

"THE BACKGROUND OF THE COMPLETION IN TEN YEARS OF THE  
CHIEF LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS"

based on the historical portion of our  
Book of Concord

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The Object of all efforts toward Lutheran unity that brought us the Formula of Concord was "a peace consistent with the divine truth."

"True Lutherans everywhere stood for a union based on the truth as taught by Luther and contained in the Lutheran Confessions." "They were determined that the Lutheran Church should never be contaminated with indifferentism or unionism, nor with any teaching deviating in the least from the divine truth."

"The theologians who were first in adopting effective methods and measures to satisfy the general yearning for a real peace in the divine truth were Jacob Andreae and Martin Chemnitz."

"In his first attempts to unify the Lutheran Church, Andreae endeavored to reconcile all parties, including the Wittenberg Philippists, who then were contemplating an agreement with the Calvinists. In 1567, at the instance of Landgrave William of Hesse-Cassel and Duke Christopher of Wuerttemberg, Andreae composed his 'Confession and Brief Explanation of Several Controverted Articles, according to which a Christian unity might be effected in the churches adhering to the Augsburg Confession, and the offensive and wearisome dissension might be settled.'"

"In five articles he treated:

1. Justification
2. Good Works
3. Free Will
4. The Adiaphora
5. The Lord's Supper

"In 1568, at the Brunswick Visitation, referred to above, Andreae submitted his five articles to Duke Julius, and succeeded in winning him for his plan. In the same interest he came to Wittenberg, January 9, 1569. Furnished with letters of commendation from Duke Julius and Landgrave William of Hesse, he obtained an interview also with Elector August, who referred him to his theologians. On August 18, 1569, Andreae held a conference with the Wittenbergers. They insisted that the basis of the contemplated agreement must be the Corpus Misnicum (Philippicum)."

"Andreae did not know the true character of the Philippism and considered the theologians at Wittenberg were orthodox teachers, and that the Corpus Misnicum contained no false doctrine. Consequently, the Jena theologians, in particular Tilemann Hesshusius, denounced Andreae's efforts as a unionistic scheme and a betrayal of true Lutheranism in the interest of Crypto-Calvinism. They rejected Andreae's articles because they were incomplete, and contained no specific rejection of the errors of the Philippists."

"At the instance of Andreae, May 7, 1570, a conference met at Zerbst in Anhalt, at which twenty theologians represented Electoral Saxony, Brunswick, Hesse, Brandenburg, Anhalt, and Lower Saxony (the Ducal Saxon theologians declining to participate). The conference decided that a new confession was not needed, and unanimously recognized the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and the Catechisms of Luther. Andreae was elated. In his 'Report' to the Emperor and the princes he gloried in 'the Christian unity' attained at Zerbst. But also this

apparent victory for peace and true Lutheranism was illusory rather than real, for Wittenberg theologians qualified their subscription by formally declaring that they interpreted and received the confessions enumerated only in as far as they agreed with the Corpus Philippicum."

"Andreae was regarded with increasing suspicion by the opponents of the Philippists. Andreae's eyes were opened to the dishonesty of the Wittenbergers; and he was convinced that it was impossible to win Electoral Saxony for a truly Lutheran union as long as the Crypto-Calvinists were firmly seated in the saddle."

"Andreae resolved henceforth to confine his peace efforts to true Lutherans, especially those of Swabia and Lower Saxony, and to unite them in opposition to the Zwinglians, Calvinists, and Philippists, who, outside of Electoral Saxony, were by this time generally regarded as traitors to the cause of Lutheranism. In 1573 he made his first move to carry out this new plan of his by publishing sermons which he had delivered 1572 on the doctrines controverted within the Lutheran Church. The title ran: 'Six Christian sermons Concerning the Dissensions Which from the Year 1548 to this 1573d Year Have Gradually Arisen Among the Theologians of the Augsburg Confession, As To What Attitude A Plain Pastor and a Common Christian Layman Who May Have Been Offended Thereby Should Assume Toward Them According to His Catechism. These sermons treat of:

