

poses that he is convinced and assured by his conscience that every and all dogmas and doctrines approved in the confessional writings are true and in accordance with Scripture, while all dogmas and doctrines rejected and condemned in them are false and not in conformity with, indeed, are contrary to Scripture as the sole norm of our faith.<sup>3</sup> If, then, anyone would make an exception according to his caprice, secretly reserve some doctrines, since he refuses to adhere to the subscribed confessional writings, he would turn his subscription into jugglery. . . . Hence it served W. Freiburger or G. L. Seidenbecher, the author of *Sacred Chiliasm*, right that, after he had been sufficiently instructed and yet refused to give up his chiliasm, he was deposed from his office, since his firmly implanted illusion of a millennium and his solemn obligation could not exist side by side. So also the otherwise learned politician Dr. Wesner was suspended from Holy Communion on account of his somewhat subtle chiliasm, as anyone may read in the Appendix to the Councils of Dedekennus, pp. 476 f. and 487 f." (*Antichiliasmus*, pp. 126 ff.)

## C

The Evangelical Lutheran Church rejects every fraternal or ecclesiastical fellowship with such as reject its Confession, either in whole or in part.

## I. SCRIPTURE PROOF

The fact that an outward church union without unity of faith, doctrine, and confession is contrary to God's Word is proved by the following declarations of the Holy Spirit:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate,

<sup>3</sup> Pfeiffer here purposely does not speak of articles of faith (*Lehr- und Glaubensartikel*) but of dogmas and doctrines, because to the doctrinal content of the Confessions there belong not only the articles of faith and doctrine, but in general whatever belongs into the area of dogma. Quenstedt thus classifies the teaching that the pope is the Antichrist, not under the articles of faith, but under "dogmatic faith." (*Theol. didactico-polem.*, IV, chap. 16, sec. 2, fol. 1688)

saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:14-18)

"If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 10, 11)

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." (Rom. 16:17)

"A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject." (Titus 3:10)

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. 4:3-5)

## 2. WITNESSES

*Apology:* "The opponents have readily approved the entire eighth article, where we say . . . that the sacraments are efficacious even when evil men administer them, for ministers act in Christ's stead and do not represent their own persons, according to the word (Luke 10:16): 'He that heareth you heareth Me.' Nevertheless we should not accept or hear false teachers, for they are no longer in Christ's place, but are antichrists. Concerning them Christ has commanded clearly (Matt. 7:15): 'Beware of false prophets.' And Paul writes to the Galatians (Gal. 1:9): 'If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.'" (Art. VII and VIII, 47, p. 177 [Somewhat modified according to Dr. Walther's text])

*Formula of Concord:* "Nor do we include among truly free adiaphora, or things indifferent, those ceremonies which give or, to avoid persecution, are designed to give the impression that our religion does not differ greatly from that of the papists, or that we are not seriously opposed to it. Nor are such rites matters of indifference when these ceremonies are intended to create the illusion, or are demanded or agreed to with that intention, that these two opposing religions have been brought into agreement and have become one body, or that a return to the papacy and an apostasy

from the pure doctrine of the Gospel and from true religion has taken place or will allegedly result little by little from these ceremonies. In this case the words of Paul must be heeded (2 Cor. 6:14, 17): 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,' and so forth." (Solid Declaration, X, 5, 6, p. 611)

*Smalcald Articles:* "Since this is the situation, all Christians ought to beware of becoming participants in the impious doctrines, blasphemies, and unjust cruelties of the pope. They ought rather to abandon and execrate the pope and his adherents as the kingdom of the Antichrist. Christ commanded: 'Beware of false prophets' (Matt. 7:15). Paul also commanded that ungodly teachers should be shunned and execrated as accursed, and he wrote in 2 Cor. 5:14: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers . . . for what communion has light with darkness?' To dissent from the consensus of so many nations and to be called schismatics is a serious matter. But divine authority commands us not to be associated with and not to support impiety and unjust cruelty." (*On the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, 41, 42, pp. 327 f.)

