

## **LCMS Commission on Doctrinal Review**

### **Decision regarding challenges filed against *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A Reader's Edition* (CPH, 2005).**

**It is the decision of the review panel of the Commission on Doctrinal Review that the doctrinal review certification of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A Reader's Edition* be revoked because of numerous passages and features of the volume which are “inadequate, misleading, ambiguous, or lacking in doctrinal clarity” (Bylaw 1.9.2.g). Specifics of the objectionable passages and features are discussed below.**

### **Background**

When Concordia Publishing House released *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* in June of 2005, the volume was widely anticipated, vigorously promoted, and quickly distributed. The book was beyond doubt very attractively produced, and a low price also encouraged rapid sales, even among people with little or no previous familiarity with the Book of Concord. The first printing of 40,000 copies sold out within about four months.

There is a great deal to celebrate and praise about a “reader’s edition” of the Lutheran Confessions. No one questions the obviously appealing presentation of the volume. The inclusion of historical commentary, timelines, and illustrations enable readers (especially laypeople) to find their way into the texts of the Confessions which might otherwise remain unknown to them. We note with joy that the publication seems to have stimulated a renewed interest in reading and studying the confessions, and we commend the publisher for making such an important book available. Our Synod can be richly blessed by a widespread and deep study of the doctrine to which our congregations, pastors, and teachers pledge themselves.

Despite the many positive aspects of the new volume, some features drew criticism. Almost immediately after the release of the book, formal challenges were submitted to the Commission on Doctrinal Review, as allowed in Bylaw 3.9.3.2.2. The chairman received three such official challenges from members of the Synod, two of which were identical in substance, and he appointed three members of the Commission to serve as the review panel in compliance with the procedure outlined in the Bylaws.

That panel’s careful review of the volume has dismissed a number of the challenges raised, but has also identified some passages and features which are problematic in various ways, some of which must be described as “inadequate, misleading, ambiguous, or lacking in doctrinal clarity” (Bylaw 1.9.2.f). We have identified lapses in sound historical scholarship, ambiguous or questionable doctrinal statements and explanations, unexplained peculiarities in the translation, and (perhaps most seriously) a general failure to distinguish clearly between what is actually the text of the Confessions and all other non-confessional material.

While all members of the review panel agreed on the identification of these problems, we wrestled long and hard over how to respond to them. Many of these problems might have been overlooked or ignored in another kind of publication, since they do not involve direct statements of false doctrine. In the end, however, the panel decided that an edition of the Book of Concord should be held to a higher standard than other writings, because it will itself be used as a

standard by which other books are judged and evaluated. By that higher standard, we think the volume here under consideration stands in need of serious improvement. For that reason we have decided to mandate such changes by the only means available to the Commission (i.e., by revoking the book's doctrinal review certification).

The publication of this new edition of the Book of Concord was met with enthusiasm and genuine interest, for which we are grateful. That enthusiasm is a sign of the love for and commitment to our Confessions throughout our Synod. But the great attention gained by the volume also makes the doctrinal challenges raised against it more serious. The members of the Commission on Doctrinal Review and the review panel have no desire to discourage this upsurge of interest in the Lutheran Confessions. We do not want to reject the edition outright, for there is a great deal to be applauded in any book which helps make the doctrine of our church more widely accessible. Much less do we want to discourage the wide reading and study of the Lutheran Confessions by clergy and laity alike. Our goal in presenting the following recommendations is to help make the volume as good as it can possibly be, to the end that our Synod may be strengthened in genuine unity, through the clear and bold confession of the truth of the gospel in all its articles.

## **Recommendations and Summary of Changes Needed**

The review panel appointed to consider doctrinal challenges to *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A Reader's Edition* have identified the following points for correction and improvement before re-release of volume.

