



## 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the International Lutheran Council

Berlin, Germany

August 27 – September 2, 2005

### **The Formula of Concord as a Model for Discourse in the Church**

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The appellation „Formula of Concord“ has designated the last of the symbolic or confessional writings of the Lutheran church almost from the time of its composition. This document was indeed a formulation aimed at bringing harmony to strife-ridden churches in the search for a proper expression of the faith that Luther had proclaimed and his colleagues and followers had confessed as a liberating message for both church and society fifty years earlier. This document is a formula, a written document that gives not even the slightest hint that it should be conveyed to human ears instead of human eyes. The Augsburg Confession had been written to be read: to the emperor, to the estates of the German nation, to the waiting crowds outside the hall of the diet in Augsburg. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, it is quite clear from recent research,<sup>1</sup> followed the oral form of judicial argument as Melancthon presented his case for the Lutheran confession to a mythically yet neutral emperor; the Apology was created at the yet not carefully defined border between oral and written cultures. The Large Catechism reads like the sermons from which it was composed, and the Small Catechism reminds every reader that it was written to be recited and repeated aloud.

#### *The Formula of Concord as a „Binding Summary“ of Christian Teaching*

In contrast, the „Formula of Concord“ is written for readers, a carefully-crafted formulation for the theologians and educated lay people of German Lutheran churches to ponder and study. Its careful crafting was intended to reconcile feuding theologians and to formulate precisely teachings which they could

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<sup>1</sup> Charles P. Arand, “Melancthon’s Rhetorical Argument for *Sola Fide* in the Apology,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 14 (2000): 281-308.



accept, enabling them to live together in doctrinal harmony. Yet the document did not call itself a „Formula of Concord.“ The book in which it was published indeed claimed the title „Concordia.“ But the title page of the Epitome of this Formula deemed what followed a „Binding Summary“ regarding certain controverted articles of faith, and the Solid Declaration labeled itself „A General, Clear, Correct, and Definitive Repetition and Explanation of Certain Articles of the Augsburg Confession.“<sup>2</sup> The Formula of Concord was conceived as part of a larger effort at achieving agreement and harmony within the German Lutheran churches by repeating the confession made at Augsburg, setting forth an *analogia fidei*, here described as a „binding summary, “roughly the term that Andreae had used („Kirchen Begriff“) in 1574 as he composed what is called the „Swabian Concord.“<sup>3</sup> This essay describes how its authors actually worked to achieve harmony by recapitulating the biblical teaching confessed at Augsburg in such a way that that teaching would be clarified in regard to the issues that divided Lutheran theologians in their time.

They did so by providing a „binding summary, basis, rule, and guiding principle“ for „how all teaching is to be judged in accord with God’s Word and how the errors that have arisen are to be explained and decided in Christian fashion,“ as the orientation to the use of the Solid Declaration states, paraphrasing the title and opening heading of the Epitome.<sup>4</sup> The designation „binding summary“ replaced the term „*corpus doctrinae*“ as the title of the effort to repeat the Augsburg Confession’s teaching in the final stage of the development of the Solid Declaration’s text, in the revisions from the Torgau Book of May 1576 to the Bergen Book of May 1577. The Book of Concord bore the heading „Concordia,“ followed by the invocation of the name of \_\_\_\_\_, and then the title, „Christian, Recapitulated, Unanimous Confession of the Teaching and Faith . . . .“ The Book is an act of confession itself, designed to repeat in concord and agreement what had earlier been confessed in Lutheran churches, „with an appended declaration--well-grounded in the Word of God as the only guiding principle“ or binding summary -- a rule of faith in action and application -- regarding the disputes that had arisen in Lutheran circles since Luther’s death.<sup>5</sup> The Book of Concord understands itself as a repetition of earlier confessions and a declaration of the principles upon which the controversies of its own time were to be adjudicated on the basis of biblical teaching.

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<sup>2</sup> *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (11. ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992 [henceforth BSLK]), 767, 833; *The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 486, 524.

<sup>3</sup> His title for the manuscript was „Schwebischer Kirchen begriff Zu einer Heilsamen Vnion In Religionsachen,“ but the editor, H. Hachfeld, labeled it „the Schwäbische Confession,“ *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie* 36 (1866): 234. Andreae labeled the activity in which he was engaged the work of „concordia“ in a letter to Duke Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, October 4, 1573, *ibid.*, 231.

<sup>4</sup> BSLK 833 and 767, *Book of Concord*, 526 and 486.

<sup>5</sup> BSLK 1; *The Book of Concord*, 3.



Since the early 1530s Wittenberg theologians had used the term „Body of Doctrine“ first of all as a synonym for the „*analogia fidei*“ or „*regula fidei*,“ the authoritative summary of biblical teaching that should guide public proclamation of the message of Scripture -- the fundamental hermeneutic of the church. By the 1550s some in the Wittenberg circle were also employing the term for a specific set of documents that summarized and expressed that guiding set of axioms for pure and proper presentation of God’s Word. Martin Chemnitz wrote in 1561, „the body of teaching of our churches, which we judge to be the true and lasting doctrinal content of the prophetic and apostolic teachings, is expressed in the content of the confessions which we accept, that is, the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, and the Smalcald Articles.“<sup>6</sup> Shortly before his death Melanchthon wrote prefaces for German and Latin editions of a collection of his writings that bore the title „*Corpus doctrinae*,“ giving the term a third definition, as the generic title for a tome that collected authoritative expressions of public teaching in Lutheran principalities and cities within the German empire.<sup>7</sup> To avoid the impression that the Book of Concord was a hostile attempt to set aside Melanchthon’s theology and replace the *Corpus Doctrinae Philippicum*, the Concordists decided to do without the phrase „*Corpus doctrinae*“ that had quickly become the standard term for such a collection of documents that was designed to summarize and regulate public teaching. They found their synonym in „binding summary, rule, and guiding principle“ more than adequate for describing what they were trying to accomplish. They were seeking to establish a hermeneutical standard to judge and guide public teaching in expressions that delivered God’s Word to the church.

In 1577 the repetition of the teaching of Augsburg Confession was necessary not because those outside the Lutheran communion demanded it but because among the teachers of the Confession disagreements had erupted as they attempted to interpret and convey Luther’s and Melanchthon’s insights in new situations in a new generation.<sup>8</sup>

### *Interpreting Luther’s Legacy*

These disagreements revolved around two fundamental theological problems raised by Luther’s own particular way of approaching traditional challenges to the proper expression of the biblical message. As a student of what was formerly labeled the "Ockhamist" philosophy and theology of William of Ockham and Gabriel

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<sup>6</sup> *De controversiis quibusdam, quae superiore tempore circa quosdam Augustanae Confessionis Articulos, motae & agitatae sunt, Iudicium*, ed. Polycarp Leyser (Wittenberg: Simon Gronenberg, 1594), 5, translated in *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 201.

<sup>7</sup> On this entire development, see Irene Dingel, „Melanchthon und die Normierung des Bekenntnisses,“ in *Der Theologe Melanchthon*, ed. Günter Frank (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2000), 195-211.