1. Justification
2. Good Works
3. Original Sin
4. Free Will
5. The Adiaphora
6. Law and Gospel
7. The Person of Christ

"Andreae appealed rather to the pastors and laymen. He sent these sermons to Chemnitz, Chytræus, Hesshusius, Wigand, and other theologians with the request that they be accepted as a basis of agreement. In the preface, dated February 17, 1573, he dedicated them to Duke Julius of Brunswick, whose good will and consent in the matter he had won in 1568, when he assisted in introducing the Reformation in his territories."

"The sermons of Andreae were welcomed by Chemnitz, Westphal in Hamburg, David Chytræus in Rostock, and others. They also endeavored to obtain recognition for them from various ecclesiastical ministries of Lower Saxony. But having convinced themselves that the sermonic form was not adapted for a confession, they, led by Chemnitz, advised that their contents be reduced to articles in 'thesis and anti-thesis', and that this be done 'with the assistance of other theologians.' Andreae immediately acted on this suggestion, and the result was what is known as the Swabian Concordia - the first draft of the Formula of Concord. This document, also called the Tuebingen Book, was submitted to, and approved by, the theologians of Tuebingen and by the Stuttgard Consistory. In Substance it was an elaboration of the Six Sermons with the addition of the last two articles. It contains eleven articles, treating:

1. Original Sin
2. Free Will
3. The Righteousness of Faith before God
4. Good Works
5. Law and Gospel
6. The Third Use of the Law
7. The Church Usages Called Adiaphora
8. The Lord's Supper

9. The Person of Christ
10. Eternal Election
11. Other Factions and Sects

"In the introduction, Andreae also emphasized the necessity of adopting those symbols which were afterwards received into the Book of Concord."

"On March 22, 1574, Andreae sent the Swabian Concordia to Duke Julius and Chemnitz with the request to examine it and to have it discussed in the churches of Lower Saxony. On the twelfth of May the Duke ordered Chemnitz to prepare an opinion of the book and to present it to the clergy for their examination and approval. Under the leadership of Chemnitz numerous conferences were held, and the various criticisms offered led to a revision of the document. This work was begun in April, 1575, by the theological faculty of Rostock. Apart from numerous changes and additions everywhere, the articles on Free Will and on the Lord's Supper were completely remodelled by Chytraeus and Chemnitz."

"The new confession, known as the Swabian- (Lower) Saxon Concordia, was subscribed by the theologians and pastors of the duchies of Brunswick, Mecklenburg, Mansfeld, Hoya, and Oldenburg. It acknowledges as its doctrinal basis the Holy Scriptures, the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and Luther's two Catechisms. It discusses the following articles in the following order:

1. Of Original Sin
2. Of the Person of Christ
3. Of the Righteousness of Faith before God
4. Of Good Works
5. Of the Law and the Gospel
6. Of the Third Use of the Law of God
7. Of the Holy Supper
8. Of God's Eternal Providence and Election
9. Of Church Usages which are Called Adiaphora or Things Indifferent
10. Of Free Will or Human Powers
11. Of Other Factions and Sects which have never Acknowledged the Augsburg Confession

"While this new Concordia was adopted in Lower Saxony, the Swabians, to whom it was forwarded, September 5, 1575, were not quite satisfied with its form, but did not object to its doctrinal contents. They criticized the unevenness of its style, its frequent use of Latin technical terms, its quotations (now approved, now rejected) from Melanchthon, etc. Particularly regarding the last mentioned point, they feared that the references to Melanchthon might lead to new dissensions; hence they preferred that citations be taken from Luther's writings only, which was done in the Formula of Concord as finally adopted."