*Formula of Concord:* "So also Dr. Luther, who understood the true meaning of the Augsburg Confession better than anyone else, remained by it steadfastly and defended it constantly until he died. Shortly before his death, in his last confession, he repeated his faith in this article with great zeal and wrote as follows: 'I reckon them all as belonging together, that is, as sacramentarians and enthusiasts, for that is what they are who will not believe that the Lord's bread in the Supper is His true body, which the godless or Judas receive orally as well as St. Peter and all the saints. Whoever, I say, will not believe this, will please leave me alone and expect no fellowship from me. This is final.'" (Solid Declaration, Art. VII, 33, p. 575 [Somewhat modified according to Dr. Walther's text])

*Luther:* "If you want to look for adjustment in religion, begin with the things that are most important, as the doctrine and sacrament. After these have been adjusted, the other matters, which are nonessential and are called *neutralia* (things indifferent) will adjust themselves, just as it happened in our churches. Then also God will be in the *Concordia* [agreement], and rest and peace

will be continuous. But if you neglect the important things and treat the *neutralia*, then God will be forgotten; then there may be a peace (without God), to which one might prefer discord. Things then will go as Christ said in Matt. 9:16, 17: The new cloth will make the rent worse, and the new wine will break the old bottles. Either make things entirely new or else desist from patching, as we have done; otherwise everything will be done in vain." (*Opinion Given Chancellor Brueck Regarding the Religious Settlement of 1541*, XVII, 835; SL XVII, 667)

*The same:* "Now some wiseacres begin to patch, for they want to mend things and settle the discord. They suggest that both sides should give way and yield. We will let them go ahead and try to accomplish what they can; nor do we begrudge them their labor. But if they will convert the devil and make him one with Christ, they will be the first [to accomplish that]. I regard such patchwork as does Jesus the Son of Sirach, Ecclesiasticus 22:7: 'It is as one that glueth a potsherd together.' There have been many cobblers who tried to do that, but they labored in vain and lost both thread and stitch. . . . In matters pertaining to faith and Christ's kingdom, He desires no mending or patching so as to bend His scepter and make it crooked. Those who attempt it only make matters worse so that they lose it entirely; for this scepter should and must remain whole and straight (Ps. 45:7), without any breaks or gaps, as the rule and norm, according to which we must believe and live." (*Second Exposition of Psalm 110* [1538], v. 2, V, 1420; SL V, 963 ff.; cf. the witnesses under Thesis X)

## THESES XXII

The Evangelical Lutheran Church administers the holy sacraments according to Christ's institution.

### WITNESSES.

*Luther:* "In the first place, no one can deny that we as well as the papists have come from Holy Baptism and from it are called

Christians. Now Baptism is nothing new, nor has it been invented by us in our own time, but it is the same old Baptism, instituted by Christ, in which the apostles, the primitive church and, after that until now, all Christians have been baptized. If, then, we have the same Baptism of the ancient, primitive (and as they are called in the Symbol, *catholicae*, that is, all Christian) churches and if we are baptized in it, then we surely belong to this same ancient and universal Christian church, which, like us and we like it, came from the one Baptism so that there is no difference because of Baptism. Baptism, however, is the pre-eminent and first sacrament, without which all the others are nothing, as they [the papists] must confess. Therefore the papists cannot revile and hereticize us as another and new church, because we have been begotten by the ancient Baptism as also the apostles and the entire Christendom. 'One Baptism' (Eph. 4:5). In the second place, no one will deny that we have the holy Sacrament of the Altar in the same way, and just as Christ Himself instituted it, and later the apostles and the entire Christendom have used it, so that we eat and drink of one table with the ancient and the entire Christendom and receive with them one and the same ancient sacrament; with respect to that we have fabricated nothing new or different. Therefore with it [the ancient church] we are one church or, as St. Paul (writes) in 1 Cor. 12:12, 13:<sup>1</sup> We are 'one body,' 'one bread,' who eat of the one bread and drink of the one cup. Therefore the papists dare not revile us as heretics or as a new church, unless they first revile Christ, the apostles, and the entire Christendom as heretics, as indeed they also do; for with the ancient church we are one church by one sacrament." (*Against Jack Sausage* [1541], XVII, 1657 f.; SL XVII, 1322 f.)

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 12:13 does not cover the whole ground, so I have added v. 12. Luther quoted 1 Cor. 10:17. The entire reference then reads: 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12, 13.

