The Future of Lutheran Confessional Studies: Reflections in Historical Context

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Abstract: The Augsburg Confession of 1530 inaugurated a new form of ecclesial self-definition: confession binds the church together. The compilation of confessional documents that make up the Book of Concord of 1580 bind Lutherans around the world today, even though the historical paths from the 16th to the 21st century have been quite various. As Lutherans face the future, they find themselves in a pluralistic world where they enjoy no cultural privilege, or even shared understanding of fundamental theological commitments. The task of confession and apologetic mission will be most challenging.

Key Terms: Augsburg Confession, Book of Concord, Lutheran, Melanchthon.

In 1530, when Philip Melanchthon decided to call the document he was preparing for Emperor Charles V at Augsburg a “confession” instead of an “apology,” he introduced a new usage of the word to Christendom. He also changed the way Christians define the church. He made good use of the title “Defense” or “Apology” for his reaction to the rejection of his “Confession” by the emperor and to the confutation composed by the imperial theologians a few months later. His justification of the teaching of those following Luther’s call for reform and their reform measures under the label “confession” inaugurated a new way of understanding what binds the church together.

Confession as the Church’s New Way of Understanding Itself

Melanchthon defined the church as the assembly of God’s people who have become acceptable in God’s sight through the forgiveness of their sin, people gathered by God’s Word, in its oral, written, and sacramental forms (CA VII, VIII). This definition reflected Luther’s understanding that God creates and establishes all reality through his creative, performative Word, in its various forms (cf. CA V, XX). It also presumed the Wittenberg anthropology, which established humanity and human worth in relationship to God solely on the basis of God’s mercy and unconditioned favor (CA II-IV). To be sure, this identity that God gives his elect children brings with it the expectations that new obedience will flow out of the trust in Christ. But its heart rests upon the re-creative work of God in Christ’s death and resurrection and in the Holy Spirit’s work in fostering and nurturing faith. God’s act of re-creation has taken away human doubt and rejection of God, and it has eradicated all the sins that flow from this unbelief. Melanchthon was convinced that the Word, which brings forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation to sinners, possesses a dynamic that will not let itself be silenced. Therefore, the church,
brought into being and sustained by the power of the Word, exists to proclaim that Word of re-creation.

Throughout the sixteenth century Lutherans defined themselves by their “confession of the faith.” They added interpretations of the fundamental confession made under Melanchthon’s leadership at Augsburg in 1530. His own “Apologia” (defense) became the first authoritative commentary on their Confession. In different ways, Luther’s catechisms, first published in 1529, and his Smalcald Articles, published in 1538 with the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, also gained authority among many of his followers. When the disciples of Luther and Melanchthon fell into dispute about how best to interpret and express the Wittenberg legacy, they settled their problems with a “Formula of Concord” in 1577–1580. This document also views itself as a commentary or exposition of the teaching of the Augsburg Confession. It was first published in a collection of confessions, the Book of Concord, that brought together the Augsburg Confession with the ancient creeds of the church and with these other sixteenth century documents from Luther’s and Melanchthon’s hands that were helping to define the Lutheran churches and their public teaching.

The Concordia served two-thirds of the Evangelical churches of Germany as a standard for interpreting Scripture and teaching its content from that time on. The churches of the kingdom of Sweden also accepted it in the late seventeenth century as such a standard. For over four centuries, some of the persecuted Lutheran churches of central and eastern Europe, immigrant churches on four continents, and mission churches around the world have also recognized it, employing various hermeneutical principles and according it differing levels of authority in their public life. The churches of the Danish kingdom of the sixteenth century, for example, kept as their public confessional standard only the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism. Theologians from Denmark, Norway, and Iceland have taken a variety of public stances toward these documents and toward the other documents of the Book of Concord.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century assessing the future of the study and use of the Lutheran confessional writings is a task that belongs to Lutherans around the world. In this issue the two authors of this essay have asked five others to join them with perspectives from their own areas. They include two theologians from mission churches, Jin-Seop Eom of Korea and Joseph Randrianasolo from Madagascar; one other representative of an immigrant church, Ricardo Willy Rieth of Brazil; one from the historic persecuted churches of central and eastern Europe, Lubomir Batka of Slovakia; and one from the Lutheran heartland, Kjell Olav Sannes of Norway. Each of their essays exhibits not simply the complexity of contemporary commitment to the Lutheran Confessions, as well as research on their texts and historical setting, but also the possibilities and promise of their application to twenty-first century challenges.