- A. The most important point in need of revision is the clear and unambiguous distinction throughout the volume between the actual texts of the confessional documents themselves and all other material (editorial introductions, historical explanations, section titles, Bible references inserted, etc.). In many cases this can be accomplished by changes in format or arrangement of the material (so that there are clearer distinctions than presently in the volume), or by specific attribution of editorial comments.
- B. In order to make clear to the reader how the volume was produced, the material now in Appendix C ("About This Edition") should be combined with the Preface, and supplemented with some explanation about how the editors consulted different original texts and variant readings, and what criteria were used for selecting a reading for this edition. The Preface should explain the editorial choices between the Latin and German texts in more detail than the current paragraph at the bottom of p. 680. It is probably better to put Appendix D ("Preface to the *Concordia Triglotta*") with the other front matter, as well.
- C. Sufficient explanation must be given about the inclusion of texts or documents (such as the Saxon Visitation Articles) which were not part of the original Book of Concord, especially in cases where the material was not included in the underlying Bente/Dau translation. Similarly, the editors must indicate and offer the reader explanatory notes when material that could arguably be included in the Book of Concord (such as the Marriage and Baptismal Booklets) is not included. The question of what is and is not part of the confessional text is an important matter to any church which regards the Confessions as authoritative.

- D. Substantive departures from the translation of Bente/Dau should be noted and explained, and the reader provided with the older Bente/Dau reading for reference. Examples of such departures would include (but are not necessarily limited to) the passages discussed below at LC, Creed, 66, and Tr 11. This is particularly important in a volume which does not claim to be a new translation, but rather to “update” Bente/Dau.
- E. Generally, the editors should refrain in the introductory material from asserting as facts statements which present applications of confessional passages to contemporary controversies, about which there is legitimate theological or scholarly debate. (An example of this difficulty would be the matter discussed in point 11 in the following section.)
- F. Care should be taken not to alter the translation of passages, or phrase introductory material, in a way that opens the door to a view of the pastoral office which is not in agreement with the public position of the Synod. Examples of such points of concern include the translation of Tr 11 and 72, and perhaps also the inclusion of (previously omitted) material in the SC Table of Duties, and introductory comments to AC V and AC XIV.
- G. A number of unclear or imprecise formulations in the Glossary should be rectified. (E.g., the definition given of “Sacrament” ascribes a “sacramental” significance not just of the pastoral office but of the person of the pastor, in a way that moves beyond our church’s position. Definitions of “Keys” and “Saint,” for example, are likewise in need of revision.)
- H. Because the book was so widely and actively promoted, and because it sold rapidly in large numbers, it will not be sufficient simply to make the changes indicated here and re-release the volume without further public comment. Some sort of explanation of these concerns and the ways they are being addressed should be publicized as widely as possible, to make it possible for people to continue to use the first edition without confusion. Indeed, even if the publisher should decide not to release a revised edition along the lines we describe here, it would still be necessary to make widely available a description and explanation of the items identified by our review.
- I. Revisions undertaken to address these concerns should be reviewed independently of the original doctrinal review. The sheer importance of the volume suggests that multiple reviewers might be employed. Steps should be taken to ensure a proper degree of objectivity and confidentiality in the selection and work of the reviewers.

### **Detailed Discussion of Points Raised by Challengers**

The primary task of the review panel was to evaluate the specific objections which were brought forward, and this (as will be seen) was a sizeable task. In the following discussion of concerns raised by challengers, each objection will be summarized in **bold type**, and the review panel’s evaluation and decision will follow in regular type.

It is important to recognize that the challenges were of very different kinds. Of the 44 points raised by challengers and evaluated below, the review panel found 21 to present no significant doctrinal concerns at all; these were primarily small matters of style or non-doctrinal

editorial choices. Ten raise legitimate concerns over textual issues. Nine identify inadequate, misleading, or inaccurate statements in the editorial material. Four point out passages where at least some additional clarification or explanation is needed to account for significant changes from the underlying Bente/Dau translation.

- 1. The translation of Large Catechism (hereafter LC), Creed, 66 (page 432) (“Even if we concede that...” is misleading or erroneous, and distorts Luther’s meaning; introduces new teaching into the Large Catechism; conflicts with Romans 1 & 2 and with Acts 17. This change is “an unwarranted, incorrect, misguided, and misleading editorial comment.”**

The rendering is a rather loose paraphrase of the German, and introduces an interpretive slant that reads Luther’s concessive clause as a contrary-to-fact conditional. This is not the plain meaning of the German grammar here; such a construction would normally require a subjunctive rather than the indicative, which the original has here. But whatever the weaknesses of the translation of this passage, the McCain<sup>1</sup> edition rendering does not do violence to the substance of the paragraph, which is that mere monotheism leaves a person under God’s wrath and without the promise of his forgiveness. In other words, even if the translation is wrong, it does not involve false doctrine.

