where he rejects the possibility of

a Jewish and a Gentile church alongside each other, and in Galatians, where he rejects the possibility of a Judaizing church. In Galatians Paul rejects the possibility of two gospels; in Ephesians, he rejects two lords, two faiths, two baptisms. Paul's anathema against those who preach another gospel is paradigmatic for the church's subsequent rejection of those who teach a different gospel. There is only one gospel because there is only one Lord of the church.

This raises questions about our understanding of the topic assigned to this study committee. Do we understand the unity of the church as a given reality in which we all live, or do we understand this unity as a task to be achieved by bringing one or the other of us into the church? Given the definition of the church in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession there is no third possibility. "Even a seven-year-old child can understand this."

However, Luther also finds that the word "church" is unclear and confusing. For we all live in associations which we call churches but which are—according to the Apology—not churches in the proper sense of the term. We will solve this terminological ambiguity only if we take the time and trouble so to clarify our conversation that we do not blur the distinction between the church in its proper sense and the kinds of churches which authorize our discussions here.

Such a distinction might also remove some of the pressure from

our discussions. For it would clarify what I assume to be true—that we all accept one another at face value as sinners who have been made members of the one, holy church through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. I do not intend that as pious admonition. Rather I think that we too easily permit ourselves to feel that not being a member of one or the other institutional church implies that someone is excluding us from the one holy church.

Thus a progress report at this point in our study could begin by reaffirming the first sentence of Article VII of the Augsburg Confession and adding to it the acceptance of one another at face value as members of this church. Or is it possible that we have some deeply hidden, embarrassing-to-express doubts about one another? If so, such hidden doubts should be raised to consciousness.

Assuming agreement that we now live and work in the unity of the church, I move on to discuss the function of doctrine and theology. In this paper I will use these words in two very general and basic senses. The word “doctrine” will describe what the church teaches as essential to salvation and the process of teaching it. I understand “essential” in this sense: If a person would understand the doctrine and deny it, he or she could no longer preach the gospel and administer the sacraments as Christ instituted them. I consider the content — although not the terminology—of the Small Cate-

chism and of the Augsburg Confession to be such statements of doctrine. I will use the word “theology” to describe the church’s disciplined and critical reflection on its preaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments.

The language of Article VII of the Augsburg Confession is to be understood as part of a response to the imperial summons of the Diet of Augsburg. The emperor orders Frederick the Wise to appear in Augsburg, hoping “to bring and reconcile men to a unity in Christian truth, to dispose of everything that has not been rightly explained or treated of on the one side or the other, to see to it that one single, true religion may be accepted and held by us all, and that we all live in one common Church and in unity, just as we all live and battle under the one Christ.”¹

In the Preface the Augsburg Confession defines itself as an explicit response to this summons and uses the language of the summons to express its concern for unity. The princes present this confession of their “preachers’ teaching and of our own faith” in order to show “in what manner, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, these things are preached, taught, communicated, and embraced in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities, and territories” (Preface, 8). Other princes are asked to submit similar confessions to provide the basis for discussing “such practical and equitable ways as may restore unity . . . and we may be united in one, true religion, even as we are all under one Christ and should confess and contend for Christ” (Preface, 10). If such discussions fail, the evangelical

princes commit themselves not to “omit doing anything, in so far as God and conscience allow, that may serve the cause of Christian unity” (Preface, 13). The emperor is reminded that evangelical princes have followed “legal form and procedure” in past appeals and that they will continue to do so until and unless these matters are settled in “Christian concord” (*Einigkeit*).

The term “unity of the church” in the Augsburg Confession thus has a twofold referent. One is the many discussions about the unity of the church in the history of theology. The other is the specific discussion of the unity of the church in the context of the Diet of Augsburg. The papists (through John Eck’s tract on the 404 heresies of the evangelicals) had attempted to place the evangelicals outside the one holy church. The Augsburg Confession recognizes that possibility of being outside the church and the need for clearly anathematizing heresies and heretics. The Schwabach Articles had been given to the emperor in the hope of convincing him that the issues at Augsburg were not questions of doctrine but matters of practice. Thus the first draft of the Augsburg Confession corresponds to what is now its second section. The evangelicals are concerned to refute such charges so clearly that there can be no doubt in the emperor’s mind about their oneness with the church created by the preaching of the gospel and the administra-

tion of the sacraments. The two parts of the Augsburg Confession demonstrate this unity. The first part defines the evangelical doctrine. The second part describes the evangelical variations in traditions and customs in a way that makes clear that these variations are not destructive of the unity of the church.