Our authors point to some remarkable convergences in the ways in which the content (for instance, on justification by faith or what it means to be human) and the method (the distinction of law and gospel) of the Confessions can contribute to our thinking in this new millennium. The influence of “beloved voices stilled,” such as those of Edmund Schlink or Hermann Sasse, echo through these essays, as northern and southern hemispheres repeat anew the confession of the faith that has guided Lutheran churches for half a millennium. These articles reveal that important voices in the dialogue of the household of faith still find helpful what the princes and cities of the Holy Roman Empire addressed to the whole church 476 years ago for their own tasks of evangelistic witness, ecumenical conversation, and the edification of their own people. The essayists demonstrate again that Lutheran way of working on the enculturation of our confession of the biblical message while remaining convinced by our doctrine of sin that every culture needs our loving critique. We intend for our introductory thoughts regarding the past and present of the academic study of the Lutheran Confessions to provide a setting for our own North American reflections as well as the studies that follow.

Some Historical Perspectives

Some historical perspective is necessary background for considering what the future of the study of the
Lutheran confessions can offer the church of the twenty-first century. The world has changed a great deal since the time of Luther. The nineteenth century witnessed a dramatic revival of respect for the Lutheran confessions in Germany, Scandinavia, and many immigrant churches. This confessional revival took place in a world that the Enlightenment and the Revolutions of the end of the eighteenth century had estranged fundamentally from the medieval/early modern world of Luther and Melanchthon. Nonetheless, the era of Klaus Harms, Wilhelm Löhe, Charles Porterfield Krauth, and C. F. W. Walther—to name a few of the confessional Lutherans from the United States a century and a half ago—stood significantly closer to Luther's world than ours does to it. Nostalgic romanticizing of the past seldom serves the past well and never serves the present or future. God's calling for contemporary students of the Lutheran confessions frames a different order of the day: conveying the message of God's Word to people caught in the midst of the evils of twenty-first century life.

If the documents in the Book of Concord are to serve the church of our century at all, historical study of their context and content must lead to translation efforts that bring the lively power and freshness of Reformation insights into understandable form for those living in the complex and threatening world of today. The Lutheran confessions must become indigenous in various cultures for use in our time. At the same time they must be taken seriously as they inform, stimulate, and discipline the work of Lutheran theologians.

The study of the texts of these confessions and the Book of Concord as a whole has waxed and waned over these centuries. Each of the documents has commanded different degrees and kinds of interest in different lands and sectors of Lutheranism. The Augsburg Confession has played not only a special role in the life of the church, but it has also commanded special attention in scholarly investigation. Because of their widespread use in instruction, Luther’s catechisms also have commanded more attention than even the Augsburg Confession in scholarship as well as in general discussion. In contrast, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession and the Smalcald Articles have received little attention from scholars, pastors, and other members of the church. The Formula of Concord has received new attention in recent scholarship, initiating a comparatively higher degree of interest in the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy as well.

The Historic Study of the Lutheran Confessional Writings as a Definition of the Church’s Teaching

In the Augsburg Confession “our confession and our faith came to light . . . our confession and defense were set forth in the greatest glory,” according to Martin Luther.² His followers found it to be an unparalleled expression of the gospel.³ Here, as in the other portions of the Book of Concord, we hear Lutherans caught in the act of confessing their faith. However, beyond its usefulness as a source and guide for the proclamation of the gospel, it also found a place as a political and then as a legal definition of what it meant to be Lutheran in the German Empire. In 1530 it announced to Emperor Charles V what the adherents of the Wittenberg theology were trying to put into practice in their towns and territories. In many principalities the Augsburg Confession and/or the Book of Concord came to serve as the adjudicatory authority for the interpretation of Scripture and the legal framework for all public teaching and theologizing.