There is concern that this editorial change was prompted by recent controversial use of this particular passage, and not by any clear inadequacy or error in the underlying Bente/Dau text. The change from Bente/Dau at this point could be perceived by some as an attempt to “spin” a passage of the Confessions in order to settle a contemporary argument. This appearance of some kind of manipulation of the confessional text is both inadvisable and unnecessary.<sup>2</sup> Since the new rendering of this text departs significantly from all previous English translations, it would probably be best to place it in brackets alongside the translation on which this new edition is based (Bente/Dau), and an explanatory note might be added.

- 2. The translation of Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (hereafter Tr), 11 (page 321) (“He also teaches that the Church is more than the ministers.”) is misleading or erroneous, and changes the sense of both Bente/Dau<sup>3</sup> and Kolb/Wengert<sup>4</sup>, which use different words to assert the superiority of the church over the clergy.**

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<sup>1</sup> For convenience and brevity, this discussion will follow the general convention of referring to English editions of the Book of Concord by the name of the primary editor(s): Jacobs, Bente/Dau, Tappert, Kolb/Wengert, etc. It is not the intention of this usage to assign personal responsibility for every detail of the text under consideration to the lead editor of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A Reader’s Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the short “theological observer” column by Charles Arand and James Voelz, “Large Catechism, III, 66,” *Concordia Journal* 29.3, 232-234, which is a response to John G. Nordling, “Large Catechism 111, 66, Latin Version” on pages 235-239 in the same issue. Another helpful “theological observer” is Thomas Manteufel, “What Luther Meant,” *CJ* 29.4, 366-369.

<sup>3</sup> The editors of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A Reader’s Edition* present their version as “based on the English translation in the *Concordia Triglotta* [1921] by William H. T. Dau and Gerhard F. Bente” (page 7). The *Triglotta* English version, in turn, was based closely on the 1882 translation of Henry Jacobs. The English translation included in the *Triglotta* will be referred to here as “Bente/Dau.”

The change seems to follow the German, even though both Bente/Dau and the rest of the present edition seem to be based on the more original Latin. No reason is given for opting to follow the German at this point, a decision which departs from the Bente/Dau text which serves as the basis for the McCain edition.

Melanchthon's argument in this section has to do with refuting papal claims of superiority, and the McCain edition's rendering seems to miss this context. The traditional English translation ("superior to" or "above") is preferable, on both textual and contextual grounds.

Some might perceive this as another example of reading a contemporary issue into the Confessions, rather than as a simple translation issue. Those who favor a stronger emphasis on the authority of the pastoral office would not be attracted to the Bente/Dau or the Kolb/Wengert reading, since both of those put the clergy under the authority of the church. The new McCain edition reading would at least allow a certain parity between pastor and church.

- 3. Scripture references not found in the original are inserted (very often throughout the volume). This changes the original text, since it is not clear that the authors had such verses in mind, or would have interpreted the verses in the way implied by their inclusion in the various articles. This is done without comment or clarification, thus introducing the implication that the Confessions themselves understand these passages in a way not necessarily intended by the original authors.**

This editorial practice can at times be very misleading. It cannot be argued that such additions and insertions into the confessional text constitute merely an "updating" of the Bente/Dau translation.

One example can illustrate the problems inherent in such a practice. In the text of AC VIII, the McCain edition interpolates a reference to Matthew 13:24-30 (the parable of the wheat and the weeds), implying that the original would have us understand Jesus's parable as a picture of the church. Of course, the non-specialist reader (to whom the McCain edition is directed) will not have any way of knowing that the Bible reference here is not part of the original text of the confession. If he is very careful, however, he will notice that such an application of the parable to the church contradicts the explicit reference (which is in the original) in Ap VII/VIII.19, where "the field" is clarified as referring to the world, not the church. (Incidentally and inexplicably, the McCain edition puts the word "not the Church" in italics in this place in the Apology, implying some kind of emphasis which is entirely lacking in the original text. The use of italics for emphasis throughout the text must be carefully checked for accuracy.)

Bible references which are not part of the actual text of the Confessions themselves should not be interpolated into the text without some kind of clear indication that these references

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<sup>4</sup> *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, translated by Charles Arand *et al.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). This edition is referred to here as "Kolb/Wengert."

are editorial additions. The method of BSLK<sup>5</sup>, where references to Bible passages (that are apparently alluded to in the text) are printed in the margins, might solve this problem. Alternatively, square brackets might be employed, following the editorial practice of Kolb/Wengert. But the practice in the McCain edition blurs the distinction between the text of the Confessional documents and editorial material, a problem throughout the volume. Because this volume presents itself as the authoritative Confessions of the Lutheran church, that distinction should always be unambiguously drawn. What is at issue here is not really a question of whether the editorial material is “correct” in its interpretation or explanation or not (although such correctness is obviously an important matter in its own right), but rather the necessity to faithfully and accurately present the text of the Confessions themselves without omission, addition, embellishment, or distortion. The McCain edition as it stands does not do this consistently.