<sup>8</sup> BSLK 11-12, *Book of Concord*, 12-13 (§20).



Biel, the young Martin Luther had learned that God is almighty and that he had been able to fashion any world that he wished. In the Old Testament the Ockhamists had discovered the Creator who holds all things in his hands, and who exercises responsibility for all in his creation. He had revealed the plan he had made for his human creatures through the church, above all in Scripture, and this Word from God is utterly reliable because the almighty God is utterly reliable, Luther had come to believe as a result of his instruction. At the same time Biel, the teacher of Luther's teachers and author of one of the textbooks from he received fundamental orientation to theology, emphasized human responsibility for all that God has placed within human dominion. Subjecting the biblical understanding of God's commands for his human creatures to Aristotle's interpretation of human responsibility, Biel taught that human beings must do their best in order to earn God's grace if they are to merit salvation. Instead of reproducing this harmonization of divine responsibility and human responsibility with such a synthesis, Luther affirmed both of these biblical concepts of responsibility and held them in tension. This resulted in his using the proper distinction of law and gospel as his fundamental description of God's ways of working with fallen human creatures and his basic orientation for interpreting the Word of God. His recognition of the dual responsibility of God and human creature produced his understanding of what it means to be human in two kinds of righteousness. It also generated his assessment of human existence in two realms.

Inseparably linked to this paradox of dual responsibilities in Luther's theology was his honest confrontation with the mystery of the continuation of evil in the lives of the baptized. Luther's theology of the cross permitted him to „call a thing what it really is,“<sup>9</sup> and so he could acknowledge the primary reality determined by God's Word, that God's chosen people are fully righteous, and that the same time recognize that these same believers are at the same time also fully infected by sin. Thus, he continued throughout his career to insist that the whole life of the Christian is a life of repentance,<sup>10</sup> a life of the Holy Spirit's repeating the killing and making alive that he executed decisively in our baptism.

The struggle to present both sides of the paradox of the two responsibilities within the context of the mystery of continued evil among Christians produced a number of disagreements among Luther's and Melancthon's disciples. In trying to emphasize human responsibility Georg Major defended the proposition that good works are necessary for salvation. His opponents affirmed that new obedience is necessary for Christian living but rejected Major's expression as a betrayal of the

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<sup>9</sup> The wording of the twenty-first thesis of Luther's „Heidelberg Disputation“ on the theology of the cross, WA 1: 354,21-22; LW 31:45. Cf. Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross, Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 81-90.

<sup>10</sup> The first of the Ninety-Five Theses, *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883-1993) [henceforth WA] 1:233,10-11; *Luther's Works* (Saint Louis/Philadelphia: Concordia/Fortress, 1958-1986) [henceforth LW] 31:25.



gospel. Johann Pfeffinger, Viktorin Strigel, and others tried to secure a proper sense of human responsibility by taking seriously the activity of the will, even though they maintained that God saves by grace alone. Their opponents believed that their language, making the human will a material „cause“ or factor in conversion, or repentance, and claiming that it has a „manner of action“ [modus agendi] in the process of turning from sin to God, undercut full divine responsibility for salvation. Fearful that any talk of a positive use of the law in the Christian life would tip the balance from human responsibility to divine responsibility, thus blurring Luther’s distinction of two kinds of righteousness, the reformer’s students Anton Otto, Andreas Poach, and Andreas Musculus rejected Melanchthon’s third use of the law even though they practiced its second use on their congregations with the fury of an avenging angel. Such tensions inevitably arose among Luther’s and Melanchthon’s disciples because the reformer’s pastorally creative approach to the paradox of God’s total responsibility for all and the total responsibility of human creatures for that which God entrusts to them was not easy to reproduce in every situation in which his disciples were called to craft their proclamation.

The second area of disagreement within the Wittenberg circle resulted from the failure of some to grasp Luther’s concept that God effects his saving will through selected elements of his created order. The Ockhamist affirmation that God could have, by his absolute power, have constructed any world and law he wished, prevented Luther from becoming entangled in any principle limiting God, such as that formulated by some Calvinists in the later sixteenth century, „the finite is not capable of conveying the infinite.“ As a good Ockhamist, he believed that if the Word of the Lord said it was so, it was so. He also had learned that God is a God of his material creation, interested in its particulars and able to use them for his saving purposes. He was convinced from biblical data that God has selected certain elements of his creation -- the human flesh assumed by the second person of the Trinity as Jesus of Nazareth, the human language of the gospel, the sacramental elements -- to fulfill his saving purposes. Therefore, there was nothing to prevent him from believing that a God who wanted to converse with his human creatures could do so also by giving them his body and blood in his Supper. He was confident that nothing prevented the second person of the Trinity from assuming human flesh in a most intimate and complete fashion, in a manner that would preserve the full integrity of both his divine and human natures while permitting them to share their characteristics. This teaching, the „communication of attributes,“ was not the reason he believed that Christ’s body and blood were present in the Lord’s Supper, but he found it a good explanation of how it might be possible that the Lord fulfilled the promise of his special sacramental presence.

But some of Luther’s and Melanchthon’s students, without benefit of Ockhamist training, instead influenced by the revival of platonism and neo-platonism, were dubious about how the „spiritual“ of the Son of God and the „material“ of bread and wine could come together with saving power. For reasons of effective polemics, as well as the appearance of complicity, these Wittenberg students were accused of „crypto-calvinism.“ In spite of their good relationships



with Zurich, Geneva, and Heidelberg, they were probably not decisively shaped by Calvinists or Zwinglians but were rather working out elements of Melanchthon's attempts to express the biblical message accurately and clearly. These students, who became the successors of Luther and Melanchthon in the electoral Saxon ecclesiastical establishment in the late 1560s and early 1570s, did indeed draw different implications from Melanchthon's thought regarding the Lord's Supper than did other close adherents of their common Preceptor, such as Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and Tilemann Hesshus,<sup>11</sup> but they claimed to be, and tried to faithfully represent and advance what they understood to be the Wittenberg Reformation. Concern to avoid magical and superstitious use of the sacrament, in the manner of much of popular medieval practice, drove some of Melanchthon's followers in this direction in the 1560s. Chemnitz, Chytraeus, Hesshus, and others certainly shared this concern, but they did not believe that a spiritualization of the sacramental forms of God's Word solved the problem. Instead, they held to Luther's understanding of the Word, also in its sacramental form, as God's actual means of re-creating sinners through Christ's death and resurrection, and as a means by which God entered into conversation and relationship with his chosen children. This reaction to the spiritualizing direction of the Crypto-Philippists led to disputes over the Lord's Supper and Christology which also disrupted the harmony of the Wittenberg circle.