In addition, at another imperial diet in Augsburg in 1555, the document defined the only lawful religious alternative to obedience to the papacy. However, not only those who closely held to the theology of the Wittenberg reformers but also those who presumed that they had developed Luther’s theology further, under the guidance of John Calvin and others later dubbed “Reformed,” contended that the defining concept “adherents of the Augsburg Confession” covered them as well. This initiated the first round of confessional scholarship in the 1570s as Lutherans and Calvinists put their claim on the document and each side tried to defend its own interpretation of the true meaning of its context and its significance as a voice with authority for public teaching.⁴
The publication of the *Book of Concord* in 1580 is often regarded as the beginning of the era labeled “Lutheran Orthodoxy.” In the judgment of some modern scholars, who concentrated their work on only the great dogmatic works of the “Orthodox” theologians, the documents of the *Book of Concord* were relatively seldom cited in this period and appeals to its authority played a relatively small role in the theological method of Lutheran theology in the seventeenth century.\(^5\) In fact, some of them did write commentaries specifically on the confessional documents,\(^6\) and the texts particularly of the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s catechisms became the basis for many public disputation at Orthodox Lutheran universities, thus forming an important medium for instruction and also the seedbed for experiments in doctrinal construction and expression carried out by professors.\(^7\)

Over the course of the eighteenth century a new wave of interest in the historical origins of the Reformation churches, triggered in part by bicentenary celebrations in 1717 and 1730, contributed to new reviews of the figures who had played the major roles in the composition,\(^8\) and in the nineteenth century the confessional awakening in Germany and Scandinavia produced some penetrating and thorough studies that command our attention to this day. Chief among them was the monumental work of the Erlangen theologian Fr. H. R. Frank.\(^9\) At the four hundredth anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in 1930, a certain zenith was reached in the study of the confessional texts with the edition of the documents in the *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelsch-lutherischen Kirche*,\(^10\) which replaced the standard edition produced in 1848 by the Franconian pastor J. T. Müller.\(^11\) In North America a new English translation by Henry Eyster Jacobs in 1882, using both Latin and German texts, replaced the 1851 Henkel translation of the German.\(^12\) Jacobs’ translation served as the basis for the *Concordia Triglotta*, edited by Friedrich Bente in 1917; he prefaced his reproduction of German, Latin, and English texts of all the confessional documents with an extensive introduction, reflecting current German scholarly interpretations of the early twentieth century.\(^13\)

Within the North American context, in somewhat parallel fashion to European use of the confessional documents, there developed different approaches to their use.\(^14\) Some pointed debate went on in connection with the interpretation of Luther’s catechisms in the 1920s and 1930s, and one of the first significant North American contributions to Reformation studies emerged out of the research of J. Michael Reu on Reformation era catechisms.\(^15\) The celebration of the Augsburg Confession in 1930 elicited some scholarly attention. The struggle against the National Socialist regime also evoked study of the confessions and the era that produced them.\(^16\)

**Thirty Years of Scholarship at the End of the Twentieth Century**

In the past three decades stimulation for fresh historical and systematic analysis of the *Book of Concord* and its constituent parts has come from at least five directions. First, the four hundredth and four hundred fiftieth anniversaries of the documents provided occasions for conferences and for research and writing that has expanded our understanding of both the original context and contemporary usefulness of the documents. Apart from the anniversary of the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537/1987), which produced little or nothing of scholarly study,\(^17\) the quadricentennial of the Formula of Concord (1577) and the *Book of Concord* (1577) as well as the four-hundred-fiftieth anniversaries of Luther’s Catechisms (1529/1579) and the Augsburg Confession and its Apology (1530/1980) resulted in a massive increase in the amount of literature at hand for those who wish to plumb the depths of the confessional documents.\(^18\)

Second, the initiation of discussion of the broader phenomenon that historians label “Confessionalization” has expanded our knowledge of the societal setting of theological development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including particularly the context of the Formula of Concord. The study of Ernst Walter Zeeden on...
Germany out of the Lutheran definition of the church as a "Konfession" foreshadowed this discussion, which has played a significant role in the study of early modern European history for a quarter century. Some scholars have pursued questions relating to the impact of the “Konfessionen,” in the sense of confessional churches upon politics, culture, and the social order with relatively little attention to religious elements in that process. The driving forces in the study of Confessionalization, Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, do take theology seriously, as do some other authors in this field, however, and this area of general historical scholarship has assisted scholars and students examining the Lutheran confessional tradition.20

A third source of stimulation for some scholarship on confessional documents has come from work on new editions or translations of the Lutheran confessional writings. In Germany the preparation of a new scholarly edition of the Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche under the leadership of Gottfried Seebass and of a modern German translation of the confessional documents under the leadership of Christian Peters have offered stimulation to research in the field. Widespread discussion was initiated in English-speaking circles by the appearance of the new translation of the Book of Concord in 2000.