4. **The editor’s reference in the introduction to Augsburg Confession (hereafter AC) XIV (page 64f) to “the apostolic rite of ordination” emphasizes ordination rather than the call itself, which is the central point of AC XIV. This seems to make ordination a requirement for a valid call, rather than the public recognition of the call. It is unclear what is meant by “an official call from the Church,” or why “Church” is capitalized in this context.**

There is a history of argument among American Lutherans (even between groups who want to remain faithful to the Lutheran Confessions) about church and ministry. There have also been recent tensions in our own Synod between, on the one hand, those who would emphasize the congregation’s call of individuals to carry out the functions of word and sacrament, and on the other hand, others who would stress the office of the holy ministry as a distinct and divinely instituted “*Stand*” into which a man is admitted through ordination. Given this history and tension, it is easy to read the editor’s references to “the apostolic rite of ordination” as somewhat problematic. It may also be noted that while ordination is here called an “apostolic rite,” the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are called “Church rites” in the glossary (p. 691, under “sacrament”). Even if it is not the intention of the editor to promote an understanding of the pastoral ministry which is not consonant with the Synod’s position, it can easily be supposed that some would make such use of this passage as it currently reads.

The question of why “Church” (singular) is *always* capitalized in the McCain edition while “churches” (plural) is *never* capitalized remains unanswered. Some nuance or distinction seems to be implied, but the readers are left to figure it out for themselves. Suffice it to say that this distinction reflects neither the German, nor the Latin, nor Bente/Dau. The distinction hardly seems to correspond to common modern English usage. If no distinction in meaning is intended, then this consistent editorial practice is misleading and should be changed.

5. **The edition is based on the Bente/Dau translation of 1921, which was in turn based partly on inferior and inadequate texts of the original documents. The present edition**

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<sup>5</sup> *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).

**ignores the real advances in scholarship and research since the 1920's, and thus cannot be considered an adequately accurate version of the Book of Concord today.**

The question of the underlying text of English translations of the Lutheran Confessions is vastly more complex than a reader of the McCain edition is led to suppose. Bente/Dau was based on the German edition of 1580 and the Latin of 1584. Since the Bente/Dau English version appeared alongside the German (of the 1580 Dresden edition) and the Latin (1584, Leipzig), that English version's occasional alternation between following the German or the Latin in various documents and passages could not confuse the reader for long (at least a reader who was able to check the original languages behind that translation).

However, the new McCain edition neither follows Bente/Dau consistently, nor offers any clues about where or why substantial departures from Bente/Dau are incorporated in the new text. This much is sure: the present McCain edition does not present the reader exactly with a translation of *either* the 1580 Dresden text *or* the 1584 Leipzig text. The English presented here is really a hybrid text which incorporates readings from both the underlying 16th century editions used in Bente/Dau, even though those underlying editions are here used somewhat differently than in Bente/Dau (that is, the McCain edition will sometimes follow the Latin where Bente/Dau followed the German, and *vice versa*).

Of course, textual eclecticism is not wrong or indefensible; practically every English Bible is based on an eclectic "hybrid" text of many Biblical manuscripts. What is problematic is the complete lack of any discussion of this approach, or even any indication that there could be a discussion (or even disagreement) about what are the original, or best, or authoritative texts of the various documents included in the Book of Concord. This silence is probably intended to simplify the reading of the text for non-specialists. But it seems to push simplicity to the point of obscuring genuine and legitimate questions about the meaning of the Confessions. The understanding and sophistication of modern lay readers of the Book of Concord should not be underestimated.

- 6. In the AC, the present edition covers over the important and often illuminating differences between the equally official German and Latin originals, by presenting a single English text which does not really reproduce either the Latin or the German accurately, but invents a kind of hybrid paraphrase.**

Please refer to the earlier comments about text-critical issues under point 5 above.

