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Discord, Dialogue, and Concord
The Lutheran Reformation’s Formula of Concord
Lewis W. Spitz

The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, observing the religious strife of the day, commented sardonically, “How absurd to try to make two men think alike on matters of religion, when I cannot make two timepieces agree!” Since his day the chorus of religious belief and opinion has become increasingly cacaphonous, so that the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the Formula of Concord, a confession which restored a good measure of harmony to a strife-ridden segment of the church, is an event of deep significance. Commemorations of Protestant confessions have at times in the past been not merely devout, but also partisan, sentimental, monumental, and even self-congratulatory or triumphalist, but ours must be done in a more reflective and analytical mood. The church of the Reformation, too, may benefit from reform and renewal. In the Frankfurter gelehrten Anzeiger (1772) Goethe mocked the iconoclastic zeal of the “enlightened reformers” of his day, who were even urging the reform of Lutheranism. But, as Luther himself realized, such great things are not in the hands of man, but of God. “Quando enim Deus verbum emittit,” he wrote, “szo geets mit Gewalt!”

From Leonhard Hutterus’ Libri christianae Concordiae: Symboli ecclesiarum Gnesios Lutheranarum (Wittenberg, 1609) to the contemporary work of Edmund Schlink, Holsten Fagerberg, Willard Dow Allbeck, and a host of others, the bibliography on the history and theology of the Lutheran Confessions has reached staggering proportions, so that it is not without trepidation that the non-specialist dares venture into the field. The modest aim of this paper will be to open up some critical matters for discussion, not to offer definitive statements or formulae. It will begin with a bit of historical revisionism and rehearse briefly a bit of the Formula’s Entstehungsgeschichte, underlining the drive toward unity against a background of dissension and accenting some remarkable aspects of the story. It will then address some major problems involved in confessionalism, the problem of authority in Protestantism, the relation of church structure to dogmatic emphasis, the function of confessions, some matters of interpretation of the Formula then and now, and the role of confessions
today. That is a tall order for a short paper, which will have to rely
on suggestion and summary statement rather than upon fully
developed argument.

1. A very widespread misreading of the history of the second
half of the sixteenth century which has affected the common un-
derstanding of the Formula of Concord is the myth of Lutheran
stagnation especially in contrast to the aggrandizement of a more
militant Calvinism. Just as the old view that the evangelical move-
ment faltered as a spontaneous popular movement following the
debacle of the Peasants' Revolt in 1525 has been discarded in the
light of new historical evidence of the urban expansion of the Re-
formation and the evangelization of the countryside after 1530, so
the picture of a passive and static Lutheranism in the second half
of the century is being thoroughly revised. Lutheranism con-
tinued to be vigorous and expansive during the second half of the
century. Although most Lutheran territories were Lutheran in
name prior to the Peace of Augsburg (1555), several of the largest
states such as Prussia and Sweden were satisfactorily reor-
organized only in the latter half of the century. The consolidation of
those territories continued up until the outbreak of the Thirty
Years War. As late as the year 1598 Strassburg turned Lutheran
and subscribed to the Formula of Concord. Even the Palatinate,
the center of the Reformed churches in the Empire which had Cal-
vinist presbyteries from 1570 on, became Lutheran in 1576 and re-
mained so for seven years.

Moreover, the evidence is mounting that Renaissance
humanism continued far into the Reformation era as a major cul-
tural force and was expanded and popularized through the Pro-
testant educational program. The Lutheran area of Silesia was of
great significance for the cultural history of confessionalism, for
during the decades between the Reformation and the Enlight-
enment it led Germany in literature and philosophy with Martin
Opitz formulating the laws for modern high German literature
and Christian Wolff most prominent as the leading philosopher.
In 1558 Melanchthon had declared quite sincerely that Silesia
could boast of having more men learned in the humanities than
any other area of Germany. Even during the three decades of the
doctrinal controversies following the death of Luther, the open-
ing of the Council of Trent, the trauma of the Interims, and the
Peace of Augsburg, the very tumult and the shouting, vehemence
and acrimony, the abuse and heated emotions bore negative wit-
tness to the fact that people cared and were very much alive, con-
cerned, and energetic.