"The movement for a general unity within the Lutheran Church received a powerful impetus by the sudden and ignominious collapse of Crypto-Calvinism in Electoral Saxony, 1574. By unmasking the Philippists, God had removed the chief obstacle of a godly and general peace among the Lutherans. As long as the eyes of Elector August were closed to the dishonesty of his theologians, there was no hope for a peace embracing the entire Lutheran Church in Germany. It was the appearance of the Calvinistic Exogesis Perspicua of 1574 which left no doubt in the mind of the Elector that for years he had been surrounded by a clique of dishonest theologians and unscrupulous schemers, who, though claiming to be Lutherans, were secret adherents of Calvinism. And after the Elector, as Chemnitz remarks, had discovered the deception of his theologians in the article on the Lord's Supper, he began to

doubt their entire contention."

"Now Elector August was determined to satisfy this universal longing for unity and peace. Immediately after the unmasking of the Philippists he took measures to secure the restoration of orthodox Lutheranism in his own lands. At the same time he placed himself at the head of the larger movement for the establishment of religious peace among the Lutherans generally by the elaboration and adoption of a doctrinal formula settling the pending controversies. To restore unity and peace to the Lutheran Church, which his own theologians had done so much to disturb, was now his uppermost desire. He prosecuted the plan of pacification with great zeal and perseverance. He also paid the heavy expenses (80,000 gulden), incurred by the numerous conventions, etc. And when, in the interest of such peace and unity, the theologians were engaged in conferences, the pious Elector and his wife were on their knees, asking God that He would crown their labor with success."

"The specific plan of the Elector was, as appears from his rescript of November 21, 1575, to his counselors, that pacific theologians, appointed by the various Lutheran princes, 'meet in order to deliberate how, by the grace of God all (the existing various corpora doctrinae) might be reduced to one corpus, which we all could adopt, and that this book or corpus doctrinae be printed anew and the ministers in the lands of each ruler be required to be guided thereby!'"

"Before this Elector August had requested Count George Ernest of Henneberg to take the initiative in the matter. Accordingly, in November, 1575, Henneberg, Duke Ludwig of Wuerttemberg, and Margrave Carl of Baden agreed to ask a number of theologians to give their opinion concerning the question as to how a document might be prepared which would serve as a beginning to bring about true Christian concord among the churches of the Augsburg Confession. The theologians appointed were the Wuerttemberg court-preacher Lucas Osiander, the Stuttgart provost Balthasar Bidembach, and several theologians of Henneberg and Baden. Their opinion, delivered November 14, 1575, was approved by the princes, and Osiander and Bidembach were ordered to prepare a formula of agreement in accordance with it. The document which they submitted was discussed with theologians from Henneberg and Baden at Cloister Maulbronn, Wuerttemberg, and subscribed January 19, 1576."

"The Maulbronn Formula, as the document was called, differs from the Swabian-Saxon Concordia in being much briefer (about half as voluminous), in avoiding technical Latin terms, in making no reference whatever to Melancthon, in quoting from Luther's works only, and in omitting such doctrinal points (Anabaptism, Schwenkfeldianism, Antitrinitarianism, etc.) as had not been controverted among the Lutherans. Following the order of the Augustana, this Formula treats the following articles:

1. Of Original Sin
2. Of the Person of Christ
3. Of Justification of Faith
4. Of the Law and Gospel
5. Of Good Works
6. Of the Holy Supper of Our Lord Christ
7. Of Church Usages, Called Adiaphora or Things Indifferent
8. Of Free Will
9. Of the Third Use of God's Law

"On February 9, 1576, the Maulbronn Formula, approved by Count Ludwig of Wuerttemberg, Margrave Carl of Baden, and Count George Ernest of Henneberg, was transmitted to Elector August, who had already received a copy of the Swabian-Saxon Concordia from Duke Julius of Brunswick. The Elector submitted both to Andreae for an opinion, whom formal reasons induced to decide in favor of the Maulbronn Formula.