Placing the thought of the Wittenberg reformers at the disposal of a new generation of pastors and people after Luther's death would have involved tensions under the best of circumstances, as is always true when the heirs of an intellectual revolutionary sort out the legacy left them for use in their own generation. In the case of Luther's heirs the inevitable controversy was fueled by bitter feelings of betrayal that grew out of the defeat of the Evangelical leading princes in the Smalcald War of 1546-1547. Duke Moritz of Saxony had sided against his Evangelical fellow princes and won the title and much of the territory of his cousin John Frederick for himself, in what was seen by many students of the reformers as perfidious betrayal. At Wittenberg, now under Moritz's control, Melanchthon believed that he could save Lutheran pulpits in Saxony for Lutheran preachers by working with the new ruler God had given him through the fortunes of war. He employed the principle of using adiaphora to fend off persecution. Many of his former students found that an indefensible betrayal of the recently departed Luther, and their stinging rebukes of what Melanchthon considered good-faith efforts to preserve the faith evoked a bitterness in him that made reconciliation seem, humanly speaking, impossible.

### *Campaigns for Concord*

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<sup>11</sup> The spectrum of interpretation of Melanchthon's thought among his disciples is demonstrated in the study of critical reactions to the Formula of Concord by Irene Dingel, *Concordia controversa, Die öffentliche Diskussionen um das lutherische Konkordienwerk am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996).



To resolve such differences leading princes and theologians of the churches of the Augsburg Confession had exerted much effort over a quarter century, seeking the elusive goal of concord: Concordia. How important concord in public teaching was for the Lutherans can be sensed in the frequent repetition of the idea that there was unanimous consent to the form of teaching presented in the Formula of Concord.<sup>12</sup> The term „concordia“ could refer to a „pactus“ or „foedus“ in medieval Latin, as well as to harmony and agreement in general. It had been used to designate a formulation that brought together disparate theological parties since at least 1534, when Erhard Schnepf and Ambrosius Blarer came to agreement on the Lord’s Supper in the „Stuttgart Concordia“ as they introduced the Reformation to Württemberg. When Melanchthon drafted the „Wittenberg Concord,“ a statement on the Lord’s Supper which both the theologians of Strassburg, led by Martin Bucer, and the theologians of the Wittenberg circle, led by Martin Luther, could accept, he found that „Concordia“ served as a worthy title for efforts at reconciliation.

„Concordia“ became the designation that Andreae and his fellow Concordists applied to their efforts at restoring agreement among the Lutherans, as they forged their chief instrument in reconciliation in 1577 from the confessional tradition of the Lutherans. „Concordia“ described the heart-felt goal of all adherents of the Wittenberg Reformation amidst the controversies of the 1550s and 1560s. Two major patterns developed in the search for concord that began in 1552, within months of the outbreak of controversy over the so-called „Leipzig Interim“ and the issues it raised, initially that of the related questions of public confession of the faith and the use of concessions regarding adiaphora to protect the church from persecution. The first path toward concord sought agreement under the leadership of the princes on the basis of simple statements regarding the controverted issues, without condemnations of false teaching and false teachers; this approach preferred rather an „amnistia,“ a forgetting or ignoring of the specific errors which had caused controversy. The second path toward concord looked to theologians rather than princes to lead the way to agreement, with detailed statements of proper teaching and with clear condemnations of both false teaching and false teachers, so that all readers could clearly understand the issues at stake. The so-called „Philippist“ party generally preferred the former approach, the so-called „Gnesio-Lutherans“ practiced the second.

[ Apart from a brief counter-offensive in 1558-1559 the Philippists avoided public confrontation over doctrinal issues to the greatest extent possible until 1569; in that year, after the collapse of a major effort at reconciling differences sponsored by the Gnesio-Lutheran Duke Johann Wilhelm of Saxony and the Philippist Elector August of Saxony, the Altenburg Colloquy, the electoral Saxon ecclesiastical establishment lodged charges of heresy against the Gnesio-Lutherans on five counts: 1) their use of Christological arguments in explanation or defense of the

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<sup>12</sup> In addition to the expressions in the title itself, BSLK 1, *Book of Concord*, 3, see the preface, BSLK 3-4, 6-8, 14-15, *Book of Concord*, 5-6, 8-9, 15 (§3-5, 9-16, 23) .



true presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, 2) their rejection of the third use of the law, 3) their teaching that original sin is the substance of the human creature, 4) their affirmation of the predestination of a specific number of elect children of God, and 5) their rejection of the biblical definition of the „gospel“ as a message of both repentance and the forgiveness of sins.<sup>13</sup> (Not all Gnesio-Lutherans held all of these positions.) The Wittenberg Philippists thus expanded the agenda of controversy by adding to the list of issues raised against them by the Gnesio-Lutherans during the 1550s: concessions in adiaphora that betrayed the confession of the church and teaching the necessity of good works for salvation and the cooperation of the human will in conversion. The agenda of controversy in the 1550s had also included the common Gnesio-Lutheran and Philippist rejection of the doctrine of justification taught by Andreas Osiander and growing Gnesio-Lutheran concerns -- shared by the south German „Swabian“ party of Johannes Brenz and Jakob Andreae -- regarding the teaching of the true presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper that gradually refocused from Calvinists and Zwinglians to those within Lutheran circles (largely the electoral Saxon ecclesiastical establishment) during the course of the 1560s. ]

After the experience of many failures to make progress in the search for concord, from princes and theologians, from Philippists and Gnesio-Lutherans as well as the Swabian theologians of south Germany, Jakob Andreae embarked on yet another attempt to restore Lutheran harmony in 1568-1570, at the command of and with the support of his prince, Duke Christoph of Württemberg. He tried to reconcile divergent parties and positions with five very brief and general articles -- on justification through faith, good works, the free will, adiaphora, and the Holy Supper --, without any hint of the rejection of false teaching, to say nothing of false teachers.<sup>14</sup> Though he refashioned the articles as he negotiated with different groups, this endeavor failed, too. Obviously, the Gnesio-Lutherans remained suspicious of Andreae's efforts, but his mission of concord also foundered on the opposition of the Philippists in electoral Saxony to his own doctrine of the Lord's Supper and his Christological support for his sacramental understanding.

Andreae left northern Germany to return home in 1570 a disappointed man. Determined, however, to bring fellow adherents of the Augsburg Confession together in a common repetition of its teaching, he drafted *Six Christian Sermons on the Divisions among the Theologians of the Augsburg Confession* in 1573. These

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Kolb, „Altering the Agenda, Shifting the Strategy: The *Grundfest* of 1571 as Philippist Program for Lutheran Concord,“ *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 30 (1999): 705-726.

