

### **Unity of faith, unity of doctrine, and unionism.**

a) **Unity of faith** exists among all the members of the invisible Church.

Romans 12:4-5, “For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,<sup>5</sup> so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”

b) **Unity of doctrine** consists in this that the members of a church, or a denomination, are united in all doctrines they teach and confess

2 Corinthians 6:14-16a, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.”

c) **Unionism asks the various denominations to form a union, or at least to maintain church-fellowship among themselves, despite their disagreement in doctrine—that allegedly being a matter of indifference—is a gross violation of the divine command.**

1 Corinthians 1:10, “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

1 Corinthians 11:18-19, “For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. <sup>19</sup>For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.”

### **The local Church, or congregation.**

1 Cor. 1:2a, “To the church of God which is at Corinth...”

Acts 8:1b, “At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

### **The local church is a divine institution.**

Matthew 18:17, “And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” (also 1 Cor 5:13)

Hebrews 10:24-25, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

1 Timothy 3:5, “...how will he take care of the church of God?”

### **The local church is to establish the Office of the Public Ministry so that the Word is preached, sacraments are administered, and erring brothers are admonished and discipline exercised. The institution of the Public Ministry presupposes the congregation.**

Acts 20:28, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God (at Ephesus) which He purchased with His own blood.”

John 20:21-23, “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’

<sup>22</sup>And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

### **The union of congregations into larger bodies, such as conferences, dioceses, or synods, etc. has not been ordained by God. Nevertheless, by human right a church should seek to show and keep the unity of doctrine with other churches.**

1 Corinthians 1:10-12,

Ephesians 4:3-6, Ephesians 4:11-16

Acts 20:28, “Therefore take heed **to yourselves and to all the flock**, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

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<sup>1</sup> **The pope is not the head of all Christendom by divine right or according to God's Word, for this position belongs only to one, namely, to Jesus Christ. The pope is only the bishop and pastor of the churches in Rome and of such other churches as have attached themselves to him voluntarily or through a human institution (that is, a secular government).** These churches did not choose to be under him as under an overlord but chose to stand beside him as Christian brethren and companions, as the ancient councils and the time of Cyprian prove. <sup>2</sup> But now no bishop dares to call the pope "brother," as was then customary, but must address him as "most gracious lord," as if he were a king or emperor. This we neither will nor should nor can take upon our consciences. Those who wish to do so had better not count on us!

<sup>3</sup> Hence it follows that all the things that the pope has undertaken and done on the strength of such false, mischievous, blasphemous, usurped authority have been and still are purely diabolical transactions and deeds (except what pertains to secular government, where God sometimes permits much good to come to a people through a tyrant or scoundrel) which contribute to the destruction of the entire holy Christian church (in so far as this lies in his power) and come into conflict with the first, fundamental article which is concerned with redemption in Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> All the pope's bulls and books, in which he roars like a lion (as the angel in Rev. 10:3 suggests), are available. Here it is asserted that no Christian can be saved unless he is obedient to the pope and submits to him in all that he desires, says, and does. <sup>4</sup> This is nothing less than to say, "Although you believe in Christ, and in him have everything that is needful for salvation, this is nothing and all in vain unless you consider me your god and are obedient and subject to me." Yet it is manifest that the holy church was without a pope for more than five hundred years at the least <sup>5</sup> and that the churches of the Greeks and of many other nationalities have never been under the pope and are not at the present time. <sup>5</sup> Manifestly (to repeat what has already been said often) the papacy is a human invention, and it is not commanded, it is unnecessary, and it is useless. **The holy Christian church can exist very well without such a head, and it would have remained much better if such a head had not been raised up by the devil.** <sup>6</sup> The papacy is of no use to the church because it exercises no Christian office. Consequently the church must continue to exist without the pope.

<sup>7</sup> **Suppose that the pope would renounce the claim that he is the head of the church by divine right or by God's command; suppose that it were necessary to have a head, to whom all others should adhere, in order that the unity of Christendom might better be preserved against the attacks of sects and heresies; and suppose that such a head would then be elected by men and it remained in their power and choice to change or depose this head.**

This is just the way in which the Council of Constance acted with reference to the popes when it deposed three and elected a fourth. <sup>6</sup> If, I say, the pope and the see of Rome were to concede and accept this (which is impossible), he would have to suffer the overthrow and destruction of his whole rule and estate, together with all his rights and pretensions. In short, he cannot do it. Even if he could, Christendom would not be helped in any way. <sup>8</sup> There would be even more sects than before because, inasmuch as subjection to such a head would depend on the good pleasure of men rather than on a divine command, he would very easily and quickly be despised and would ultimately be without any adherents at all. He would not always have to have his residence in Rome or some other fixed place, <sup>7</sup> but it could be anywhere and in whatever church God would raise up a man fitted for such an office. What a complicated and confused state of affairs that would be!

<sup>9</sup> Consequently **the church cannot be better governed and maintained than by having all of us live under one head, Christ, and by having all the bishops equal in office (however they may differ in gifts) and diligently joined together in unity of doctrine, faith, sacraments, prayer, works of love, etc.** So St. Jerome writes that the priests of Alexandria governed the churches together and in common. The apostles did the same, and after them all the bishops throughout Christendom, until the pope raised his head over them all.

## XI Antithesis

<sup>22</sup> This is a brief and simple explanation of the various articles which for a time the theologians of the Augsburg Confession have been discussing and teaching in mutually contradictory terms. **From it, under the guidance of the Word of God and the plain Catechism, every simple Christian can understand what is right and what is wrong, since we have not only set forth the pure doctrine but have also exposed the contrary errors.** In this way the offensive controversies that have developed receive a basic settlement.