- 7. Similar to the complaint about the text of the AC, there is a problem with the Tr. The editors of the present version have picked readings from the Latin and the German without any clear reason or logic for the alteration, and have failed to indicate where such changes between text traditions occur. They have also reproduced some textual errors from the Bente/Dau (e.g., Tr 66: "enemies of the Church," where the original reads "enemies of the gospel").**

Please refer to the earlier comments about text-critical issues under point 5 above.

- 8. In the Small Catechism (hereafter SC), Table of Duties, the section entitled "What the Hearers Owe to Their Pastors" is inserted, even though it was not originally part of the**

**SC, nor was it included in the editions of the Book of Concord said to be used by the editors. (It was in a 1540 edition of the catechism, and there included some further Scripture references which are not included in the present volume.) Also, the section entitled “What Subjects Owe to the Rulers” was neither original in Luther’s 1529 text of the SC nor included in the Book of Concord. (It seems to originate in a 1542 edition of the catechism.)**

To a certain extent, this is another question of which text the McCain edition is following. Obviously, as the challenger concedes, there is nothing objectionable about the Bible verses included in these sections. The challenge calls into question whether these verses, arranged under these topics, and placed into this location, are in fact to be included into the “official” text of the Confessions.

On the one hand, the McCain edition does not pretend to tackle such questions afresh, but rather claims to present an “update” of Bente/Dau. On the other hand, passages such as this one clearly demonstrate that this “update” can and does include significant departures from the Bente/Dau text. That being the case, it is important for the editors to alert the reader by means of footnotes to places where such substantive departures have been made, and to offer the reader guidance about what justifies or motivates these departures.

- 9. Both the Marriage Booklet and the Baptismal Booklet are omitted from the present edition, even though they appear to have better attestation in editions of both the catechism and the Book of Concord than the material mentioned above in the Table of Duties.**

Please refer to earlier comments about text-critical issues under point 5, and the observations about significant decisions of what material should be included under point 8 above.

- 10. In the Large Catechism (hereafter LC), Commandments, 46 (page 389), following an early distortion of the text, the present edition inserts a “not” and misreads the sentence which should read: “Just leave it to the devil and the world to deceive you with their appearance...”**

This is an example of an imperfect translation following an inferior underlying text, but it is a minor point and does not involve a doctrinal error.

- 11. The editor’s introduction (page 514) asserts that Formula of Concord (= FC), Epitome (= Ep) X cannot be used to defend liturgical diversity among individual congregations, claiming that the discussion only refers to German territorial churches with their consistories, superintendents, etc. This opinion of the editors should not be included as if it were an uncontestable fact.**

The editors may be correct in the historical point that “churches” in FC X probably referred to territorial churches rather than individual local congregations. But that reference was by no means the point or focus of the article, and such a historical observation does not explicitly support the bald assertion about contemporary application made in the introduction. There are too many differences in history, polity, and social environment between churches of



sixteenth century Germany and twenty-first century America to permit such a facile equation of principles and practices of worship.

It is generally inappropriate for the editor to insert such absolute claims about debatable contemporary questions, when the question of how to apply the Confessions to today's life in the church is by no means settled in every case.

It is important to remember here that we are not dealing with a private writing *about* the Formula of Concord and its historical background, or with a book in which a modern author makes an argument about the proper application of the Confessions to issues facing us today. Rather we are considering a volume that presents itself as the public and official doctrine of our church. There would be no objection to the editor making such an argument in a book *about* the Confessions or in an essay or article; in fact, this is exactly the sort of assertion and argument one would expect in such a work. However, in a volume that presents itself as "The Lutheran Confessions" the editors should take pains to avoid offering tendentious opinions in their comments, and to restrict themselves to factual information (which should, as mentioned elsewhere, always be adequately identified as editorial material) that will help readers read and understand the documents themselves.

**12. Following the Bente/Dau edition, the Catalog of Testimonies (page 651ff) and the Saxon Visitation Articles (page 676ff) are included, the latter with no introduction to clarify its relation to the Book of Concord. This creates the impression that they are to be regarded as part of the Book of Concord.**

It is difficult to know what to make of the inclusion of these documents, especially the unexplained appearance of the Visitation Articles. Also it should be noted that some of the appendices are documents that approach "confessional" status, while other appendices, formatted in either exactly the same way or very similarly, are modern editorial material. Tucked away as Appendix C ("About This Edition," page 680) are some very brief comments which should have been in the Preface. Appendix D reproduces the introduction to the *Concordia Triglotta* (which included the Bente/Dau English version on which the McCain edition is supposed to be based), and this should also have been placed at the beginning. Such matters of inclusion and arrangement of the appendices certainly do not involve doctrinal error, but they contribute to the general ambiguity in the whole volume about the boundary between confessional text and editorial comment.