<sup>14</sup> One version of the Articles was edited by Heinrich Heppe, *Geschichte des deutschen Protestantismus in den Jahren 1555-1581* (Marburg: Elwert, 1853), 250-254, translated in Robert Kolb, *Andreae and the Formula of Concord, Six Sermons on the Way to Lutheran Unity* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1977), 58-60. On other versions of these articles, see Inge Mager, „Jakob Andreaes lateinische Unionsartikel von 1568,“ *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 98 (1987): 70-86; and Hans Christian Brandy, „Jacob Andreaes Fünf Artikel von 1568/69,“ *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 98 (1987): 338-351.





printed sermons treated an expanded list of disputes and divisions, embracing not only the traditional Gnesio-Lutheran agenda of controversy but also the Philippist accusations against their opponents: justification by faith, good works, original sin, the free will, adiaphora, law and gospel, the third use of the law, and the person of Christ and the communication of attributes.<sup>15</sup>

In these sermons Andreae greatly expanded his treatment of each of the divisive issues and included specific rejection of false teaching in the text and of false teachers with identification of the source of the false teaching in the margin. His new effort for concord followed the Gnesio-Lutheran model for seeking agreement. Furthermore, his sermons embraced the positions of the main body of Gnesio-Lutherans in sharply repudiating Philippist positions on a series of disputed questions. He also claimed common ground with the majority of Gnesio-Lutherans by condemning some more radical Gnesio-Lutheran positions, such as the definition of original sin as the substance of the sinner, the alleged „antinomianism“ of Andreas Musculus and others, and Nikolaus von Amsdorff’s use of Luther’s judgment, „good works are detrimental for salvation.“

Andreae asked colleagues in north Germany, including Martin Chemnitz and David Chytraeus, to endorse and promote his new call for unity. Chemnitz, Chytraeus, and others advised Andreae that only a higher level of theological discourse could solve the problems, and so in 1574 he composed the „Swabian Concord.“ Chemnitz and Chytraeus offered improvements in what is known as the „Swabian-Saxon Concord.“ Impatient with the slow pace of reaction to Andreae’s document, Elector August asked the government in Württemberg to undertake a new effort. Duke Ludwig joined the courts of Henneberg and Baden in commissioning the „Maulbronn Formula,“ completed in January 1576. These two documents stood at the disposal of August of Saxony when he began his new reform effort in 1576. At meetings in Torgau in May/June 1576 and Bergen in May 1577 -- with an intervening invitation for criticism of the Torgau draft sent to all Evangelical churches in Germany --, the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord was carefully crafted as an instrument of reconciliation from the drafts of Andreae, Chytraeus, Chemnitz, and the Maulbronn theologians, with significant additions to their work formulated at Torgau and Bergen.

[ The core committee of six representatives that was responsible for the text of the Solid Declaration was constituted according to territorial, political representation, not by theological „party affiliation.“ Christoph Körner of Brandenburg entered to little into public controversy that he cannot be definitely assigned to any of the groups in the Wittenberg circle of the 1560s and 1570s. His

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<sup>15</sup> *Sechs Christlicher Predig Von den Spaltungen so sich zwischen den Theologen Augspurgischer Confession von Anno 1548. biss auff diss 1573. Jar nach vnnd nach erhaben. Wie sich ein einfaf[e]ltiger Pfarrer vnd gemeiner Christlicher Leye so dardurch mo[e]cht verergeret sein worden auß seinem Catechismo darein schicken soll* (Tübingen: Gruppenbach, 1573), translated in Kolb, *Six Christian Sermons*, 61-120.



colleague, Andreas Musculus, had not closely associated with the Gnesio-Lutherans but fits their profile in his churchmanship and his theological positions. Jakob Andreae represented the theology of the south German „Swabian“ party around Johannes Brenz. Nikolaus Selnecker had clearly been closely associated with the Philippists. David Chytraeus and Martin Chemnitz were devoted followers of Melancthon but also close friends of many Gnesio-Lutherans and, perhaps apart from Chytraeus’s synergism, should be identified with them. The assertion of the existence of a „middle party“ to which the two of them belonged does not conform to historical fact.<sup>16</sup> ]

[ Andreae’s original draft, in the Swabian Concord, determined large parts of four articles of the Formula of Concord, including two which treated controversies that had largely died out, V (on the definition of law and gospel) and X (on adiaphora), and XII (on sects outside the Lutheran churches). In addition, two third of article VI, on the third use of the law, came from his pen, but with additions necessitated by the presence of Andreas Musculus, whose position Andreae had expressly rejected earlier, at the table in Torgau. In addition, Andreae, Chytraeus, and Chemnitz shared responsibility almost equally with each other for the treatment of justification in Article III. In the Swabian Concord Andreae had added God’s election or predestination to the list of issues treated in the *Six Christian Sermons*, and one third of the text of the Formula’s article on the subject (XI) reproduced his thoughts, but two-thirds of that article came from Chemnitz’s supplement. Andreae shared with Chemnitz the responsibility for the final treatment of Christology although one-third of that article came from adjustments made in the text at Torgau and Bergen. ]

[ Chytraeus produced half of the text of Article II, on the freedom of the will, with extensive supplement from the Maulbronn Articles, and almost eighty percent of the Formula’s discussion on the Lord’s Supper came from his pen. Chemnitz wrote three quarters of the article on original sin (I), and two-thirds of those on good works and predestination, as well as making considerable to those on justification (III) and Christology (VIII). The Maulbronn Articles provided nothing for four articles (III, IV, VI, XI), little for three others (I, V, VIII), and only ten (VII, X) to twenty (II) percent of three others. At Torgau the committee went beyond the manuscripts it had before it primarily in expanding Articles III, V, VI, and VIII. Bergen altered above all articles II (25%), VIII (15%), and I (10%). At Bergen the committee totally redrafted the ninth article, on Christ’s descent into hell, which had been first composed at Torgau. ]

Their work rested upon the presupposition that „the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments“ are „the pure, clear fountain of Israel, which alone is the one true guiding principle, according to which all teachers and teachings are to be judged and evaluated.“ The Scripture alone is served them as

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<sup>16</sup> For the argument for a „middle party,“ see F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1921).

primary authority for the teaching and life of the church. All other presentations of God's Word proceed from Scripture and are subject to it. Indeed, the Concordists recognized the secondary authority of summaries of biblical teaching in the ancient creeds and in the Augsburg Confession, along with the expositions of it in the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and Luther's Catechisms. They were offering the Formula of Concord as a repetition of the teaching contained in Scripture and the documents named as secondary authorities for public teaching.<sup>17</sup> Even though they treasured the teachings of the ancient fathers and accorded special respect to the entire corpus of Luther's writings, they did not place the fathers or Doctor Luther in their list of secondary authorities. They cited the patristic evidence when it was helpful and even added a semi-official appendix, the „Catalog of Testimonies,“ to the Book of Concord to demonstrate that its Christological teaching agreed with that of the ancient church. They cited Luther to define what it meant to be Lutheran, in defense of their own interpretation of the intent of his teaching on controverted articles against others' points of view, and second, to support (but not establish) their interpretation of Scripture.<sup>18</sup> But their arguments claimed a biblical basis at all points.