We are, however, primarily concerned with the first part of the Augsburg Confession. The conclusion of the first part asserts that the evangelicals are summarizing their teaching in order to demonstrate that nothing in their teaching “departs from the Scriptures or the catholic church or the church of Rome, in so far as the ancient church is known to us from its writers. Since this is so, those who insist that our teachers are to be regarded as heretics judge too harshly” (AC, XXI, 1). Those who so judge act “contrary to all Christian unity and love” (AC, XXI, 1). Such statements are made with implicit reference to the laws of the empire on heresy.

Philipp Melanchthon draws attention to this legal context of the Augsburg Confession in his unused drafts of prefaces. He appeals to the emperor to follow the example of his predecessors Theodosius, Charlemagne, and Henry IV. Theodosius established catholic Christianity as the state religion with his decree:

“It is Our will that all the peoples who are ruled by the administration of Our Clemency shall practice that religion which the divine Peter the Apostle transmitted to

the Romans, as the religion which he introduced makes clear even unto this day. It is evident that this is the religion that is followed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic sanctity; that is, according to the apostolic discipline and the **evangelic doctrine (doctrinam evangelicam)**, we shall believe in the single Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, under the concept of equal majesty and of the Holy Trinity.

“We command that those persons who follow this rule (**lex**) shall embrace the name of Catholic Christians. The rest, however, whom We adjudge demented and insane, shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogmas, their meeting places shall not receive the name of churches, and they shall be smitten first by divine vengeance and secondly by the retribution of Our own initiative, which We shall assume in accordance with divine Judgment.”²

At the time of Theodosius, this decree represented a final decision on Arianism and Donatism. Both are condemned and placed under the condemnation of the imperial law. It is then not surprising that Melanchthon includes the reference to the doctrine of the gospel in the section of the confession dealing with the Donatist controversy.

The Emperor Marcian issued a similar decree in support of the

decisions of the Council of Chalcedon. When Justinian formulated the sixth century code of laws which was still the basic law of the empire in the 16th century, he repeats the above-quoted decree of Theodosius and this decree of Marcian as the first and third items in the code. Melanchthon’s reference to Theodosius therefore was an explicit reference to the conditions set down for the unity of the church in the imperial law. Charlemagne and Henry IV are referred to as emperors who also took initiative in the affairs of the church. Article VII of the Augsburg Confession thus has a specific historical context.

The church is one by definition in the thinking of the evangelicals. However, its unity is being unjustly denied by the papists. They are seeking to exclude the evangelicals from the church; the evangelicals are not seeking to exclude the papists. The emperor has called the diet to settle the matter and restore the unity of the church. The Augsburg Confession asserts that this unity is not broken by the evangelicals because they teach the doctrine of the gospel. Their confession emphasizes the congruity between their teaching and the teaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments through which the church has been created and is still being preserved. They are “catholic.”

The doctrine of the gospel that is sufficient for the unity of the church in the Augsburg Confession is therefore nothing else than the

"evangelic doctrine" of the imperial law. This becomes more obvious if we read the Augsburg Confession without the later inserted titles of the various articles. Then the entire doctrinal section is a continuation of the opening confessional formula of the early church: *cum magno consensu*. All the doctrines are specific items of this one confessional statement. If Article VII is read in this continuous context, the meaning of the doctrine of the gospel (**evangelic doctrine**) becomes more obviously defined in terms of the entire doctrinal section of the Augsburg Confession itself. Indeed as we trace the development of Article VII through the sources of the Augsburg Confession to its final formulation, we see an ever-increasing economy of form and content.

