

DOCTRINAL
STATEMENT

of the

Association *of*
Confessional
Lutheran
Churches
(ACLIC)

PART ONE: **OUR CONFESSIONAL SUBSCRIPTION**

Thesis 1

We confess that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and the only rule and norm according to which all teachings and teachers in the church are to be judged. The canonical Scriptures are inspired by God and are therefore infallible. Even as God cannot lie, deceive, or err, the Holy Scriptures cannot lie, deceive, or err. The Holy Scriptures are the only source of divine doctrine. All of the church's doctrine is to be drawn from the clear Scriptures. It must be established by what the biblical text clearly means. It may not be established by what the biblical text might mean.

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn any teaching that would deny the inerrancy, inherent clarity, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures or that would promote any authority over our teaching than that of Scripture alone.

Thesis 2

We subscribe unconditionally to the Ecumenical Creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian creeds, because their doctrine is drawn from the Holy Scriptures and is in complete agreement with God's Word. We subscribe unconditionally to the doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580: the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; the Smalcald Articles, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope; the Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther; and the Formula of Concord. We subscribe to the Book of Concord because it is drawn

from and is faithful to the Holy Scriptures in all points of doctrine.

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn any approach to the Lutheran Confessions that would deny their relevance to the church today or their suitability to settle doctrinal disputes among us.

Thesis 3

We commend as useful for study and guidance the following:

1. CFW Walther's *Theses on Church and Ministry* of 1852 (German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States).
2. "Theses on Lay Preaching" of 1862 (Norwegian Synod).
3. "The Third Commandment and the Christian Sunday" of 1863 (Norwegian Synod).
4. "Absolution" of 1874 (Norwegian Synod).
5. "An Accounting" of 1884 (Norwegian Synod).
6. "A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod" of 1932 (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod).
7. "Unity, Union, and Unionism" of 1936 (Little Norwegian Synod).
8. "Fellowship in its Necessary Context of the Doctrine of the Church" - Statement of the Overseas Committee: From the Proceedings of the Recessed Forty-Sixth Convention of the Synodical Conference, 1961 (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod).
9. "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" of 1973 (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod).
10. "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod: Character, History,

Doctrine, Mission" of 1981 (Evangelical Lutheran Synod).

We agree with and welcome examination based on *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion* by Martin Chemnitz, (Concordia Publishing House in 1981 et. al), the standard for the Orthodox German Lutheran church from the time of Chemnitz on.

PART TWO:
OUR CONFESSION IN LIGHT OF
MODERN TRENDS

In response to certain movements and trends in the church today we make the following confession:

Thesis 1

We confess that justification by grace alone through faith alone for Christ's sake is the central article of the Christian doctrine and may not be set aside to the periphery in favor of any other article (Romans 3:21-28; Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8-10).

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn any effort to replace justification with a doctrine of sanctification or indwelling or recreation as the central article of the faith (Galatians 1:6-12).

Thesis 2

We confess that the Holy Spirit works graciously through the gospel and the sacraments of Christ and we do not seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in our lives apart from the external Word of God (Psalm 119:105; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2

Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 4:1; SA III, VIII, 10). We follow the historic and doctrinally sound liturgies of the church for the sake of the faithful proclamation of the gospel and the right administration of Christ's sacraments (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Corinthians 14:33,40).

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn any reliance on extra-biblical revelations. We reject and condemn the modern Charismatic Movement with its claim to "speaking in tongues" as the sign of being "baptized in the Holy Spirit" as unscriptural and dangerous (John 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:30-31; 1 Corinthians 13:8; 1 Corinthians 14:4).

Antithesis 2

We reject and condemn the replacement of the church's historic liturgies and hymns with forms that neglect the objective means of grace in favor of celebrating religious feelings (Romans 10:8-9; Matthew 28: 18-20; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 20:21-23).

Thesis 3

We confess that the church is the gathering of believers among whom the gospel is preached purely and the sacraments are administered rightly (AC VII) and that Christ has established in and for His church a specific office whose incumbents are to preach the gospel and administer His sacraments through which the Holy Spirit, where and when God pleases, works faith in those who hear the gospel (Matthew 28:16-20; John 3:8; John 20:21; Titus 1:5; AC V).

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn the formless doctrine of church and ministry that teaches that every use of God's Word "on

behalf of believers” is the divinely instituted public ministry of the word (1 Corinthians 4:1; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1) and that every gathering of Christians is to be regarded as church (Matthew 16:16-18 and Matthew 18:17-20; Acts 2:42).

Antithesis 2

We reject and condemn any teaching that would deny that Christ has entrusted this holy office to the royal priesthood of the baptized or that would challenge the right of a Christian congregation to choose its own pastor, though we affirm the duty of every congregation to involve, when possible, the pastors of their fellowship in the call and installation of pastors. (Matthew 7:15; 1 Corinthians 3:21-22; 1 John 4:1).

Antithesis 3

We reject and condemn the ordination of women and we deny that God calls women to preach, teach, or administer the sacraments in the church (Jeremiah 23:21; 1 Corinthians 14: 34-37; 1 Timothy 2:11-14; AC XIV).

Thesis 4

We confess that the unity of the church is established by the Holy Spirit through the Word and that false doctrine is the source of division. The church must uphold the truth of God’s Word and must not tolerate false doctrine in her midst but must faithfully identify errorists, refute their errors on the basis of God’s Word, and refuse to express church fellowship with them (Matthew 7:15; Romans 16:17-18; 2 John 10-11).

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn religious unionism, that is, the

expression of church fellowship with persistent errorists (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Antithesis 2

We reject and condemn separatism, that is, the refusal to express church fellowship with churches whose doctrine and practice is in agreement with God's Word (1 Corinthians 12:13-14, 25; Ephesians 4:1-6).

NOTES:

† Adopted: Tuesday, January 29, 2008

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