Resolving differing uses of Scripture by the theologians of the Wittenberg circle in their address of the burning questions of the day was the challenge of Concordists. The text of the Solid Declaration largely followed Andreae's lead in the *Six Christian Sermons*, rejecting Philippist positions, embracing the teaching of the main body of Gnesio-Lutherans. But especially with the help of Chemnitz and Chytraeus, the Torgau committee built upon and expanded Andreae's attempts to recognize valid concerns among the Philippist and radical Gnesio-Lutheran teaching in conflict with the fundamental teaching espoused by the Formula. At a number of points just how this careful crafting took place can be observed. In two articles disagreement separating the members of the Torgau committee had to be resolved. At other points, to one extent or another they had held differing positions, at least in accent and formulation of their teaching. Nonetheless, they shared a common point of view to a large extent but strove to take seriously conflicting positions among those who had engaged in controversy.

#### [ *Disagreements among the Concordists on the Descent into Hell (Article IX)*

When the Torgau committee decided to add an appendix to article VIII, on Christology, by affirming against the Heidelberg Catechism that Christ descended into hell bodily, thus demonstrating that his person could be in the tomb and in hell at the same time,<sup>19</sup> there were also tensions in the room. Article IX's treatment of

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<sup>17</sup> In the „Binding Summary, Basis, Rule, and Guiding Principle“ of the Solid Declaration, BSLK 834-839, *The Book of Concord*, 526-529.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, and Hero. Images of the Reformer, 1520-1620* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 55-74.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Kolb, „Christ's Descent into Hell as Christological Locus in the Era of the Formula of Concord. Luther's 'Torgau Sermon' Revisited,“ *Lutherjahrbuch* 69 (2001): 101-118.



its subject is unique in the Formula of Concord in that it offers only the briefest of summaries of proper teaching on Christ's descent and then refers readers to Luther's so-called „Torgau Sermon“ in order to learn that the less said about the subject, the better. The affirmation that „the entire person, God and human being, descended to hell after his burial, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his power“ favors the interpretation of Melanchthon's disciples at the expense of Andreae's earlier position. He had followed Johannes Brenz in explicating the descent into hell in terms of Christ's sufferings on earth while the former Wittenberg students held to the position that Luther and Melanchthon had embraced, that Christ descended as part of his triumph over the devils and forces of hell.<sup>20</sup> The Torgau committee made its point without entangling itself in the cross-currents of interpretation within the Lutheran churches of the time. ]

#### *Disagreements among the Concordists on the Third Use of the Law (Article VI)*

Article VI, on the third use of the law, posed a similar problem. Melanchthon had developed the concept of the third use of the law, the application of the law in the life of the believer, in response to the popular antinomianism that had shocked him and Luther as they conducted the visitation of Saxon parishes in 1527/1528 and to the theological antinomianism of his friend and former student Johann Agricola, who taught that the law played no role in the believer's life.<sup>21</sup> Luther concentrated on an ever sharper proclamation of the second use of the law;<sup>22</sup> Melanchthon tried to develop a more finely analytical presentation of the way in which the law functions in the Christian life.

In the 1550s, in the turmoil created by his colleague Georg Major, with his defense of the proposition, „good works are necessary for salvation,“ some Gnesio-Lutherans who sharply rejected the proposition as it stood were willing to concede that „good works are theoretically necessary for salvation in the doctrine of the law.“ Others recognized that formulation as contrary to Luther's distinction of two kinds of righteousness. They included Nikolaus von Amsdorff, Anton Otto, and Andreas Poach.<sup>23</sup>

In a parallel dispute at the University of Frankfurt an der Oder, also in the late 1550s, Abdias Praetorius defended the necessity of good works against Andreas Musculus, who feared that any mention of necessity, as Melanchthon had

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<sup>20</sup> David G. Truemper, „The *Descensus ad Inferos* from Luther to the Formula of Concord,“ S.T.D. thesis, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1974.

<sup>21</sup> Timothy J. Wengert, *Law and Gospel, Philip Melanchthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 77-210, esp. 200-206.

<sup>22</sup> James M. McCue, „Luther and the Problem of Popular Preaching,“ *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 (1985): 33-43.

<sup>23</sup> Matthias Richter, *Gesetz und Heil: Eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte und zum Verlauf des sogenannten Zweiten Antinomistischen Streits*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 132-207, 251-291.



expressed it in his third use of the law, would lead to an abandonment of Luther's understanding of salvation by grace alone. Musculus insisted that believers produce good works spontaneously, apart from any necessity or compulsion from the law, out of a „free and merry spirit,“ in so far as they are people of faith.<sup>24</sup> Otto, Poach, Musculus, and their supporters all applied the law in its accusing and crushing force to parishioners and readers of their printed works with fervor, and so it is unfair and inaccurate to label them „antinomians“ as did the Philippist polemic against the Gnesio-Lutherans, and as Jakob Andreae did in his *Six Christian Sermons*. This part of Andreae's proposal for concord occasioned a genuine difficulty when the committee to compose the Formula of Concord was created by August of Saxony in consultation with other princes. For his fellow elector, Johann Georg of Brandenburg, sent the general ecclesiastical superintendent of his lands, Andreas Musculus, as one of his two delegates. Musculus faced not only Andreae but also three faithful students of Melanchthon, all steadfast adherents of his view of the third use of the law, Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and Nikolaus Selnecker, across the table in Torgau in 1576.

The treatment of the topic of the law in article VI shows how the committee worked to take seriously concerns from both sides of a dispute and honor the concerns of each. Andreae's Swabian Concord had emphasized the human responsibility for obedience to God in treating the question of a third use of the law; Musculus had rejected it in order to safeguard God's responsibility for his gracious re-creation of sinners through the forgiveness of sins. Article VI begins with a section taken from the Swabian Concord, revised slightly at Torgau, which affirms that because of the mystery of the continuation of sin in believers' lives, they need the law, indeed to confront them with their sinfulness but also to teach them the daily practice of the law of the Lord (SD VI:1-9). Chytraeus added a few sentences at this point to confess that the gospel creates the new obedience of believers and the law, unable to empower this new obedience, reproves sin as the Holy Spirit's tool for killing, while the gospel serves as his tool for restoring and comforting (SD VI:10-14). However, Musculus' concern wins affirmation in the next paragraphs. Works of the law are distinguished from works of the Spirit, for two different kinds of people try to fulfill „the unchanging will of God, according to which human beings are to conduct themselves in this life,“ a definition which aids the Melanchthonian assertion of human responsibility. The attestation of divine responsibility then follows in words acceptable to Musculus: „When people are born again through the Spirit of God and set free from the law (that is, liberated from its driving powers and driven by the Spirit of Christ), they live according to the unchanging will of God as comprehended in the law, and do everything, insofar as they are reborn, from a free and merry spirit. Works of this kind are not, properly speaking, works of the law but works and fruits of the Spirit . . . .“ (SD VI: 17, 15-19). Andreae and Chytraeus both contributed to the closing paragraphs of the article VI with a strong reminder that the sinfulness of the believer's flesh makes the continued proclamation of the law necessary. Andreae's effort to meet Musculus' concern can

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 208-250.



be heard in his statement that Christians „are personally freed from the curse and condemnation of the law through faith in Christ and . . . their good works, though imperfect and impure, are pleasing to God through Christ. . . . they act in God-pleasing way .. not because of the coercion of the law but because of the renewal of the Holy Spirit -- without coercion, from a willing heart, insofar as they are reborn in their inner person“ (SD VI:23, cf. 20-25).