**13. Throughout the volume, headings and section titles are inserted which are not in the original text. Introductory and editorial comments are interspersed before each article of the AC and elsewhere, with no explanation anywhere to make clear that these comments are not part of the original text. A whole section of editorial material, "Controversies and the Formula of Concord" (pages 521-531), is inserted between the Ep and the Solid Declaration (= SD), and this section is not unambiguously identified as material inserted for the present edition. It is set in the same size and font of type as the FC itself.**

The point about section headings seems trivial at first glance. But the general problem of interspersing editorial material throughout the text of the documents is much more serious.

Some of the editorial material is printed in a slightly different font, but the difference is slight, and (more importantly) that distinction is nowhere pointed out or explained to the reader. The insertion of the “Controversies” section between the Epitome and the Solid Declaration is especially confusing. As the challenger has pointed out, this material is *not* distinguished from the Formula of Concord itself by a different font, and it is not identified anywhere as new material added by the editors.

Should we be concerned with editorial matters such as layout and fonts? Ordinarily such things would not need attention in a process of doctrinal review. However, in this case the layout contributes to ambiguity about what is (and isn’t) the actual text of the Confessions, and that ambiguity is a very serious matter, even if it does not involve a direct statement of false doctrine.

**14. In the introduction to AC IV, the editor presents a “purely forensic doctrine of justification” which is an inaccurate reduction of the true doctrine presented in AC IV and the relevant article of the Apology (= Ap).**

The challenger is perhaps reacting to a so-called “forensic” reduction of the gospel to a “legal fiction,” but that is not the only or proper understanding of “forensic” justification, which (properly understood) is clearly the Lutheran position. This challenge does not have any merit.

**15. In the introduction to AC V, the editor introduces and asserts a “clerical” view of ministry rather than reflecting the article’s own stress on the means of grace.**

By itself, this point would probably not raise substantial objections. But it can easily be construed as part of a pattern of “editorializing” in support of a particular theological faction or current in today’s church, under the guise of offering introductory comments to the Confessions.

**16. In the introduction to AC XIV, the editor’s phrase “theologically qualified” tends to imply “seminary trained” as a sine qua non for called and ordained ministry. It also introduces the phrase “apostolic rite of ordination,” which is never used in the Confessions and is never clarified or defined by the editors.**

The objection to the phrase “theologically qualified” is not substantial. One cannot necessarily infer “seminary training” from a comment about theological qualification for ministry. After all, the notion that pastors should be theologically competent and well qualified is thoroughly biblical, and the editor does not claim any seminary or any other educational system as mandatory.

On the other hand, there is a need to change or explain the phrase “apostolic rite of ordination” to avoid a wrong understanding of the pastoral ministry. Please refer to the earlier comments this phrase under point 4 above.

**17. In the introductions to both the Smalcald Articles (hereafter SA) (page 282) and the FC (page 530), an unfair and inaccurate caricature of Philip Melancthon is repeated, following Bente. The one-sided charges have been refuted by recent scholarship, but are**

**here repeated and perpetuated, distorting the historical truth and introducing an anti-Melanchthon bias especially to the understanding of the Formula.**

The historical assessment of Philip Melanchthon is not a doctrinal matter. But repeating Bente's notorious anti-Melanchthon bias is not an adequate presentation of the current state of confessional scholarship. As mentioned elsewhere, an edition of the Book of Concord must be held to high standards, also in terms of historical scholarship.

- 18. In the introduction to SA III, 10 (page 308), the editors say, "Only men who have been judged capable of discharging the ministerial office should be ordained." However, the article does not designate the sex of pastors, and the male reference here distracts from the main point, which is to ensure that the church is not deprived of pastors by the refusal of Roman bishops to ordain evangelical clergy. The editor's contemporary concerns (in this case an opposition to women clergy) are inserting themselves into the Confessions here.**

The challenger seems to have a different axe to grind here. It should be stated that the Lutheran Confessions give neither theological nor historical support for the ordination of women to the pastoral office, and it would be inappropriate to manipulate a translation of the Confessions in an attempt to create such support. However, it is worth asking whether the McCain edition is intended to appeal to a broad spectrum of Lutherans who are genuinely interested in the Confessions, or only to those who support the Missouri Synod's conviction that only males should be ordained to the pastoral ministry. In other words, is this meant to be a 'Missouri Synod Book of Concord'? The guiding principle should be that the edition should not allow contemporary issues or interests (such as, in this case, guarding against the unbiblical practice of women pastors) to be determinative of how texts of the Confessions are translated or introduced.