At the same time Andreae advised the Elector to arrange a general conference of prominent theologians to act and decide in this matter, suggesting as two of its members Chemnitz and Chytraeus of Rostock. This being in agreement with his own plans, the Elector, at the convention at Lichtenberg, February 15, 1576, submitted the suggestions of Andreae to twelve of his own theologians, headed by Nicholas Selnecker, then professor in Leipzig. Ever after the unmasking of the Crypto-Calvinists he was the leader of the Lutheran forces in Electoral Saxony."

"Having through the influence of Selnecker, at Lichtenberg, obtained the consent of his clergy to his plans of unification, and, also in accordance with their desire, called Andreae to Saxony, Elector August immediately made arrangements for the contemplated general convention of theologians. It was held at Torgau, from May 28 to June 7, 1576, and attended by Selnecker, the Saxon ministers who had participated in the Lichtenberg convention, Andreae, Chemnitz, Andrew Musculus, Christopher Cornerus, and David Chytraeus,.... The result of the Torgau deliberations, in which much time was spent on the articles of Original Sin and Free Will, was the so-called Torgau Book. On the seventh of June the theologians informed the Elector that, on the basis of the Swabian-Saxon and the Maulbronn documents, they, as desired by him, had agreed on a corpus doctrinae."

"The Torgau Book was essentially the Swabian-Saxon Concordia, recast and revised, as urged by Andreae, with special reference to the desirable features of the Maulbronn Formula."

"The majority decided, says Chemnitz, that the Saxon Concordia should be retained, but in such a manner as to incorporate also the quotations from Luther, and whatever else might be regarded as useful in the Maulbronn Formula. The Torgau Book contained the twelve articles of the later Formula of Concord and in the same sequence; Article IX, 'Of the Descent of Christ into Hell,' had been added at Torgau. The Book was entitled: 'Opinion as to how the dissensions prevailing among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession may, according to the Word Of God, be agreed upon and settled in a Christian manner.' It was signed as 'their faith, doctrine, and confession' by the six men who were chiefly responsible for its form and contents: Jacob Andreae, Martin Chemnitz, Nicholas Selnecker, David Chytraeus, Andrew Musculus, and Christopher Cornerus. The convention was closed with a service of thanksgiving to Almighty God for the blessed results of their labors and the happy termination and favorable issue of their discussions, Selnecker delivering the sermon. Similar services were held at other places, notably in Mecklenburg and Lower Saxony."

"In a letter to Hesshusius, Chemnitz says concerning the Torgau Convention: "Everything in this entire transaction occurred aside from, beyond, above, and contrary to the hope, expectation, and thought of all. I was utterly astounded, and could scarcely believe that these things were done when they were done. It seemed like a dream to me. Certainly a good happy and desired beginning has been made toward the elimination of corruptions, toward the establishment of a godly confession. In a letter of July 24, 1576, to Hesshusius and Wigand, Andreae wrote in a similar vein, saying: 'Often were they (Chemnitz and Chytraeus) almost overwhelmed with rejoicing and wonder that we were there (at Torgau) brought to such deliberation. 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.'"

"In accordance with the recommendation of the Torgau convention the Elector of Saxony examined the Torgau Book himself and had copies of it sent to the various Lutheran princes and estates in Germany with the request to have it tested by their theologians, and to return their opinions and censure to Dresden. Of these (about

25) the majority were favorable. The churches in Pomerania and Holstein desired that Melanchthon's authority be recognized alongside of Luther's. On the other hand, Hesshusius and Wigand demanded that Flacius, Osiander, Major, Melanchton, and other 'originators and patrons of corruptions' be referred to by name and condemned as errorists. Quite a number of theologians objected to the Torgau Book because it was too bulky. To meet this objection the Epitome, a summary of the contents of the Torgau Book, was prepared by Andreae, with the consent of the Elector. Originally its title read: 'Brief Summary of the Articles Which, Controverted Among the Theologians of the Augsburg Confession for many years, were settled in a Christian manner at Torgau in the month of June, 1576, by the theologians which there met and subscribed'."