2. The Formula of Concord owed its origin to the fear of disin-
tegration, weariness with dissension, and a positive desire for unity within Lutheranism. Protestantism, because of its lack of a supreme centralized authority and its emphasis upon the individual's explicit faith has always carried within it a potential for complete organizational disintegration. With deviations from the central church pattern toward individualism on one hand and toward sectarianism on the other, according to Ernst Troeltsch's well-known diagram, it has come to resemble nothing so much as a banyan tree. Yet, the fact that ninety percent of its adherents are nominally members of a few major persuasions is all the more astonishing. Such cohesion despite all the centrifugal forces brought to bear upon the church may perhaps be explained historically by three factors. The one is a generally observable phenomenon that while ideas make for change in history, institutions provide stability, which gives a long term advantage to organization over individualism. The second is the fact that in early modern times political powers which insisted upon religious uniformity for the good of the state dominated the church. The third was the development of a general adherence and loyalty to the major confessions, whether that be the Confessio Helveticus Posterior, the Westminster Confession, or the Formula of Concord.

The desire of rulers for uniformity within the state increased with princely particularism, and the growth in power of natural monarchs added to the traditional proprietary church arrangements. In 1536 the Swedish statesman Axel Oxenstierna told his colleagues on the council that religion "is the great vinculum communis affectus et societatis humanae and there is no greater or stronger nexus concordiae ac communitatis than unitas religionis." Sweden was out of line with German Lutheranism, for it did not include the Liber Concordiae among its symbola until late in the next century. At Uppsala in 1593 the opportunity to include it was missed and the ordinance on religion in 1663 and the draft of the Church Ordinance of 1682 really merely recommended it as an explanation of the Augsburg Confession. It was only by his Church Law of 1686 that Charles XI at last gave the Formula of Concord a quasi-symbolic character. In the case of Sweden, however, the church assembly and, in line with it, the kings and parliaments reinforced religious unity, and the one case of possible royal deviation toward Catholicism proved not to be a serious threat. Ecclesiastical and secular government did in the case of Sweden, by way of example, present further fragmentation of the church.

There can be no doubt that the confessions played an important
role in preventing the doctrinal and organizational disintegration of Protestantism, and among these the Formula of Concord merits an honored place. It grew out of a desire for peace and unity. The formulators strove to be faithful to the ecumenical creeds, to Luther's evangel, to the normative Augsburg Confession; and they undertook to define doctrine on the basis of the Scriptures as the only rule and norm in order to correct error and end controversy. Their motto might well have been taken from St. Augustine's Confessions: “In this diversity of true opinion let truth itself beget concord!” Doctrinal controversies had raged so long between the integrists or Gnesio-Lutherans and the Philippists, accused of being Crypto-Calvinists, that the public had reached the point of saturation. In the words of La Fontaine, “Religious contention is the devil's harvest.” Just as it is difficult to understand the Apology of the Augsburg Confession without a knowledge of the Catholic Confutatio Augustanae Confessionis, so it is impossible to comprehend the assymetrical thrusts of the Formula of Concord without a knowledge of the ten major controversies that developed between 1537 and 1577. How wide the chasm between the two major contending parties had become was revealed clearly at the Colloquy of Worms in 1557. That secular princes were unable to resolve such lofty matters became obvious at the meetings of the princes at Frankfurt in 1558 and at Naumburg in 1561. It was time now for conservative pacific theologians of the centrist position, supported morally and financially by the princes, Luther's “Christian brothers in authority,” to become the blessed peacemakers. “The itch of disputing,” Sir Henry Wotton wrote in A Panegyric to King Charles, “is the scab of the churches.” It was time to apply balm in Gilead.