Article VI makes clear that God alone is responsible for the believer’s new identity as a child of God and for the motivation to meet God’s expectations for human exercise and performance of obedience to him. It also makes clear that humans are created to exercise responsibility through the obedience which alone can come from the Holy Spirit’s power. Concerns of both sides in the debate over the third use of the law were taken seriously. The two sides of the paradox, law and gospel, are held in tension. Those who approach this text without realizing the underlying structure of understanding may find it confusing, but it is clear that here members of the Wittenberg circle were practicing the paradox of divine and human responsibility.

*[ Honoring Concerns from Two Sides on Good Works (Article IV)*

The discussion of the third use of the law grew out of the controversy over the proposition „good works are necessary for salvation.“ In the mid-1520s the reforming pastor of Magdeburg Nikolaus von Amsdorff and his reforming school rector Georg Major had been threatened with death by local Roman Catholic opponents, in part because they rejected this teaching. In the 1550s, reflecting in part political exigencies in the wake of the Leipzig Interim, in part his own concern for public order and Christian morality or human responsibility, Major embraced the phrase. Amsdorff was shocked. He readily acknowledged that good works are necessary for Christian living, but his concern for maintaining total divine responsibility for the salvation of sinners moved him to attack Major, igniting a generation of controversy.<sup>25</sup> Andreae joined the Gnesio-Lutherans in condemning Major’s proposition, but article IV respects Major’s fundamental theological concern regarding public order morality and the new obedience of believers.

Chemnitz supplemented or revised Andreae’s original draft extensively in this article. After the usual description of the controversy, Chemnitz added to what his colleague had written his own observations regarding the agreement that united all Lutherans: that God wills believers to do good works, that faith and the renewal of the Holy Spirit produce good works, that these works are acceptable to God because of Christ, in spite of their imperfection (SD IV:7-8). In a lengthy discussion he affirmed that since the Augsburg Confession and its Apology used the

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<sup>25</sup> Timothy J. Wengert, „Georg Major (1502-1574), Defender of Wittenberg’s Faith and Melancthonian exegete,“ in: *Melancthon in seinen Schüler*, ed. Heinz Scheible (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997), 129-156; Robert Kolb, "Georg Major as Controversialist: Polemics in the Late Reformation," *Church History* 45 (1976): 455-468.



term „necessary“ with regard to works, it could continue to be said that believers necessarily perform good works.<sup>26</sup> However, this necessity must be carefully defined. Chemnitz endeavored to explicate the nature of human responsibility under God’s grace (SD IV:14-30, 34-35). His text had to be revised, however, probably under Musculus’ glare, to make it crystal clear that this necessity is not a coercion since „the people of the New Testament are supposed to be a willing people“ who „sacrifice with a free will, not reluctantly or under compulsion, but from obedient hearts“ (SD IV:17). Chemnitz himself strove to make certain that the necessity of good works was excluded from any role in justification and in the preservation of faith, righteousness in God’s sight, or salvation. Into his discussion Chytraeus placed his own warning against the idea that Christians can practice evil works (SD IV:31-33), another avowal of human responsibility.

Chemnitz strengthened this point by dealing gently with Amsdorff’s repetition of Luther’s „good works are detrimental to salvation,“ taming the reformer’s defence of divine responsibility with a view toward the threat of immorality, that is, a failure to exercise divine responsibility. Amsdorff’s use of the phrase against Major that had aroused little objection even in the polemical atmosphere in which he advanced it, perhaps because Philippist opponents as well as Gnesio-Lutheran supporters had recognized its significance as a attestation of the inappropriateness of ascribing righteousness in God’s sight in any way to human activity or performance.<sup>27</sup> Chemnitz rebuffed the position gently, however: „when asserted without explanation, it is false and offensive. It may weaken discipline and public order, and it may introduce and strengthen a crude, wild, presumptuous Epicurean way of life“ (SD IV:39, 38-40). Having made clear that God is totally responsible for the salvation of sinners, completely apart from their works, he here had to make certain that human responsibility not be weakened so that hearers of Lutheran preaching would understand that they were recreated by God for obedience in faith.

*Honoring Concerns from Two Sides on Freedom of the Will and Predestination  
(Articles I, II, and XI)*

Related to this controversy on good works was the dispute over the role, contribution, and power of the human will to conversion and repentance. Melancthon had taught all his students to be concerned about the activity of the will -- an anthropological question -- for a series of reasons, some of which never became factors in Luther’s discussion of bound choice, a matter of soteriology.

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<sup>26</sup> This position was not controverted by most of Major’s opponents; even Nikolaus von Amsdorff had prepared a manuscript for publication (though it was not published), entitled „Instruction on Good Works, that They are not Necessary for Salvation but for a Christian Life,“ see Robert Kolb, *Nikolaus von Amsdorf (1483-1565), Popular Polemics in the Preservation of Luther's Legacy* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1978), 163-164.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Kolb, "Good Works are Detrimental to Salvation, Amsdorf's Use of Luther's Words in Controversy," *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* IV (O.S. XVI) (1980),136-151.



Luther and Melanchthon shared worries about public order and morality after the parish visitations of 1527/1528, but Luther never confronted Roman Catholic negotiators who accused the Lutherans of „stoic determinism,“ of teaching „manichaeism,“ of making God a cause of evil. Melanchthon, as electoral Saxony’s chief ecclesiastical diplomat, did. Luther simply proclaimed the gospel. Melanchthon had to teach future preachers and teachers the principles of communication, and good rhetoric demanded attention to psychological factors. Thus, the younger colleague did not hesitate to assert the freedom of the will to act so that the integrity of the human creature and the responsibility of human action be preserved. The older colleague never abandoned his insistence that apart from the Holy Spirit the active, „free“ human will could make only a bound choice in matters of the human relationship with God. The differences between the two were matters of focus and accent more than of substance.

Their students, however, in their endeavors to defend God’s responsibility for salvation and human responsibility for obedience, fell into disputes about how to make each clear. The debate was complicated by the inability of the time to recognize presuppositions and paradigms behind the formulations the theologians were using. Johann Pfeffinger, superintendent and professor in Leipzig, tried to address the problem by using an adult model for the person who is being converted. God’s grace is as free as the warmth of the sun, but to enjoy the free warmth of the sun the person must walk from the cellar to the open air. Gnesio-Lutheran opponents of this position began with the presupposition that to enter the Kingdom of God the sinner must be born again, must be like a little child. Viktorin Strigel, professor of Jena, tried to solve the problem by using Aristotelian anthropology and suggesting that original sin is an accident which adheres to the human will, damaging its ability to trust in God but not taking away its ability to act (he termed this a „modus agendi“). Strigel’s Gnesio-Lutheran colleague Matthias Flacius preferred using only biblical language but argued that in Aristotelian terms, while the material substance of the fallen creature remained, the formal substance of the sinner -- the ability to fear, love, and trust in God above all things -- was lost. Thus, he could use Luther’s occasional label for original sin, „essential sin,“ and the reformer’s observation that the sinner at heart is now cast „in the image of Satan.“ Such language offended Strigel’s and Flacius’s patron, the Gnesio-Lutheran Duke Johann Friedrich the Middler, and many of his Gnesio-Lutheran friends, and thus Flacius’s attempt to clarify the problem of the bondage or freedom of the will led to a serious division within Gnesio-Lutheran ranks.<sup>28</sup>

The Formula of Concord thus had to deal with three positions regarding the question of the will. Was it the will of an image of Satan, a creature turned essentially or substantially into sin in terms of its relationship to God? Was it a corrupted will, totally bound away from God but God’s creature and not a creation of the devil? Was it a will totally dependent on God’s grace but still able to act in some way or other to prepare itself for reception of grace?