"After most of the censures had arrived, the 'triumvirate' of the Formula Of Concord, Andreae, Selnecker, and Chemnitz, by order of the Elector, met on March 1, 1577, at Cloister Bergen, near Magdeburg, for the consideration of the criticisms and final editing of the new confession. They finished their work on March 14. Later, when other criticisms arrived and a further revision took place (also at Bergen, in May, 1577), Musculus, Cornerus, and Chytraeus were added to their number. Though numerous changes, additions, and omissions were made at Bergen, and in Article IX the present form was substituted for the sermon of Luther, the doctrinal substance of the Torgau Book remained unchanged. The chief object of the revisers was to eliminate misunderstandings and to replace ambiguous and dark terms with clear ones. At the last meeting of the six revisers (at Bergen, in May) the Solid Declaration was quickly and finally agreed upon, only a few changes of a purely verbal and formal nature being made. On May 28, 1577, the revised form of the Torgau Book was submitted to Elector August. It is known as the Bergic Book, or the Solid Declaration, or the Formula of Concord, also as the Book of Concord ( a title which was afterwards reserved for the collection of all the Lutheran symbols). Of course, the Epitome, prepared by Andreae, was also examined and approved by the revisers at Cloister Bergen."

"In order to remove a number of misunderstandings appearing after the completion of the Bergic Book, a 'Preface' (Introduction to the Book of Concord) was prepared by the theologians and signed by the princes. The Catalog of Testimonies, added first with the caption 'Appendix' and later without the same, or omitted entirely, is a private work of Andreae and Chemnitz, and not a part of the confession. Its special purpose is to prove that the Lutheran doctrine concerning the person of Christ and the majesty of His human nature as set forth in Article VII of the Formula of Concord, is clearly taught by the Scriptures as well as by the Fathers of the ancient Church. The Formula of Concord (German) was first published at Dresden, 1580, as a part of the Book of Concord. The first authentic Latin Edition appeared in Leipzig, 1584.

"Originally Elector August planned to submit the Bergic Book to a general convention of the evangelical estates for approval. But, fearing that this might lead to new discussions and dissensions, the six theologians, in their report (May 28, 1577) on the final revision of the Bergic Book, submitted and recommended a plan of immediate subscription instead of an adoption at general convention. Consenting to their views, the Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg forthwith sent copies of the Bergic Book to such princes and estates as were expected to consent. These were requested to multiply the copies, and everywhere to circulate and submit them for discussion and subscription. As a result the Formula of Concord was signed by the electors of Saxony, of Brandenburg, and of the Palatinate; furthermore by 20 dukes and princes, 24 counts, 4 barons, 35 imperial cities, and about 8,000 pastors and teachers, embracing about two-thirds of the Lutheran territories of Germany."

"Kilde remarks: 'Wherever the civil authorities were in favor of the Bergic Book, the pastors and teachers also were won for its subscription. That the wish of the ruler contributed to this result cannot be denied and is confirmed by the Crypto-Calvinistic troubles reappearing later on in Saxony. But that the influence of the rulers must not be overestimated, appears, apart from other things, from the frequent additions to the signatures: 'With mouth and heart'.'"

"Self-evidently the Crypto-Calvinists as well as other errorists had to face the alternative of either subscribing or being suspended from the ministry. The very object of the Formula of Concord was to purge the Lutheran Church from Calvinists and others who were not in sympathy and agreement with the Lutheran Confessions and constituted a foreign and disturbing element in the Lutheran Church."

"As to the manner in which the Formula was submitted for subscription, it was certainly not indifferentistic, but most solemn and serious, and perhaps, in some instances, even severe. Coercion, however, was nowhere employed for obtaining the signatures."

"The fact is that no other confession can be mentioned in the elaboration of which so much time, labor, and care was expended to bring out clearly the divine truth, to convince every one of its complete harmony with the Bible and the Lutheran symbols, and to hear and meet all objections, as was the case with respect to the Formula of Concord."