There is no need to rehearse the details of the Formula's Entstehungsgeschichte. We should note especially, however, that the original triumvirate and all six initial signators did not reach agreement because they were such compatible personalities, but that they did so despite the fact that they were not! It was the cause of peace and unity in the church that was their overriding concern. All six signators were members of the Center Party, but they were individually quite different. Jacob Andreae had developed under the formative influence of Johannes Brenz and Württemberg Lutheranism. Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and Nicholas Selnecker had studied with Melanchthon, but had moved quite far from their preceptor. Andreas Musculus, who had conducted polemics against the Interim, Osiander, Stancarus, Melanchthon, and Calvin, was the stalwart general superintendent of Brandenburg. Christoph Körner or Cornerus, who
was called the *oculus universitatis*, had a keen humanist interest and did commentaries on Cicero and Aristotle. Despite the interplay of intellectual and dogmatic cross-currents, in spite of the ambivalence in the relation of Melanchthon's students to Philippism, despite their differing personalities and even the deep personal dislike that Selnecker, for example, felt for the mercurial Andreae, they worked effectively together for the common cause and set a noble example for emulation.\(^\text{10}\) Jacob Andreae made the cause of Lutheran unity his life's work and did much preliminary study prior to the formulation of the Bergen Book or Formula. In 1568 he proposed a "Confession and Brief Explanation of Certain Disputed Articles," and in 1573 he elaborated on these five articles in his "Six Christian Sermons, on the Divisions . . . among the Theologians of the Augsburg Confession . . . How a Simple Pastor and a Common Christian Layman Should Deal with Them on the Basis of His Catechism."\(^\text{11}\) In his entire effort he never sought to innovate, but rather to clarify and propound those basic truths long held *semper et ubique*, even if not *ab omnibus* (Vincent of Lerins). As the Preface to the Formula eventually expressed it: "We . . . have wished, in this word of concord, in no way to devise anything new."

3. The problem of authority has quite rightly been called the Achilles heel of Protestantism. *Quo homines, tot opiniones!* Luther's personal appeal to conscience and to *ratio evidens* at Worms, before the Diet and later before the Archbishop of Trier, posed the problem of subjectivity. This question plagued him through the years: *Nam tu solus sapis?* He found comfort in the thought that he was not alone, but in the company of the prophets, evangelists, apostles, fathers and brothers from Augustine and Bernard to Johannes Tauler and Philipp Melanchthon. In his funeral oration for Luther Melanchthon in turn placed Luther in that same noble succession. His conscience was "captive to the Word of God"; and his teaching corresponded, he held against the radicals, to a sound tradition within the church. Luther's own temperament did not equip him well to be a systematician, as his uninspired commentary on *The Three Symbols or Creeds of the Christian Faith* (1538) suggests.\(^\text{12}\) He deferred gladly to the author of the *Loci*. Nevertheless, his own contributions to the confessional canon embodied in the Book of Concord, the Large and Small Catechisms and the Schmalkald Articles, were simple, forceful, and unambiguous statements of evangelical essentials. But even during his own lifetime, as early as the Wartburg days, "false brethren" undercut him,\(^\text{13}\) and he lived to see the beginning of doctrinal controversies which had to be taken into account in
the Formula of Concord.

The well-known Roman Catholic Reformation scholar Pere Daniel Olivier, a student of Yves Congar and a member of the Lortz school, contends that Luther's formula of justification by faith was basically unstable and could be held together only by a man of his forceful personality, keen intelligence, deep religious experience, and rich theological background. During his own lifetime his theology was distorted in three directions, legalism, synergism, and antinomianism. After his death heresies sprang up as though from dragon's teeth, some preached in his name. Of course, Luther's distinguished predecessors, St. Paul and St. Augustine, had also lived to see their doctrinal formulations twisted and turned, so that even in that respect Luther was in good company.