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<sup>28</sup> Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus* (Erlangen: Blaesing, 1859-1861), II:310-412.





The first article of the Formula decisively rejects Flacius's use of Aristotelian language (SD I:54) and does so with repetitions of the unfair accusation that his position was Manichaeic (SD I:3-4, 26-47). Also here the Concordists tamed Luther's sometimes extravagant use of Flacian-like language by interpreting the reformer's use of Flacius's terminology directly (SD I:53) and also alluding to his treatment of original sin as a deep corruption of the human will (SD I:8, 33, 61-62), reformulating their treatment of Luther yet at Bergen (61-62). Chemnitz and his colleagues apparently believed that Luther's efforts at expressing total divine responsibility sometimes actually failed to do so in a way that held God's grace in proper tension with the integrity of the human creature. Thus, they channeled his theological ebullition into useable, respectable forms, making a wild stream navigable for a new generation of the uninitiated.

Indeed, the Concordists confessed with the Apology of the Augsburg Confession that the will has become corrupted „with a deep-seated, evil, horrible, bottomless, unfathomable, and indescribable corruption of the entire human nature and of all its power, particularly of the highest, most important powers of the soul, in mind, heart, and will“ (SD I:11). Article II makes it clear that „the natural, unregenerated human mind, heart, and will are not only completely turned away from God in all divine matters, but are also perverted and turned toward every evil and against God. Likewise, they are not only weak, impotent, incapable, and dead to the good, but through original sin they have also been tragically perverted, poisoned through and through, and corrupted“ (SD II:17). Therefore, „just as people who are bodily dead cannot on the basis of their own powers prepare themselves or dispose themselves to receive temporal life once again, so people who are spiritually dead in sins cannot on the basis of their own strength dispose themselves or turn themselves toward appropriate spiritual, heavenly righteousness and life, if the Son of God has not made them alive and freed them from the death of sin“ (SD II:11). Strigel's use of the term „modus agendi“ to affirm the integrity of humanity by describing the still active will of the fallen sinner was rejected (SD II:61). Melancthon's attempt to explain the role of the will in conversion with Aristotelian „factors“ -- the Holy Spirit as the effective factor, the Word as the instrumental factor, the will as the material factor -- was rejected as misleading for students (SD II:90). These formulations, designed to affirm total divine responsibility for salvation, were clearly efforts to attract the disciples of Flacius, who had died two years before the Formula of Concord was completed, back into the fold, an effort that did not meet with complete success.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time Formula of Concord Article II takes seriously the concerns of the Melancthonian school. Chytraeus and Selnecker had certainly repeated Melancthon's point of view often, in passages that sound as „synergistic“ as those

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<sup>29</sup> Dingel, *Concordia controversa*, 467-541.



of Pfeffinger and Strigel.<sup>30</sup> Chemnitz had shared his Preceptor's concerns that God not be the cause of evil; that was the entire point of his treatment of the topic „on the freedom of the will“ in his 1561 „Judgment“ on the controversies besetting the Lutheran church.<sup>31</sup> He, too, wished to reject „Stoic determinism“ and to convey to his fellow-pastors the insights of Melanchthonian rhetoric regarding moving the hearts and minds of their people to faith. Thus, Article II states, in Chytraeus's words, that even though Scripture „compares the unregenerated human heart to a hard stone . . . or to an unhewn block of wood, or to a wild, ferocious beast,“ „that does not mean that the human being after the fall is no longer a rational creature, or that human beings can be converted to God without hearing and thinking about the divine Word, or that they cannot understand or freely do or refrain from doing what is good and evil in external, temporal matters“ (SD II:19; cf. the reinforcement of this point added at Bergen).

One constant charge made by Melanchthon and his disciples against Flacius and his followers was that the latter regarded the unrebored sinner as a block of wood or stone, a charge they denied.<sup>32</sup> Chytraeus met the concern of the Philippists also by acknowledging that „a person who has not yet been converted to God and been reborn can hear and read this Word externally, for in such external matters . . . people have a free will to a certain extent even after the fall, so that they may go to church and listen or not listen to the sermon“ (SD II:52). The deterministic „madness of the Stoics and Manichaeans“ was rejected alongside the exaltation of the power of the will in conversion practiced by coarse Pelagians, papists and scholastics, and synergists (SD II:74-77). Luther's description of the will in conversion as „pure passive“ is interpreted as not teaching „that conversion takes place apart from the proclamation and hearing of God's Word“ nor does it teach „that in conversion the Holy Spirit engenders no new impulses and initiates no spiritual *effectus* [working] in us“ (SD II:89). The integrity of the human creature is preserved while the impotence of the will to contribute anything to its turning to God and the necessity of the means of grace as God's tool for turning is clearly confessed. This point is reinforced in article XI, on predestination.

[ Predestination had not been a major source of public disagreement among Luther's and Melanchthon's students in the 1550s and 1560s, in part because most of them avoided discussion of it. However, in the later stages of the synergistic controversy, Cyriakus Spangenberg had published a presentation of Luther's understanding of God's election of his chosen children to salvation and had thereby evoked a small exchange of views with the Wittenberg theologians.<sup>33</sup> Spangenberg

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<sup>30</sup> Lowell C. Green, „The three causes of Conversion in Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and ‘the Formula of Concord,‘“ *Luther Jahrbuch* 47 (1980): 89-114.

<sup>31</sup> Chemnitz, *Iudicium*, 20-30, translated in *Sources and Contexts*, 204-208.

<sup>32</sup> On one such exchange, see Robert Kolb, „Nikolaus Gallus' Critique of Philip Melanchthon's Teaching on the Freedom of the Will,“ *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 91 (2000): 87-110.