### THESIS XXIII

True Evangelical Lutheran particular or local churches or congregations are only those in which the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, set forth in its symbols, is not only lawfully recognized, but is also professed in public preaching.

#### 1. SCRIPTURE PROOF

"How do ye say, We are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us? . . . The pen of the scribes is in vain" (Jer. 8:8). As here the Holy Spirit rejects as vain boasting the appeal of the Jews, who allowed false doctrine to prevail in their midst, that they had the Law of the Lord, so the appeal of nominal Lutherans that they recognize the existing orthodox Confessions, while tolerating false doctrine in their midst, must be rejected as vain boasting.

#### 2. WITNESSES

*Luther*: "In the first place, this Christian holy people is to be recognized by the fact that it has the holy Word of God. . . . We speak of the external Word which is preached orally as by you and me. That indeed Christ has left us as an external mark by which His church or His holy people is to be known in the world. We speak of such oral Word also when it is seriously believed and publicly confessed before the world, as Christ says in Matt. 10:32: 'Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven.'" (*Of the Councils and the Churches* [1539], XVI, 2785; SL XVI, 2274 f.)

*Gerhard*: "Just as is the doctrine which is heard in a church by public proclamation, so also that church is regarded. If in it the universal doctrine (the pure doctrine of the universal church) is proclaimed, it will be regarded and classified as a catholic (orthodox) church; if heresy is proclaimed in it, it will be regarded and classified as heretical." (*Loc. de. eccl.*, par. 136)

Cf. also the witnesses sub Theses XVII and XIX.

### THESIS XXIV

The Evangelical Lutheran Church practices fellowship of confession and (Christian) love with all who with it are one in faith.

#### 1. SCRIPTURE PROOF

“Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:3)

#### 2. WITNESSES

*Formula of Concord*: “We believe, teach, and confess that no church should condemn another because it has fewer or more external ceremonies not commanded by God, as long as there is mutual agreement in doctrine and in all its articles as well as in the right use of the holy sacraments, according to the familiar axiom: ‘Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in faith.’” (Epit., Art. X, 7, pp. 493 f.; cf. Augsburg Confession, Art. 7, cited in Thesis XVIII, D.)

*Luther*: “It is written in Gal. 6:16: ‘As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.’ This passage excludes no one. Therefore all those who believe and teach according to the doctrine of the Confession [Augsburg Confession] and the Apology are our brethren according to such faith and doctrine, and their danger concerns us as much as does ours. As members of the true church we dare not forsake them, regardless of when they join us, whether they do so secretly or openly, whether they live among us or in the diaspora. This we say and confess.” (*Opinion on the Recess of the Imperial Diet* [1530], XVI, 1857; SL XVI, 1538)

### THESIS XXV

In short, the Evangelical Lutheran Church has all the essential marks of the true visible church of God on earth, as they are found in no other denomination of another name; it is therefore in no need of any doctrinal reformation.

### WITNESSES

*Luther*: “If Christ is not among us, where shall we find Him elsewhere in the whole world? If *we* are not the church or a part of the church, where, then, is the church? Are the dukes of Bavaria, the pope, the Turk, or such like, the church? If we do not have God’s Word, who is there that has it? But if God is for us, who is against us? — Yes, you say, we are sinners and ungrateful. Oh, my dear friend, listen! That does not make Him a liar. Moreover, in such a holy, divine cause we cannot be sinners.” (“Letter to Melanchthon” [June 29, 1530], XVI, 1072; SL XVI, 904)

*The same*: “By God’s grace our church is next to and most like that of the apostles; for we have the pure doctrine, the Catechism, the sacrament right as Christ taught and instituted it; we also know how one should rule in home and world. If God’s Word remains pure and prevails, and that alone makes the church, then everything else is well and right.” (*Table Talk*, XXII, 935; SL XXII, 599)

*The same*: “Not that we are perfect and had obtained all things, but we have before us the right rule (as St. Paul says Phil. 3:16), the right way, and the right beginning, and we are lacking nothing in doctrine, let the life be as it may.” (*Admonition to the Clergy*, XVI, 1124 f.; SL XVI, 948 f.)