- 19. In the introduction to the Tr (page 326), the editors inappropriately introduce a critique of 19th and 20th-century Roman Catholicism into discussion of 16th-century document.**

Anachronistic polemics are not a matter of doctrine with which our review should be concerned.

- 20. In introductory comments for the Eight Commandment in the LC (page 414), the editor misrepresents Luther's explanation when it is said, "The greatest violators are false preachers who, by their false doctrine, speak ill of God and His name." This thought is not part of Luther's explanation, and seems to be aimed at the conduct of our contemporary controversies.**

This item may highlight a relatively small slip of scholarship in the editorial introduction, but does not constitute a doctrinal error which is substantially "inadequate, misleading, ambiguous, or lacking in doctrinal clarity."

- 21. In the introduction to the FC, the editors identify "the Bible, and the Bible alone," as the sole source of doctrine. In doing so, they deny the biblical doctrine that all human beings have a natural knowledge of God's existence and power and attributes.**

This passage is unobjectionable. The challenge raises a broader question about the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*. The text of the McCain edition can certainly be understood in a way congruent with that principle. The editor's comment does not seem to be directed against the natural knowledge of God among non-Christians, but against the erosion of Biblical authority in the church.

- 22. In introductory comments to FC Ep II (page 495), the editors express the opinion that “We should stick to the pattern of sound doctrine and refrain from introducing novel ways of speaking about Bible teachings. We should use the very words and phrases used in the Lutheran Confessions to explain the Bible. It is very unwise to take time-tested words explaining one thing and use them to explain another. This only leads to confusion and error.” This impulse toward “repristination” is not the emphasis of the article itself, and distorts the meaning.**

The editorial comment in question is inadequate and misleading, because it misrepresents the content and argument of FC Ep II.

- 23. In the section on “Controversies” (page 521f), Editors claim that no one who denies the 3rd use of the law can be regarded as truly Lutheran. But this distorts the argument, and puts forward the claim that Christians can encounter the law without threat, which conflicts with the teaching that *lex semper accusat*.**

The challenger takes up the long argument about the third use of the law, but the McCain edition material here is not erroneous. It would have been helpful, perhaps, to describe in a historical introduction how and why Lutherans who want to be faithful to the Confessions have disagreed so sharply about this question.

- 24. In FC Ep X, 3 (page 514), and very often elsewhere, the editors have attempted to update Bente/Dau by recasting the sentence structure in a way that twists the meaning or emphasis of the original text. In other words, an effort to simplify has resulted in oversimplification, and sometimes distortion. In the passage from FC Ep X mentioned, the new version suggests that there are some Church ceremonies which are commanded by God's Word and are thus part of divine worship—an idea very far from the thrust of the article in question.**

The challenge refers to small matters of translation which do not constitute serious flaws in the McCain edition. Any translation of such a large and complex work can probably be improved or polished in various places, but not every translation error (or weakness) is fatal.

- 25. Throughout the volume, the new version refuses to use “inclusive language” but uses male pronouns where references would permit a more inclusive rendering. Such a practice belies the claim to “update” the version of Bente/Dau for 21st-century American readers.**

While a generic use of male pronouns and the words “man” or “men” (meaning human beings generally) may no longer be considered standard academic usage, neither is such usage clearly archaic or erroneous. This seems to be a matter of stylistic or editorial preference, not a doctrinal issue.

- 26. Throughout the volume, notes which would have explained nuances or ambiguities in the text are absent, resulting in an oversimplified text that does not reflect the full meaning of the original.**

Please refer to the earlier comments under points 1 and 5 above.

- 27. In the Preface to the Augsburg Confession, the edition mixes Latin and German texts.**

Please refer to the earlier comments about text-critical issues under point 5 above.