Why the early and persistent deviation? There is, of course, a skeptical answer, that of the urbane French historian Michelet, who defined theology as the art of befuddling oneself systematically. There was the usual problem of the epigoni who lack the master's brilliance. When one observes the exaggerations of an Amsdorf declaring good works to be harmful to salvation, Osiander's pomposity while rejecting forensic justification, or Flacius declaring man's very substance to be sin (although he distinguished substantia materialis and substantia formalis, and though he really meant the latter as being sin, he refused to clarify his statement), one is inclined to offer easy explanations such as assuming all this to be a case of Die deutsche Neigung zur Ubertreibung! But then one recalls that nearly every willful folly can be duplicated among the French and Dutch Reformed and can only feel bemused at general human limitations. Humanism seems to have added flexibility to some mentalities, but one can formulate no general rule. "Hoeschel," Julius Caesar Scaliger remarked, "though a Lutheran, is a learned man!"

When a doctrinal position becomes merely a matter of private opinion, disintegration doctrinally and eventually organizationally is sure to follow. "Taking heed to the doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:16) calls for more than that. It calls for churchmanship, not individual subjectivity: In his Memoirs Joseph Priestly recorded this incident: "Orthodoxy, my lord," said Bishop Warburton, in a whisper, "orthodoxy is my doxy — heterodoxy is another man's doxy." The formulators of concord had to arrive at a principle of authority which would transcend self-willed definitions and appeal to sound principle. There were several readily available solutions that they did not adopt. The first of these was an appeal to the authority of Luther. In the interest of pacification they had
decided against naming any person associated with an erroneous or controverted opinion, but would refer only to Luther by name. Andreae's mentor, Johannes Brenz, had called Luther *praecipitor noster observandissimus*. They wrote of Luther that "in the spirit this highly enlightened man foresaw that after his death his traducers would distort his teachings." Musculus published a volume of excerpts from Luther's writings. And yet, for all their high regard for Luther, they did not appeal to his writings as a final authority. In fact, it is astonishing to find how infrequently they cite his non-symbolical works and how rarely they appeal to his magisterial authority. This is no equation of Luther's teaching as such and revelation. Luther is viewed as a great doctor of the church to whom one should respectfully pay attention, but he appears as a gift to that part of the church which adhered to the Augsburg Confession, a true witness to the Gospel.15

Nor did the authors of the Formula of Concord look definitively to the authority of the ecumenical creeds or to the earlier evangelical confessions. Their attitude was very similar to that of Luther's toward the creeds and, indeed, toward the writings of the church fathers. They were evidence as to how the early Christians in a better age had understood the gospel, just as the evangelicals in those latter days had been given the gift of a purified understanding.16 The formulators knew full well that nearly all the confessions of the Lutheran Church arose out of specific political and ecclesiastical circumstances. This explains why the signatories of the confessions were not synods or theological conventions. Nevertheless, the confessions spoke for the churches, as can be seen from the opening line of the first Chief Article of Faith of the Augsburg Confession, which begins: "Our churches teach with great unanimity . . ." The intention of the reformers was not to found a new church based upon a new confession like a new republic based upon a constitution, but rather to purify the old church of abuses in teaching, worship, and life. The Augsburg Confession did not for them constitute a new church teaching according to the Scriptures, but the confession testifies to its prior existence. Nor did the reformers after 1530 seek to found the church on the Augsburg Confession. That is evident from the freedom with which Melanchthon changed the text from edition to edition like that of any ordinary text, without receiving any criticism from Luther or the other colleagues. Only at the time of the religious colloquies of 1540 was the specific individual wording of the Augustana emphasized more strongly and that from the political side by the Elector of Saxony. Luther realized that the formal adherence to the ecumenical creeds had not kept the old
church from losing its hold on evangelical truth. The essential signs or notae of the church were the true preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the Sacraments according to that Word. In the writing in which he gave the fullest account of the notae ecclesiae, in the Von den Konziliis und Kirchen (Concerning the Councils and the Church), he completely omits the confessions. They are also absent from the Kirchenordnungen and from the university statutes either for ordination or for the academic oath. The first case in which the Augsburg Confession took on a normative and binding character was in the Homberg Kirchenordnung of 1532, and then the statement is very guarded, denying force, but stating that the Augsburg Confession and the Apology do not state anything mistaken about the Sacrament. The one attempt to make the Augsburg Confession a norm for determining false doctrine came in 1535 in Ulm when the city proceeded against the spiritualist Sebastian Franck. He was to bind himself to a confession of ten articles composed by Martin Bucer and to the Kirchenordnung of Ulm of 1531. When he declined to do so, the city council dropped its demand. The Augsburg Confession was adduced as a witness of the right doctrine, but it was not given a legal character. Using the confessional writings as a legal test seems to have developed gradually in connection with the oath or subscription in churches, schools, and universities in the Lutheran territorial churches and seems to have increased during the period of transition from Orthodoxy to Enlightenment.17