Fourth, ecumenical discussions have sparked interest especially in the Augsburg Confession within both Lutheran and Roman Catholic circles, and to a lesser extent in other Christian churches, in the past quarter century. The exploration of the abiding significance of particular contributions from the Lutheran tradition to the understanding of the biblical message for the whole household of faith in the past quarter century has focused above all on the status and the content of the Augsburg Confession.

Finally, growing out of a strong commitment to ecumenical rapprochement is a new reaffirmation of Lutheran identity, above all in Germany. Arguments that the Lutheran churches need no specifically Lutheran organization to represent them have evoked new examinations of what contributions the historical Lutheran tradition does have to make to the witness of the gospel in secularized societies such as those in western Europe. Mission churches are searching for a new understanding of their place in the household of faith in their lands now that their function as preservers of European culture on other continents has disappeared. Mission churches have faced such challenges throughout their history and continue to be engaged in the search for proper expressions of the insights delivered to them by their own historic tradition within their ever-changing cultures.

Intertwined with work initiated by these various concerns are certainly projects born of personal and ecclesiastical interest. The net result of all this work has generated new approaches, impulses, and questions for both historians of theology and systematic theologians. The detailed studies of Wilhelm Maurer on the Augsburg Confession,21 Christian Peters on the textual history of the Apology,22 and Albrecht Peters on Luther’s Catechisms23 have given students tools that bring them deep into the confessional texts and/or their sixteenth century use. The treatment of the Catechisms by Charles P. Arand expands access to their richness for application in our time.24 Within the context of the discussion of Confessionalization several German scholars have contributed significant new research to the understanding of the origin, content, and impact of the Formula of Concord and the theologians who participated in its composition.25 Much of the scholarship of this period has been skillfully drawn together in the two volume treatment of the confessions by Gunther Wenz.26

Among the most important advances of the past third of a century is a more sober view of Philip Melanchthon and his place in the history of the Lutheran churches. Formerly judged largely against standards which demanded that he be a clone of Luther or a traitor, the nature of his thought and thus the nature of his contributions have become clearer through contributions by both North American and European scholars.27

The Challenge of Confessional Studies in the Twenty-first Century

There are four kinds of Lutheran churches in the world: those in the Lutheran heartlands of central
and northern Europe, in which Lutheran churches and thinkers of a wide variety of theological streams have determined the shape, culture and national life; churches in central and eastern Europe, most of which have lived since the Counter-Reformation as minority churches, often under Roman Catholic, National Socialist, or Soviet persecution; diaspora churches in North and South America, South Africa, and Australia, which have integrated into societies which have been predominantly Christian even if not specifically Lutheran; and mission churches, which have brought the gospel often for the first time to tribes and villages and cities in parts of two-thirds world. In none of these four kinds of churches is business continuing as usual for Lutherans in the twenty-first century. In all of them the voice of Lutheran theology has no privileged place in either the general conversation of the culture or in ecumenical exchange. All are engaging challenges that require some reflection on what it means to be a Lutheran Christian and a Lutheran church. Churches of each type need to be listening to the voices of other types of churches, which speak out of these different sets of historical experience and contemporary challenge. This will take place as those engaged in the theological task from these various church settings meet face-to-face or establish contact with each other through publications and other (often electronic) means of communication.

Encouragement for future study of the confessional documents arises out of both academic and ecclesiastical circles. There are some specific examples of efforts to advance the exchange of views around the study of the confessional texts. For instance, the efforts of Professor Kjell Olav Sannes of the Menighets Fakultet in Oslo to organize a “Collegium Confessionis” offer the framework for fruitful exchange among Lutherans from various parts of the world through conferences and the use of the internet. Research into the historical development of the Lutheran confession of the faith in its specific form and in its broader context is being conducted by individual scholars, and some study of topics related to the Book of Concord and/or its constituent parts is also underway. One example is the work of Professor Irene Dingel and her associates in the Arbeitsstelle “Quellenedition zur Konfessionsbildung 1548–1577/1580” at the University of Mainz. Their examination of the “internal controversies within Protestantism” is producing both a bibliography of printed works that appeared in connection with the disputes which lay behind the Formula of Concord (available at http://www.litdb.evtheol.uni-mainz.de/datenbank/index.php) and a Studienausgabe of selected books and pamphlets that shaped the course of those disputes—and therefore shaped the Formula itself.