<sup>33</sup> Spangenberg's *De praedestinatione. Von der Ewigen Vorsehung/ vnd Go[e]tlichen Gnadenwahl. Sieben Predigten* (Eisleben: Georg Baumann, 1567) was attacked in the



repeated Luther's belief in the particular election of every individual believer to salvation without the slightest hint of a doctrine of double predestination, but the Wittenberg attack expressed concern that Spangenberg denied that God wants all to be saved and that believers should trust God's promise in the means of grace rather than any speculation about whether they had been chosen by God (a point Spangenberg himself emphasized). ]

[ Article XI contains extensive sections from both Andreae (SD XI:1-3, 65-96) and Chemnitz (SD XI:4-64). Spangenberg's assertion regarding the particular election of every individual believer is confirmed (SD XI:23,54), but Article XI also met the Philippist concern to maintain clearly that Christ died for all sinners and that God wants all to be saved (SD XI:28), and that God in no way is a cause of evil (6-12, 79-86), important elements in the defense against charges of „stoic determinism“ lodged by Roman Catholic theologians against the Lutherans since Melancthon's earliest diplomatic contacts with them around 1530. The article's focus on God's revelation of his election through the means of grace (SD XI:13-14, 29-38, 68-72, 77) should have pleased both sides. For both relied on God's Word of promise as the instrument of the Lord's saving will, even in the midst of disagreements about how best to hold God's responsibility for salvation and the human responsibility of faith and obedience in proper tension when treating the topics on God's predestination of his children and their use of the will he had given them. ]

#### *And Other Articles*

The attempt to meet the concerns of both sides in specific controversies is not equally apparent in every article of the Formula. In Article III, on justification, the adversaries rejected were Andreas Osiander and Francesco Stancarò, with their opposing views of salvation through the indwelling of the divine nature alone or the actions of the human nature alone, and Roman Catholic teaching at Trent. Here no effort to acknowledge the propriety of their concerns is to be found. Osiander's inability to understand Luther's teaching that God's Word creates a new reality by creating faith in the forgiven sinner, and his corresponding definition of the righteousness of faith as a neo-platonic divinization through the indwelling of Christ's divine nature was sharply rebuffed as a betrayal of Luther's confession of God's salvation in Christ. The Tridentine resolution of the paradox of divine and human responsibilities with a synthesis that included some grace and some works was also repudiated.

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Wittenberg theological faculty's *Endlicher Bericht vnd Erklerung der Theologen beider Vniuersiteten/ Leipzig vnd Wittemberg* . . . (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1570), 185a-198b. Spangenberg replied in *Kurtze Antwort vnd Gegenbericht/ Der Prediger/ in der Graffschafft Mansfeldt* . . . *Auch M. Cyriaci Spangenbergs su[e]nderliche Antwort/ auff derselben Theologen/ vber jhn gefelletes Endurtel* (Eisleben: Andreas Petri, 1570), E2a-K3a. See Robert Kolb, *Bound Will, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 198-226.



Articles VII and VIII also offered no room for the spiritualizing views of the Wittenberg crypto-Philippists, but as Chytraeus revised the article on the Lord's Supper and as Chemnitz rewrote that on Christology they did repeated their long-held views in ways that reached out to other expressions of Lutheran teaching. Chemnitz did not make any concession to the Wittenberg theologians' antipathy toward the Christological argument in behalf of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, but he decisively shied away from the more extravagant versions of the argument found in the Swabian sacramental argumentation.<sup>34</sup> Chytraeus also clearly rejected any spiritualizing of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord Supper, but he was also sensitive to concerns enunciated by the Philippist theologians who parted company with their spiritualizing colleagues in 1574, in the crisis of so-called „Crypto-Calvinism“ in Elector August's lands. Their attempt to find ways to bring Luther's and Melanchthon's views of the Lord's Supper into harmony in the Torgau Articles of 1574 found parallels in Article VII.<sup>35</sup>

The address of the mini-controversy over the proper definition of law and gospel in Article V conceded that the Philippists were not wrong when they taught a wider denotation of the term „gospel,“ as had their Flacian opponents, but affirmed, with the Flacians, that the strict or proper definition of „gospel“ excluded preaching of repentance and the law. Article X avoided any mention of the Flacian contention in the adiaphoristic controversy that limited and restricted the power of the prince within the church, for both Philippists and Swabians had believed that God used governmental officials for the benefit of the church and permitted them to exercise a strong hand in the governance of the church. But the carefully crafted synthesis of assertions from Andreae's and Chytraeus's drafts, as well as the Maulbronn Formula, did concur at all other points with the Gnesio-Lutheran emphasis on the freedom of the church to make decisions in neutral matters (adiaphora), the importance of liturgy and other customs and practices for the clear proclamation of the biblical message, and the necessity of uncompromising and clear confession of faith, also in the use of otherwise neutral matters, when such confession is necessary. ]

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The path to concord took the Lutheran churches of the 1570s on a long, circuitous route. It was never certain that a majority of Evangelical churches could find a common expression of unity in teaching until it actually happened, and then

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<sup>34</sup> Bengt Hägglund, "Majestas hominis Christi". Wie hat Martin Chemnitz die Christologie Luthers gedeutet?, in: *Luther Jahrbuch* 47 (1980), 71-88.

<sup>35</sup> On the Torgau Articles, see Irene Dingel, „Die Torgauer Artikel (1574) als Vermittlungsversuch zwischen der Theologie Luthers und der Melanchthons,“ in: *Praxis Pietatis. Beiträge zu Theologie und Frömmigkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit. Wolfgang Sommer zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans-Jörg Nieden und Marcel Nieden (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1999), 119-134.



only two third of German Evangelicals adhered to the settlement.<sup>36</sup> Great were the political and theological energies invested in what often seemed a frustrating effort doomed to failure. Success came for a number of reasons, some quite mundane. There would have been no Formula of Concord without the willingness of Elector August of Saxony, Duke Christoph of Württemberg, and Duke Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel to invest large amounts of money in the financing of the campaign for concord. There would have been no Formula of Concord without the sheer stubbornness of Jakob Andreae, whose diplomatic skills overcame his difficult personality as he never gave up trying again to gather these willful Lutherans together, right up to his final -- successful -- effort in writing the preface to the Book of Concord to garner still more support.<sup>37</sup>

Success came, however, also because of the dedication of Andreae and his colleagues to the confession of the faith and the unity of the church. They did not shy from rejecting positions they believed betrayed or misrepresented God's message given to the church through the apostles and prophets. But they recognized at the same time that differences can arise in good faith because different people approach issues from different concerns. Without benefit of modern epistemological analysis of the role of presuppositions and agendas in human thinking, they were striving to take seriously the concerns and perspectives of almost all of those who wanted to pass on the witness of Luther and Melanchthon to their generation. Disciplined by Scripture and committed to bringing to clarity the various concerns and considerations of their fellow theologians, Andreae, Chemnitz, Chytraeus and their colleagues sought to repeat in appropriate fashion for their day the confession of Augsburg. Their proposal not only expressed agreement among a majority of the heirs of the Wittenberg reformers at their time. It has served as an expression and confession of the gospel of Jesus Christ for more than four hundred years and continues to offer a model for theological discourse in the church.

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<sup>36</sup> On the opposition to the Formula, see Dingel, *Concordia controversa*.

<sup>37</sup> Irene Dingel, „The Preface of the Book of Concord as a Reflection of Sixteenth Century Confessional Development,“ *Lutheran Quarterly* 15 (2001): 373-395.