The norma normans for the Formula of Concord was not Luther, nor the ecumenical creeds, nor even the Augsburg Confession, but the Holy Scriptures. The opening words of the Epitome make this quite clear: “Formula of Concord. A Thorough, Pure, Correct, and Final Restatement and Explanation of a Number of Articles of the Augsburg Confession on Which for Some Time There Has Been Disagreement among Some of the Theologians Adhering to this Confession, Resolved and Reconciled under the Guidance of the Word of God and the Comprehensive Summary of our Christian Teaching.” Things are to be settled “in conformity with God’s Word.” The seventh paragraph of the Epitome reads: “In this way the distinction between the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and all other writings is maintained, and 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.”

4. The function of the Confessions, including also the Formula
of Concord, remains one of critical importance. Confessing the Confession does not mean a mere subscription to a church statement as an application of a fides implicita, but it means a commitment to the truth of the Word of God and to the person of the God who speaks that Word. The secular princes who signed the Formula of Concord professed to do so cum ore et corde. Christianity has lived by the confession of faith, for “many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds” (Acts 19:18). From Luther’s brave stand at Worms, which the English historian Froude has described as perhaps the finest scene in human history, the evangelical movement intensified the confessional aspect of the Christian life, linking profession of allegiance to the person of Christ with a Biblical understanding of that relationship. Profession of faith and confession of the creed were joined historically in the Lutheran movement. In a university disputation of 1542 Luther established the syllogism: “The circle of the believers is not visible; the church is the circle of believers; therefore the church is invisible.” But he opposed to that syllogism another: “For the sake of confession the circle of the church is visible . . . By confession the church is recognized, according to the word of Paul: ‘For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation’” (Rom. 10:10). The Confession is part of the individual’s confession as well as an expression of the collective doctrinal position. The Formula is very concerned about pure doctrine, reine Lehre. It couples the teachings of truth with defense against error (Lehre und Wehre), offering thetical statements introduced, with but one exception, with a ritualistic “we believe, teach and confess” and antithetical statements introduced by a formalistic “we reject and condemn.” Even condemnations are intended as a loving corrective statement. Every article in the Formula of Concord is concerned with the issues of a major controversy within Lutheranism. But despite the apologetic purposes, the Formula remained evangelical and confessional in the positive sense. It breathes a pacific spirit.

It should be emphasized that none of the confessions of the Christian Church, including the Formula, have ever sought to exhaust divine truth and infinite wisdom through the agency of human language. Rather, they have sought to state as clearly as is humanly possible propositions which would by affirmation or rejection rule out certain human doctrinal aberrations which were not compatible with what from the Scriptures, also given in human language, can be known of divine truth. In the twelfth century Robert of Melun wrote of the church fathers: “Sacri patres,
quod non oppugnabuntur, non defendebant.” The Lutheran church fathers, too, did not in the confessions seek to state fully all that the Scriptures comprehended or that they believed. The great church historian Philip Schaff paid the Formula of Concord this tribute: “It sums up the results of the theological controversies of a whole generation with great learning, ability, discrimination, acumen, and, we may add, with comparative moderation.”