Theologians, ordained and lay, will continue to find the Lutheran confessions indispensable and essential tools for ecumenical dialogue for evangelistic witness, and for edificatory strategies for the life of congregations and the people of God. As at Augsburg, today’s ecumenical exchange can benefit from a clear articulation of those views that the first representatives of the Wittenberg Reformation set forth as the program of our churches. If the twenty-first century becomes indeed an era of the “ecumenical honesty” recently called for in the pages of this journal by Dominican Richard Schenk, then the documents of the Book of Concord provide a constructive point of departure for witness that is dedicated to bringing benefit to the whole household of faith.

Furthermore, the Lutheran confessions must be taken into consideration as Lutherans renew their earlier endeavors in evangelistic witness to the faith. As Lutheran missionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Johan Campanus in Delaware or Bartholmaeus Ziegenbalg in Tranquebar, translated the Small Catechism to further their work, modern translators and interpreters of the Book of Concord and its parts can also assist the mission of the church to bring the message of salvation to those outside the Christian faith. Moreover, Lutheran understanding of the distinction of law and gospel as the framework in which God effects his saving purpose through his mighty Word, Lutheran understanding of that Word as an effective tool of God’s will, Lutheran anthropology which perceives what it means to be human in the distinct realms of our relationship with God and that with other human creatures, and many other insights offered by the Lutheran confessions can contribute to the delivery of the gospel to the peoples of every culture through new missiological contributions from Lutheran voices.
Finally, among the primary tasks of all theologians is the edification of those within their own community and congregation. As people struggle with questions regarding their personal identity, their sense of safety and certainty in a fragile world, and their assessment of the meaning of their lives and their own worth, the doctrine of justification, with all its ramifications for understanding who we are as human creatures, can be so translated that it speaks directly to the burning issues of daily life. Since the Wittenberg Reformation sought above all to bring to their people proper pastoral care (Seelsorge) through the consolation of the gospel of Christ, practitioners of all the theological disciplines will find help of various kinds in the orientation provided by the confessional texts. The recently published *A Formula for Parish Practice* by Timothy Wengert illustrates clearly how the texts of sixteenth century confessions can find application in twenty-first century parish life.

**Emerging Repeat Issues**

In all three of these areas several issues emerge as topics that promise fruit if discussed seriously within the contemporary context. These issues already have their own history; yet they pose a future challenge as well.

Luther’s search for a gracious God, as his theological effort has often been interpreted, was also a search for his own identity before God and in this world. In an age of sometimes frantic personal pursuit of self-fulfillment or self-satisfaction, with the frustration, discouragement, and sometimes despair that follows, Luther’s understanding of God’s love, displayed in Christ, offers hope and encouragement to those who are trying to justify their own existence on the basis of false sources of identity, security, and meaning. The Lutheran doctrine of justification taught in the *Book of Concord* offers rich resources for addressing precisely those possessed by the disappointments and disillusionments of twenty-first century life. After a century in which learned scholars and political propagandists with innumerable agendas have endeavored to formulate a host of false definitions of what it means to be human, the Lutheran confessions propose a definition of humankind as responsible creature of God, re-created through Christ’s rescue from bondage to false goals and gods—a definition that enables the promotion of truly satisfying human living.

The confessional documents offer contemporary believers a digest of Luther’s and Melanchthon’s perceptive insights into how God works in his world, through his creative and re-creative Word, as it comes to people as law and gospel, in oral, written, and sacramental forms. The sixteenth century confessors’ recognition of the gospel’s power to change lives and the modes of proclamation that effect such change can enrich ecumenical discussion, evangelistic outreach, and the edification of Christ’s people in the midst of the struggles of their daily lives.