"In Electoral Saxony, where Crypto-Calvinism had reigned supreme for many years, prevailing conditions naturally called for a strict procedure. For Calvinists could certainly not be tolerated as preachers in Lutheran churches or as teachers in Lutheran schools. Such was also the settled conviction and determination of Elector August. When he learned that the Wittenberg professors were trying to evade an unqualified subscription, he declared: By the help of God I am determined, as long as I live, to keep my churches and schools pure and in agreement with the Formula of Concord. Whoever does not want to cooperate with me may go; I have no desire for him. God protect me, and those belonging to me, from Papists and Calvinists - I have experienced it."

"The Elector demanded that every pastor affix his own signature to the Formula. Accordingly, in every place, beginning with Wittenberg, the commissioners addressed the ministers and schoolteachers, who had been summoned from the smaller town and villages, read the Formula to them, exhorted them to examine it and to express their doubts or scruples, if they had any, and finally demanded subscription of all those who could not bring any charge of false doctrine against it. According to Planck only one pastor, one superintendent (Kolditz, who later on subscribed) and one school-teacher refused to subscribe. Several professors in Leipzig and Wittenberg who declined to acknowledge the Formula were dismissed."

"However, as stated, also in Electoral Saxony coercion was not employed. Moreover, objections were listened to with patience, and time was allowed for consideration. Indeed, in the name of the Elector every one was admonished not to subscribe against his conscience."

"In Brandenburg the clergy subscribed unconditionally, spontaneously, and with thankfulness toward God and to their 'faithful, pious ruler for his fatherly care of the Church'. Nor was any opposition met with in Wuerttemberg, where the subscription was completed in October, 1577. In Mecklenburg the ministers were kindly invited to subscribe. Such as refused were suspended and given time for deliberation, with the proviso that they abstain from criticizing the Formula before the people. When the superintendent of Wismar and several pastors declined finally to adopt the Formula, they were deposed."

"Accordingly, it was in keeping with the facts when the Lutheran electors and princes declared in the Preface to the Formula of Concord 'that their theologians, ministers, and schoolteachers did with glad heart and heartfelt thanks to God the Almighty voluntarily and with well-considered courage adopt, approve, and subscribe this Book of Concord (Formula of Concord) as the true and Christian sense of the Augsburg Confession, and did publicly testify thereto with heart, mouth, and hand. Wherefore also this Christian Agreement is not the confession of some few of our theologians only, but is called, and is, in general, the unanimous confession of each and every one of the ministers and schoolteachers of our lands and provinces'."

"In reply to the criticism (of the Calvinists in the Neustadt Admonition, etc.) that it was unjust for only six theologians to write a Confession for the whole Church, and that a General Synod should have been held before the signing of the Confession, the Convention of Quedlinburg, in 1583, declared it untrue that the Formula of Concord had been composed by only six theologians, and reminded the critics how, on the contrary, the articles had first been sent, a number of times to all the Lutheran churches in Germany; how, in order to consider them, synods and conferences had been held on every side, and the articles had been thoroughly tested; how criticisms had been made upon them; and how the criticisms had been conscientiously taken in hand by a special commission. The Quedlinburg Convention therefore declared in its minutes that, indeed, 'such a frequent revision and testing of the Christian Book of Concord, many times repeated, is a much greater work than if a General Synod had been assembled respecting it, to which every province would have commissioned two or three theologians, who in the name of all the rest would have helped to test and approve the book. For in that way only one synod would have been held for the comparing and testing of this work, but, as it was, many synods were held; and it was sent to many provinces, which had it tested by the weighty and mature judgment of their theologians, in such manner as has never occurred in the case of any book or any matter of religion since the beginning of Christianity, as is evident from the history of the Church.' We are solemnly told (Andreae, Selnecker, etc.) that no one was forced by threats to sign the Formula of Concord, and that no one was tempted to do so by promises. We know that no one was taken suddenly by surprise. Every one was given time to think. As the work of composition extended through years, so several years were given for the work of signing. We very much doubt whether the Lutheran Church today could secure any democratic subscription so clean, so conscientious, so united, or so large as that which was given to the Book of Concord."