The Torgau Articles, the most immediate predecessor of the Augsburg Confession, emphasize that Frederick the Wise "is making provision that . . . the Holy Gospel be preached with all diligence, and that ceremonies be performed in accordance with it."³ This is followed by the assertion that even their opponents admit the rightness of their doctrine. Then the Torgau Articles discuss the doctrines and ordinances of men. The evangelicals observe those "ordinances, which are not contrary to the Holy Gospel."⁴ Galatians 1.8-9 is cited as the basis for the rejection of schismatics: "On that account, the unity of the Christian Church consists not in external human ordinances . . . dissimilarity in external human ordinances is not

contrary to the unity of the Christian Church . . . which we confess in the Creed. . . . For since we are here commanded to believe that there is a Catholic Church, that is, the Church in the entire world and not bound to one place, but that wherever God's Word and ordinances are, there is a Church, and yet the external human ordinances are not alike, it follows that this dissimilarity is not contrary to the unity of the Church."⁵

There is a marked difference in emphasis between the discussion of unity in the Torgau Articles and in the Augsburg Confession. The whole trend of the Augsburg Confession is sharply refocused as a result of the emperor's rejection of the Schwabach Articles. Before this rejection the evangelicals had reason to hope that doctrine would not be the major issue at the Diet of Augsburg. They were certain that they met the requirement of the Code of Justinian. Accordingly, the Schwabach Articles have nothing corresponding to the material now found in Article VIII of the Augsburg Confession. The confession's emphasis on the rejection of the Donatist heresy may be read as an implicit identification with the Code of Justinian which rejects the Donatist heresy. The evangelicals thereby also defend themselves against the conclusion that their criticisms of the papists deny the validity of the papists' sacraments.

The Schwabach Articles, in comparison to Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, are much less pointed in their discussion of the unity of the church: "Article XII. That there is no doubt that there

is and remains upon earth until the end of the world a holy Christian church, as Christ declares, Matt. 28:20: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' This church is nothing else than believers in Christ, who hold, believe and teach the above mentioned articles and parts, and for this suffer persecution and martyrdom in the world; for where the Gospel is preached (**wo das Evangelion gepredigt wird**) and the Sacraments used aright, is the holy Christian church, and it is not bound by laws and outward pomp, to place and time, to persons and ceremonies."⁶

The Schwabach Articles were prepared in the summer of 1529 as a joint confession of the Saxons and Franconians. They combine the Franconian Confessions of the 1520s and Luther's confessional statement at the end of his "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper." Luther's statement on the church in this confession has no explicit discussion of the unity of the church. The most pertinent section is: "In this Christian Church, wherever it exists, is to be found the forgiveness of sins, i.e., a kingdom of grace and of true pardon. For in it are found the gospel, baptism, and the sacrament of the altar, in which the forgiveness of sins is offered, obtained, and received. Moreover, Christ and his Spirit and God are there. Outside this Christian Church there is no salvation or forgiveness of sins, but everlasting death and damnation;

even though there may be a magnificent appearance of holiness and many good works, it is all in vain.”⁷

The Ansbacher Ratschlag (1524) is the most typical of the Franconian Confessions which played a role in the negotiations leading to the development of the Schwabach Articles. Its section on the church covers several pages in the 1930 edition of these confessions. Its significant statement on the unity of the church reads: “The Christian church is the group or gathering of all who believe in Christ and thus live in the unity of the spirit, faith, hope, and love and will continue to live in this unity. Because of this unity they are called a community of saints.”⁸ This basis of unity is markedly different from the Augsburg Confession’s. The emphasis on preaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments is present in other contexts in the Ansbacher Ratschlag. And its theme of unity is submerged in the Schwabach Articles—possibly as a way of correcting an inaccurate formulation by omitting it. The question of Zwinglian influence in Ansbach at this point is intriguing but cannot be pursued here.

The Marburg Articles have no section on the church. The Large Catechism asserts that the church is one but gives no precise definition of the unity of the church. The other significant source of the Augsburg Confession is the “Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors” of 1528. It does not have a section on the church but does have one on doctrine. In this section Luther and Melanchthon admonish the pastors to preach “the

whole gospel”—and the context makes clear that they are concerned about the pastors’ failure to preach repentance and the law.⁹ Given the bitter experience of the First Antinomian Controversy which resulted from Agricola’s objection to this point, Melanchthon would hardly have written Article VII without thinking that the evangelicals could give good evidence of their seriousness in defining the teaching of the gospel.

The Augsburg Confession’s explicit and specific concern with the unity of the church has its closest parallel in the Torgau Articles. Both the Augsburg Confession and the Torgau Articles were written after receipt of the imperial summons to come to Augsburg with a confession in order to discuss unity. The Torgau Articles emphasize that differences in ceremonies are not divisive. The Augsburg Confession adds the emphasis on the positive base of unity in agreement on the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. That emphasis with its implicit appeal to the Code of Theodosius as incorporated in imperial law reflects the emperor’s rejection of the Schwabach Articles as an adequate doctrinal statement. At the same time the language of the predecessor documents, particularly the Schwabach Articles, makes clear that “the teaching of the gospel” refers both to the process of teaching the gospel and to the content of the gospel that is proclaimed.