*The same*: “Because now the languages [of Scripture] have become known, they spread such light and accomplish such great things that the whole world is amazed and must confess that we have the Gospel so pure and perfect, almost as the apostles had it; for it has come to us in its pristine purity and far more pure than Jerome and Augustine had it in their time.” (*To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools* [1524], X, 549; SL X, 471)

*The same*: “For our part we have never desired councils to reform our churches, for God the Holy Spirit has sanctified our church by His holy Word long ago. In fact, He rather swept out all papistic fornication and idolatry, so that (praise God!) we have everything pure and holy. We have pure the Keys [the Office of the Keys]; and we have holy and pure everything that belongs to the true church, without any human doctrine, addition, and

impurity. As we said above, the life is not perfect according to it, as we would fain see and desire it. About this even the prophets and apostles complained, for that belongs there where we shall be like the angels (Matt. 22:30). But we desire a council in order that our church may receive a hearing, our doctrine may freely come to light, your fornication in the papacy may be known and condemned, and everyone misled by it [the papacy] may be converted and elevated with us and together with us to the true holy church." (*Against Jack Sausage*, XVII, 1693 f.; SL XVII, 1350)

*Gerhard*: "From the fact that we are called Lutherans Bellarmine concludes that we are not members of the true church. We reply: (1) We ourselves have not chosen this name; but since it was given to us by our opponents, we use it in a good sense to distinguish ourselves. (2) Luther himself earnestly warns that no one should call himself a Lutheran in the sense that he regards Luther as the master and primary author of his faith; hence Bellarmine ascribes this meaning of the term 'Lutheran' to us contrary to the truth. (3) We are called Lutherans from Luther, not as the Arians were once so called from Arius, or the Nestorians from Nestorius, and so forth; for Luther fabricated no new heretical teachings as did Arius and Nestorius, but he discovered and confuted from the Word of God the newly introduced papistic errors and recalled us to the ancient Christian faith. Therefore we are called, or rather we suffer ourselves to be called, from Luther, not as from a teacher of a new heresy, as the Arians once were called from Arius, the Nestorians from Nestorius, and so forth, nor as the founder of a new religious order, as the Franciscans were named from Francis or the Dominicans from Dominic, and so forth, but as from the divinely called defender of the ancient faith, the destroyer of the papacy, and the Reformer of the church. (4) Since the Roman Church and its adherents have refused to acknowledge the evangelical truth demonstrated from Scripture, but continued to defend the deeply rooted errors with pen and sword, arrogating to themselves alone the name 'catholic,' it so happened that we retained the names 'Evangelical' and 'Lutheran' for the sake of distinction, in order that our church might be separated from the communions of those [the papists] not merely by their confession of faith, but also by their different name.

"Thus we are called Lutheran, because we are dedicated to that doctrine which for a long time lay buried under the papistic errors and which Luther, called for this by God, again brought to light and stoutly defended against the papists. (5) The fact that such a name derived from a man does not go counter to the catholic and Christian name is shown not only by the very nature of the case, but also by the history of the ancient church, for the orthodox Christians were called Athanasians by the Arians. Chrysostom in particular proves this very clearly in his 33. Homily on the Acts of the Apostles, toward the conclusion: 'Do we separate ourselves from the church? Do we have our name from a man? Have we a leader as one had Marcion and another Manichaeus, or as this one had Arius and that one had another head of a sect? Even if we receive a name from someone, we certainly don't receive it as pertaining to heads of sects but as pertaining to those who are our leaders and rule the church. We have no master upon earth. That God forbid! We have only the one Master in heaven.' . . . From Christ as the only Author and Master of our faith we are called Christians; from our agreement with the catholic faith we are called Catholics; from Luther as its defender we are called Lutherans. . . .

"Finally, we concede that, rightly understood, we are schismatics, namely, because we have separated ourselves from the Roman Church and its head, the Roman pope. But we have by no means separated ourselves from the unity of the Christian church and its Head, Christ Jesus. O blessed schism, by which we were united with Christ and the true catholic church! Such a schism is commanded in the words (Acts 2:40): 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation'; and again (Rev. 18:4): 'Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.'" (*Loc. de eccles.*, pars. 156, 160)