Furthermore, the fabrication of the charge that Luther’s message led to impious living reveals the inability of his opponents to grasp the central dynamic of his understanding of the Creator and his human creature; it does not reflect the reality of the anthropology present in the reformer’s writings and those of his colleagues and students. They offer, also in the confessional documents, plentiful resources for addressing the pressing ethical issues that arise in every society at the beginning of the twenty-first century. For they help us understand what should move us to be fully human, that is, godly, in our relationship with others. They lay the foundation for comprehending God’s structure for human life in their use of Luther’s concept of the Christian’s callings in household, workplace, community, and congregation. The confessions also aid readers in taking God’s commands for human life, which reveal his plan for truly good living, and applying them to our world.

The future discussions among students of the Lutheran confessions will also continue the debate of past centuries over questions related to the interpretation of their texts. These questions include the manner in which twenty-first century Christians can best harvest the benefit of the theological sweat and tears that went into their composition. Any simple repristination of an historical document, of course, results only in the mute speaking to the deaf.
The proper use of the Lutheran confessions in the twenty-first century requires skills at translation. The indigenous nature of the Book of Concord and its constituent parts—most importantly, the Small Catechism—demands work on the confessional hermeneutics. Such hermeneutical questions fall into at least two categories. First, Lutheran theologians must struggle to find the most effective ways to introduce in our own cultural settings the theological appraisal of who God is as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and who we human creatures are, as rebellious creatures fashioned in the Creator’s image. Second, the development of the confessional hermeneutics for our time involves an assessment of the authority that the Confessional documents claim for themselves—not as legal dicta (which was the case in much of the Lutheran past) but as expressions of and witnesses to the Word of God. Furthermore, it involves the subsidiary questions weighing the relationships among the documents themselves and their relationship with other writings of their authors. For example, some Lutherans have reduced what the original authors defined as commentaries on the Augsburg Confession, the Apology and the Formula of Concord, to opinions regarding its content, while others have transformed these documents into definitive interpretations.

Georg Spalatin, Luther’s friend from student days in Erfurt, secretary for Friedrich the Wise, and later parish pastor, called the presentation of the Augsburg Confession “the most significant act that has ever taken place on earth.” Lutherans of the twenty-first century may not share this appraisal of the Augsburg Confession or of the other confessional documents of the Book of Concord. Nonetheless, they do find in them fruitful capital for implementing and accomplishing God’s call to deliver his Word faithfully to the whole household of faith, to those who need to be drawn into the household of faith, and especially to those committed to our care in our own communities. For their own benefit and for those outside their communion, Lutheran churches need to be actively conducting study of their confessional heritage in the documents of the Book of Concord, and they need to be using the fruits of that study in ecumenical witness, evangelistic outreach, and the edification of the people of God.

Endnotes

1. See Robert Kolb, Confessing the Faith. Reformers Define the Church, 1530–1580 (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1991). When referring to specific articles, the Augsburg Confession will be abbreviated CA.


3. See Kolb, Confessing the Faith, 43–62.


6. E.g., Balthasar Mentzer, Exegesis Augustanae Confessionis… (Giessen, 1613); Johann Hülsemann, Manuale Augustanae confessionis… (Wittenberg: Widow of Clement Berger, 1631).


10. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930 and ten subsequent editions).


13. Concordia, or Book of Concord. The Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, ed. Friedrich Bente (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1922).


16. E.g., Hans Christoph von Hase, Die Gestalt der Kirche Luthers. Der casus confessionis im Kampf des Matthias Flacius gegen das Interim von 1548 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1940), which implicitly draws comparisons between Flacius’ efforts and those of the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany.

17. The work of William Russell’s doctoral dissertation project, which resulted in his study, Luther’s Theological Testament: The Schmalkald Articles (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), came later and remains the only book-length study of the document. The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope has escaped extended scholarly analysis.

18. For the literature up to 1987, see David Daniels and Charles Arand, comps. A Bibliography of the Lutheran Confessions (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1988).


20. The rich literature in this still developing field of study treating Lutheran developments can be sampled in Bekenntnis und Einheit and in Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland, Wissenschaftliches Symposium des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte, ed. Hans-Christoph Rublack (Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 197; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1992).


24. Charles P. Arand, That I may Be His Own. An Overview of Luther’s Catechisms (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2000).