- 28. In AC XIII, the version here translates the German “*einsetzen*” as “ordain” rather than “institute” as it usually does. This is misleading and unclear.**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 29. In AC XXVIII, 5 (page 84), “commandment” is inaccurate translation of the German “*Befehl*.”**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 30. In AC XXVIII, 66 (page 88), the edition omits phrase “for a time” which indicates that some apostolic mandates were temporary.**

This is probably a minor mistranslation or a simple oversight. On the other hand, such an omission could offer an opportunity for someone to construct an illegitimate argument about the permanence of all “apostolic mandates.” This should be corrected in a future edition.

- 31. In AC XXVIII, 67 (page 88), “canon laws” is an inadequate and misleading reduction of “ancient canons” (German).**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 32. In Ap IV, 5, the edition follows Bente/Dau, and mixes Jonas’s version into the Latin original and implies that the law comes only in the Old Testament and the gospel only in the New Testament.**

Please refer to the earlier comments about text-critical issues under point 5 above.

- 33. In Ap V (III), 7-8 [i.e. Ap IV, 129] the Latin “*igitur*” (“therefore”) is left untranslated.**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 34. In the Tr 67 (page 330), the Latin “*hominibus*” in Ephesians 4:8 is rendered as “to men,” which can be read as negating the important and helpful gifts given to female teachers and church workers.**

This is not an error, but a minor translation issue, or rather another example of the editors’ choice to use male pronouns and words in a generic way.

- 35. In Tr 72 (page 330), the new version departs from Bente/Dau to translate “by having their pastors do it,” which is a paraphrase of “*adhibitus suis pastoribus*.” Bente/Dau and Kolb/Wengert simply translate this phrase, “to ordain pastors for themselves.”**

This is one of those places where the manner in which the McCain edition departs from its “basis” (Bente/Dau) implies a bias in favor of a strong emphasis on clergy authority. It is difficult to read this change as anything other than an effort to bolster the role of pastors. It is unjustified on strictly linguistic grounds, and the Bente/Dau rendering of the phrase was certainly not archaic, complex, or unclear.

- 36. In Tr 79 (page 331), the phrase “these men” is not in the Latin or German.**

This challenge seems to arise from over-sensitivity to the gender issue which can be noticed in some other items that were challenged. The translation does not contain an error or substantive inadequacy at this point.

- 37. In the LC regarding the Ten Commandments, 172 (page 404), the translation should read “civil and spiritual government” rather than this version’s “civil and Church leadership.”**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 38. In the LC, Commandments, 179 (page 405), the translation should read “you shall not kill” rather than this version’s “you shall not murder.”**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 39. In FC Ep VI, 4 (page 504), the phrase “start evil and self-created forms of worship” is unsupported by the Latin, and does not reflect accurately the German.**

While this could be viewed as a rather minor issue of translation, the challenger suggests that this passage is part of a consistent pattern of changes and editorial comments in the McCain edition which militate against innovation or variety in worship forms (cf. point 11 above concerning the introduction to FC Ep X). The editor also comments dismissively about a pastor writing new liturgies (in the “Controversies” section inserted between the Epitome and the Solid Declaration, page 524).

Even if one is sympathetic to the position favored by the editor on worship matters, it is questionable whether it is appropriate to introduce changes (not clearly supported by the original text) into the translation of the text of the Confessions to promote such a contemporary agenda.

- 40. In FC Ep VI, 5 (page 504), the German “*soviel*” (Latin “*quatenus*”) is translated as “because” in the McCain edition (“These works are done by believers because they are regenerate”), rather than as “to the extent that.”**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 41. In FC Ep X, 7 (page 515), the German “*wann sonst*” (Latin “*si modo*”) mistranslated as “as long as” rather than “when otherwise.” The implication is that this mistranslation makes the article seem to focus on when it might be proper to condemn another church.**

This is a relatively minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 42. In FC SD Rule and Norm, 1 (page 536), the edition introduces a thought alien to the article when it renders the sentence, “we should have a unanimously accepted...” and “all evangelical churches should confess...” The German states simply that there is such unity.**

This is a relatively minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 43. In FC SD VI, 2, the translation of the sentence about the works of believers being acceptable to God is incorrect. It is claimed that the paraphrase of Bente/Dau here results in a serious distortion of the meaning.**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.

- 44. In FC SD X, 14, the German “*den hohen Artikel*” is translated as “the outstanding article” when a better rendering would be “the eminent article” (as in Bente/Dau).**

This is a minor translation issue, and does not constitute a substantive error or inadequacy.