5. One needs to reflect upon the question as to whether such confessions as the Formula of Concord are destructively divisive. Since confessions naturally stress what is characteristic of the confessing group they tend to ignore or play down the areas which that group has in common with other Christian segments of the universal church. The Formula of Concord united at least two thirds of all German Lutherans at the time, but it is instructive to study the response and reaction of other groups at the time. The Fortress Press book entitled Discord, Dialog and Concord: Studies in the Lutheran Reformation’s Formula of Concord, 1577 contains essays on the reaction of the Dutch Reformed, the French Calvinists, the Anglicans, and the Catholics. We have received the gift that Robert Burns asked for when he penned (To a Louse, 1786):

Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An’ foolish notion.
If the same spirit of Christian love and charity which is evident in the Formula, which counters error but nowhere attacks people or names them, it may well serve as a starting point for discussions with churches outside the Lutheran fold.

6. We must in conclusion consider the significance of confessionalism and of the Formula of Concord for the church today. The Formula was a confession of great historical importance. It ended the major doctrinal controversies within Lutheranism. It was widely accepted as an expression of inner convictions and personal faith as well as a public doctrinal statement and guide. It showed how the second generation of Lutheran theologians understood Reformation truths. It restored harmony within Lutheranism in the Empire, thereby assuring the Lutherans that the privileges gained politically in the Peace of Augsburg could not with right be challenged. But we need to reflect on its contemporary significance:

In this present day the idea of cultural uniformity enforced by the state has given way in the free world to an appreciation of cultural pluralism. Institutions as such seem to be coming unstuck at
an alarming rate. With the state and institutional cohesian, two traditional props for church organizational unity removed or weakened, only the third force, that of confessional loyalty remains. There are some voices raised in behalf of doctrinal pluralism on even central conceptions of theology such as sin and grace. Such counsel invites the disaster of confusion within the church and a speeded-up process of dissolution, a foreshortened eschatology.

There is a strange phenomenon operative in church history with respect to the relation of credal statements or dogmatic earnestness and the reality of ecclesiastical control. Where hierarchical governance or domination is relatively secure and effective, wide latitude of religious experience and theological speculation is allowed. Where ecclesiastical governance is weak, authority decentralized or congregationalized, and cohesion depends upon voluntary association, church bodies have tended toward strong credal statements and doctrinal conformity. Witness the Roman Catholic Church, the latitude of opinion allowed in the secure medieval period and the narrowness of Trent once papal power was shaken. Contrast the clerical strength of the Episcopal or Methodist churches with concomitant doctrinal permissiveness and the loose association of Southern Baptists with their strong emphasis on credal fundamentals. Or compare the power of the ministerium in Eastern nineteenth century Lutheranism which tolerated Dr. S. S. Schmucker's *Definite Platform*, the president of the General Synod's Seminary calling for a revision of central articles of the Augsburg Confession, and the dispersed authority of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, guaranteeing congregational supremacy in its famous Article Seven, but with a powerful emphasis under the leadership of Dr. C. F. W. Walther upon loyalty to the Lutheran confessions *quia* rather than merely *quatenus*. One can doubtless cite exceptions to this general rule, especially in American church history, which, for example, has seen Congregationalism suffer nearly complete doctrinal disintegration. But that, one might argue, was the price paid for a more intimate involvement in the processes of Americanization than most foreign or ethnic church bodies experienced until recent times. In the sixteenth century the confessions provided a focal point for allegiance and supplied a cohesive force which spared Protestantism from complete ideological disintegration. Confessions must do so again, unless churchmen are willing to preside over the final dissolution of organized Christianity into its atomic particles.
The Formula might well serve as a renewed stimulus to a genuine ecumenical endeavor. Indifference to genuine differences proved to be damaging in the union efforts of the nineteenth century and in all too many ecumenical efforts of the twentieth. A clear statement of one's beliefs and commitments, individually as well as collectively, is an important first step in any ecumenical effort. Churchmen today can learn from the authors of the Formula the meaning of concern for religious truth, the importance of honesty and integrity, and the value of the theological enterprise. They can cherish the concern for the *una sancta* so evident in the Book of Concord which placed the Formula of Concord after the ecumenical creeds and the conciliatory Augsburg Confession, declaring the ecumenical creeds to have the “very highest kind of authority” (*summae auctoritatis*) after the Scriptures themselves (well after, of course).