The agreement on the pure preaching of the gospel desired by the Augsburg Confession can also be defined in terms of the doctrinal positions of the signers of the confessions. Clear distinctions are made in practice between differences in doctrine and in theology. Thus Luther had his difficulties with the word *homousion*. And Eck had cited this as one of his heresies. The Augsburg Confession accepts the doctrine of Nicea without suggesting that Luther’s theological problems with the terminology are contrary to that confession. Similar points could be made about Luther’s introductions to the biblical books.

The Augsburg Confession is careful not to suggest that the papists should be excluded from membership in the one holy church because of bad theology. That had been suggested in earlier writings of the reformers and would be suggested again—but only about selected papists. In the Confessions this suggestion appears first in the Apology and then in the Smalcald Articles, Parts III and XII. The manner in which the possibility is discussed is of great significance for our understanding of the Augsburg Confession.

The following excerpt from the Apology will serve as a representative discussion of the issues: “We are not dreaming about some Platonic republic, as has been slanderously alleged, but we teach that this church actually exists, made up of true believers and righteous men scattered throughout the world. And we add its marks, the

pure teaching of the Gospel and the sacraments. This church is properly called 'the pillar of truth' (I Tim. 3:15), for it retains the pure Gospel and what Paul calls the 'foundation' (I Cor. 3:12), that is, the true knowledge of Christ and faith. Of course, there are also many weak people in it who build on this foundation perishing structures of stubble, that is, unprofitable opinions. But because they do not overthrow the foundation, these are forgiven them or even corrected. The writings of the holy Fathers show that even they sometimes built stubble on the foundation but that this did not overthrow their faith. Most of what our opponents maintain, on the other hand, does overthrow faith, as when they condemn our doctrine that forgiveness of sins is received by faith. It is also an open and wicked error when our opponents teach that men merit the forgiveness of sins by their love for God before entering a state of grace. This, too, means to remove Christ as the foundation. Similarly, why will faith be necessary if sacraments justify *ex opere operato*, without a good attitude in the one using them?" (Ap, VII, 20-21).

Melanchthon here makes the same distinction between the foundation and the stubble built upon it that I would make between doctrine and theology. There is much bad theology—even among the orthodox Lutheran fathers—that does not overthrow the faith. But whoever consciously overthrows the foundation ceases to be a member of the church. In saying

this, it is always necessary to emphasize that the ministry of such people may remain fruitful and valid because they continue to preach the gospel which they overthrow and to administer the sacraments which they use without faith.

Because of doctrinal differences the representatives of four southern German cities were not permitted to sign the Augsburg Confession. They wished to sign it with an explicit reservation on the doctrine of the real presence expressed in Article X. They were not permitted to sign, even though Bucer made a special trip to Coburg in an attempt to secure Luther's permission. As a result these four cities introduced their own confession at Augsburg, the Tetrapolitana. It has a large section on the church but does not deal explicitly with the question of its unity. Zwingli also submitted his confession to the diet, and it too has a detailed statement on the church.¹⁰

This gives a clear illustration of the doctrinal concern that the theologians of the Augsburg Confession felt it was contradictory to the teaching of the gospel. However, although these four cities were not allowed to sign the confession, they are not excluded from the one, holy church, nor is their ministry considered invalid.

In the following years the evangelicals do not abandon attempts to establish unity with the papal church as well as with the Swiss. They also live with differences and disagreements among themselves—which regardless of their theological significance are not con-

sidered to break their agreement about the teaching of the gospel.

After Luther's death the focus of the problem shifts. First, the Peace of Augsburg (1555) creates a new legal situation. For all practical purposes it amends Charles V's interpretation of the imperial law based on the Code of Justinian by permitting variations in life and teaching in the church that Charles V had rejected at Augsburg in 1530. The Peace of Augsburg thus practically accepts the contention of the Augsburg Confession that its teaching of the gospel represents the catholic faith of the church.