May the almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant us the grace of his Holy Spirit that we may all be of one heart in him and **constantly abide in this Christian and God-pleasing concord.** Amen.

## Part II SD Antitheses

### ANTITHESES IN THE CONTROVERTED ARTICLES

<sup>14</sup> In order to preserve the pure doctrine and to maintain a thorough, lasting, and God-pleasing **concord within the church**, it is essential not only to present the true and wholesome doctrine correctly, but also to accuse the adversaries who teach otherwise (1 Tim. 3:9; Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:24; 3:16). “Faithful shepherds,” as Luther states, “must both pasture or feed the lambs and guard against wolves so that they will flee from strange voices and separate the precious from the vile” (John 10:12-16, 27; Jer. 15:19).

<sup>15</sup> On this point we have reached a basic and mutual agreement that we shall at all times make a sharp distinction between needless and unprofitable contentions (which, since they destroy rather than edify, should never be allowed to disturb the church) and necessary controversy (dissension concerning articles of the Creed or the chief parts of our Christian doctrine, when the contrary error must be refuted in order to preserve the truth). <sup>16</sup> It is true that the Christian reader who really delights in the truth of God’s Word will find in the previously mentioned writings what he should accept as correct and true in each of the controverted articles of our Christian faith, according to the prophetic and apostolic writings of God’s Word, and what he should reject, flee, and avoid as false and wrong. Nevertheless, to insure that the truth may be established the most distinctly and clearly and may be distinguished from all error, and likewise to insure that familiar terminology may not hide and conceal something, **we have collectively and severally come to a clear and express mutual agreement concerning the chief and most significant articles** which were in controversy at this time. This agreement we have set forth as a certain and public testimony, not only to our contemporaries but also to our posterity, of that which our churches believe and accept with one accord as the correct and abiding answer in the controverted issues, to wit:

### THE SUMMARY FORMULATION,<sup>3</sup> BASIS, RULE, AND NORM, INDICATING HOW ALL DOCTRINES SHOULD BE JUDGED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE WORD OF GOD AND ERRORS ARE TO BE EXPLAINED AND DECIDED IN A CHRISTIAN WAY

<sup>1</sup> The primary requirement for **basic and permanent concord** within the church is a summary formula and pattern, unanimously approved, in which the summarized doctrine commonly confessed by the churches of the pure Christian religion is drawn together out of the Word of God. For this same purpose the ancient church always had its dependable symbols. It based these not on mere private writings, but on such books as had been written, approved, and accepted in the name of those churches **which confessed the same doctrine and religion.** <sup>2</sup> In the same way we have from our hearts and with our mouths declared in **mutual agreement** that

we shall neither prepare nor accept a different or a new confession of our faith. Rather, we pledge ourselves again to those public and well-known symbols or common confessions which have at all times and in all places been accepted in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession before the outbreak of the several controversies among the adherents of the Augsburg Confession and which were kept and used during that period when people were everywhere and unanimously faithful to the pure doctrine of the Word of God as Dr. Luther of blessed memory had explained it:

## PREFACE TO THE AC

Most serene, most mighty, invincible Emperor, most gracious Lord:

A short time ago Your Imperial Majesty graciously summoned a diet of the empire to convene here in Augsburg. In the summons Your Majesty indicated an earnest desire to deliberate concerning matters pertaining to the Turk, that traditional foe of ours and of the Christian religion, and how with continuing help he might effectively be resisted.<sup>2s</sup> The desire was also expressed for deliberation on what might be done about **the dissension concerning our holy faith and the Christian religion**, and to this end it was proposed to employ all diligence amicably and charitably to hear, understand, and weigh the judgments, opinions, and beliefs of the several parties among us to unite the same in agreement on one Christian truth,<sup>3s</sup> to put aside whatever may not have been rightly interpreted or treated by either side,<sup>1 4</sup> to have all of us embrace and adhere to **a single, true religion and live together in unity and in one fellowship and church, even as we are all enlisted under one Christ.**<sup>2 5</sup> Inasmuch as we, the undersigned elector and princes and our associates, have been summoned for these purposes, together with other electors, princes, and estates,<sup>3</sup> we have complied with the command and can say without boasting that we were among the first to arrive.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In connection with the matter pertaining to the faith and in conformity with the imperial summons, Your Imperial Majesty also graciously and earnestly requested that each of the electors, princes, and estates should commit to writing and present, in German and Latin, his judgments, opinions, and beliefs with reference to the said errors, dissensions, and abuses.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, after due deliberation and counsel, it was decided last Wednesday that, in keeping with Your Majesty's wish, we should present our case in German and Latin today (Friday).<sup>6 8</sup> Wherefore, in dutiful obedience to Your Imperial Majesty, we offer and present a confession of our pastors' and preachers' teaching and of our own faith, setting forth how and in what manner, on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, these things are preached, taught, communicated, and embraced in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities and territories<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> If the other electors, princes, and estates also submit a similar written statement of their judgments and opinions, in Latin and German,<sup>10</sup> we are prepared, in obedience to Your Imperial Majesty, our most gracious lord, to discuss with them and their associates, in so far as this can honorably be done, such practical and equitable ways as may restore unity. Thus the matters at issue between us may be presented in writing on both sides, they may be discussed amicably and charitably, our differences may be reconciled, **and we may be united in one, true religion,**<sup>11</sup> **even as we are all under one Christ and should confess and contend for Christ.** All of this is in accord with Your Imperial Majesty's aforementioned summons. That it may be done according to divine truth we invoke almighty God in deepest humility and implore him to bestow his grace to this end. Amen.