The Formula was addressed to grievous contemporary problems of that day. Certainly its engagement should authenticate the value of credal statements today addressed to contemporary problems within or outside the church. The Barmen Declaration in the thirties, the Missouri Synod’s doctrinal statements, and similar efforts to articulate the concerns and convictions of church bodies are certainly in line with the intent of the Formula. However, doctrinal concerns and credal statements should be directed toward the real problems of our times, corrosive relativism, skepticism, secularism, totalitarianism, cynicism, nihilism. Creeds, it must be remembered, state what is not compatible with central faith-truths while not trying to exhaust the sum of all truths contained in the Faith.

Finally, from the Concordians and harmonizers of that day, we can learn how to combine a spirit of charity with the concern for truth. Rejoicing over the Torgau agreement Andreae wrote: “Truly, this is the change of the right hand of the Most High, which ought also to remind us that since the truth no longer suffers, we should do everything that may contribute to the restoration of good feeling.”22 We can learn, as they obviously had, something from Luther regarding the study of theology. For when it comes to theology, Luther said, “es gehört eine gewisse Bescheidenheit dazu.” When it comes to theology a certain modesty is called for!

**FOOTNOTES**

1. *Weimar Ausgabe* 56, p. 422, 7
2. Among the most comprehensive studies are Edmund Schlink, *Theology of*
Discord, Dialogue, and Concord:


5. The Reformed churches have been as concerned as the Lutheran about the role of confessions in their tradition, as is evident from the Festschrift edited by Joachim Staedtke, Glauben und Bekennen. Vierhundert Jahre Confessio Helveticus posterior. Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte und Theologie (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966).


7. Ibid., pp. 142f. Trygve R. Skarsten, “The Reaction in Scandinavia,” in Spitz and Lohff, op. cit., chapter 8, argues that the churches of Sweden and Finland maintained their right to legislate confessional loyalty and subscription as they met in church assembly and determined the confessional subscription of the king in contrast to Denmark-Norway-Iceland, where the king determined the religious affiliation and confessional subscription of the people.


9. There is a need for a new biography of Musculus offering a more positive evaluation than that of Christian Wilhelm Spreker, Lebensgeschichte des Andreas Musculus (Frankfurt an der Oder: Trowitsch and Sohn, 1858).

10. See the new book by Theodore R. Jungkuntz, Formulators of the Formula


16. See Hans Weissgerber, "The Valid Confessional Symbols", in Vajta and Weissgerber, eds., op. cit., pp. 1-22, on the place of the Augsburg Confession, the Formula of Concord, and the rest, in the doctrinal subscription of the Lutheran churches of the world. On Luther's attitude toward the patristic corpus as evidence of later papal deviation and for the early understanding of the Scriptures, see Ferdinand Kattenbusch, Luthers Stellung zu dem ökumenischen Symbolen (1883).


18. Ibid., p. 222. "Propter confessionem coetus ecclesiae est visibilis... Ex confessione cognoscitur ecclesia, iuxta illud Pauli citatum dictum: Corde creditur ad iustitiam, sed ore fit confessio ad salutem." WA 3911, 161.


22. F. Bente, op. cit., p. 246.