But paradoxically the pressures to achieve unity between the Lutherans and the Roman Church became more persistent and were supported with increasing military force. The attempts of some Lutheran theologians to achieve this unity by agreeing in the interim to build some stubble on the foundation of the teaching of the gospel became the source of conflicts among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession. These controversies were resolved for many by the Formula of Concord and subsequently by the Book of Concord. The preface to the Book of Concord uses the term "*Einigkeit*"—the Augsburg Confession's word for "unity"—a number of times. It says that the devil has sown the seed of false teaching and *Uneinigkeit*. The preparers of the Book of Concord were determined to restore the *Einigkeit* that existed during Luther's lifetime. A group of theologians was assembled in 1576 in order to promote Christian *Einigkeit*.¹¹

The use of the word "**Einigkeit**" leaves no doubt that the signers of the Formula of Concord intended to make some contribution to the **Einigkeit** of the church described in the Augsburg Confession. Their intention was not to add anything to the teaching of the gospel but to clarify that and show how some teachings and some ways of teaching were in conflict with the gospel. They have thereby given us a good example of the way in which theology serves doctrine. It clarifies how the gospel is and is not at stake in a particular discussion.

The authors of the Formula of Concord had one possibility that we do not have—they could bring economic and political pressure to bear on theologians to examine all issues and make a decision. Such pressure has not been available to us for a long time, and its results were of dubious value in any case. But there is another, more fruitful, effective kind of pressure that we are now free to use: the slow, steady pressure of engaging one another in theological conversation about our teaching of the gospel. Such conversations must be fruitful because the oneness of the church under our one Lord presses toward unity. And if our conversations do not seem to lead to that unity in doctrine, it may well be that our theology is inadequate, that we really do not see why and whether a particular point involves the gospel or not. And even if we see that the gospel is involved, we may not understand how.

Thus the Augsburg Confession's statement on the unity of the church helps us understand the function of doctrine and theology. The one holy church will continue

forever because it is born out of the teaching of the one gospel. And because the unity we seek is already given to us through the teaching of the gospel, we may hope to find adequate expression of that unity in our common teaching. The search for that unity and for the words to express it is the task of theology. The task proceeds slowly but is not doomed to failure, for what we seek is already given to us. We live in the tension between the church's oneness and the disunity of our churches. The disunity does not deny the oneness because two meanings of church are involved. However, the unity of our denominations would symbolize the oneness of the church but only if it expresses the oneness of the gospel as the basis of the churches' unity.

We have seen that the Augsburg Confession's concern for and definition of the unity of the church was expressed within a definite historical context. Its affirmation of the teaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments looks back to the early church's emphasis on the **evangelic doctrine** (or teaching). In looking back, however, the theologians of the Augsburg Confession singled out the essential basis of unity and laid aside a unity based on papal authority or on the continuity of human traditions and theologies. Their formulation provided a new basis for the search for the unity of the church in Lutheranism. It is this search for unity on the basis of the teaching of the gospel that has given our church its specific-ally theological character.

In our work we thus stand in continuity with the theologians of the Augsburg Confession in the one holy church. And although political and ecclesiastical conditions have changed radically in these four centuries, their attempt to focus on the interrelationship between the one gospel and the one holy church and on the need to seek unity by seeking agreement on the teaching of the gospel remains our task. From the perspective of the interrelationship between the one church and the one gospel we might define our theological task as one of asking whether and how the barriers which prevent us from declaring unity are related to the gospel which creates the one holy church in which we are already united.

1 J. M. Reu, ed., **The Augsburg Confession: Collection of Sources** (Chicago: Wartburg, 1930), pp. 71-72.

2 **Code of Theodosius**, XVI, 1, 2.

3 Reu, p. 80.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

7 Robert H. Fischer, ed., **Luther's Works**, Vol. 37 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), p. 368.

8 Wilhelm Ferdinand Schmidt and K. Schornbaum, **Die Fraenkischen Bekenntnisse: Eine Vorstufe der Augsburgischen Konfession** (Munich: Kaiser, 1930), pp. 187ff. The doctrine of the church is on pp. 187-96.

9 Conrad Bergendoff, ed., **Luther's Works**, Vol. 40 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), p. 275.

10 Henry E. Jacobs, ed., **The Book of Concord**, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: G. W. Frederick, 1893), pp. 165ff. and pp. 195-96.

11 **Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche** (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), pp. 4, 7, 8, 14, 15.