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This is the Background of the Completion in Ten Years (1567 to May 28, 1577) of the Formula of Concord, one of the Chief Confessions of the Lutheran Church.

Our consideration of the experience of our forefathers in working for and winning true unity among the Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession will help us to work for true unity and peace among the Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession today. As it is, there is great disunity among these Lutherans. But our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded us to continue in His Word with the promise that, if we do this, we shall know the Truth. The continuation of our study of the Word will certainly bring us to know the Truth; and the continuation of the study of the Word will certainly bring other Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession to the same Truth. There being only one Truth, it is the continuation of the study of Christ's Word that will lead us to true unity with all Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession, wherever they are.

There is, first of all, the need of a man or a group of men who have a deep and abiding desire for the unity of all Lutherans, who, as Jacob Andreae and



Martin Chemnitz and Elector August, will work incessantly for unity and peace among the Lutherans. We need a leader or leaders who have the physical endurance to organize and conduct an all-out offensive against errors and misunderstandings and who have the clarity of expression of doctrinal truths possessed by Martin Chemnitz. We can pray for the leadership we need toward Lutheran unity; and our Lord will hear such prayer.

While our efforts would at first be to unite all Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession, they would also be expended to unite also such among the Protestants in general who would in the course of time be led to subscribe to a *corpus doctrinae*. We know it to be the truth that not only Lutherans compose the invisible Christian Church on earth but that Christians everywhere, also in other Christian churches, are included and known to belong to it by our all-knowing Savior. When He, therefore, commands us to work for true unity (as in John 17 and other passages), He wants us to extend our desire for unity also over the Christians who are drawn into denominations and churches of names other than Lutheran.

In our effort toward Lutheran unity we need to set down with clarity and thoroughness all the doctrines involved in differences of interpretation and misunderstandings among the Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession today and with utmost patience and persistence arrive at a corpus doctrinae or Agreement, that would be approved by the Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession. This document would serve as a unifying agent in the hand of Almighty God as it is passed from pastor to pastor for his careful perusal and approval and signature, and from teacher to teacher, until every leader of the Synodical Conference and the other Lutheran bodies has stated his position for or against the document. In this way, as in the days of the Formula of Concord, the Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession would be drawn together into one united Church.

In accordance with the spirit of Christ that would draw all like-minded Christians into one fellowship, the same procedure would be followed in approaching the Christian people in denominations other than Lutheran. A document would be composed that would treat all doctrines concerning which there are differences and misunderstandings and used as a unifying instrument in the hand of God to draw all like-minded Christians into one visible fold. With the proper preparations for the circulation of such a document all who at heart could subscribe to it would be asked to add their signatures.

It was possible for the Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession to settle their differences and to set down their mutual faith in a series of written doctrinal statements during the fifty years between 1530 and 1580; it would be possible also in our day to settle our differences, that are not nearly so complex and divergent as the differences that disturbed the Lutherans in the days of Luther. We need a leader or a number of leaders who are determined to draw all Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession together into one fold; we need a document that will treat the doctrines that are involved in the misunderstandings and interpretations that divide us and that will by a clear presentation of Truth and denunciation of untruth forever settle our differences; and, finally, we need the signatures of all who agree with the document.

Just as in the past, so today unity among all Lutherans who subscribe to the confessions in the Book of Concord can be effected. Efforts to attain such unity will certainly be accompanied by God's Spirit who works effectually through the eternal Word.

A brief study of the background of the completion in ten years of the Formula of Concord, and of fifty years of the the confessions comprising the Book of Concord as

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we know it today, will help us evaluate our present efforts toward unity in the Synodical Conference.

by Robert Wm. Schaller  
911 Woodland Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona

(The personal evaluation of our efforts toward unity in the Synodical Conference and the exhortation have been deleted from this copy of Pastor Schaller's paper.)