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“CONCORDIA” AND “UNITAS”

IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

Dialogue Within the Reformation Spirit

Oscar L. Arnal

Within the process of determining the criteria for fellowship among Canadian Lutherans, this symposium has been assigned the specific task of analyzing the relationship between *concordia* and *unitas* in the Lutheran Confessions. With that end in mind, I propose a comparison of two sets of our symbolic documents, namely the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Book and Formula of Concord*. By employing such a method, it is hoped that our historical roots may be utilized in the service of our responsibility to critique and affirm each other.

Before one can engage in this dialogue with the past, it becomes necessary to come to terms with our own presuppositions and initial assumptions. All our assertions, even our historical and doctrinal convictions, are rooted within the reality of our biological and sociological environments. We speak out of experiences which are our own both individually and collectively. In a paper presented by Aarne Siirala to the Lutheran Council in Canada's Division of Theology, this position is amplified with clarity. He utilizes his personal pilgrimage of European Lutheranism, with its compromises, its authoritarianism and its anti-Semitism, as well as his insights con-

1. Aarne Siirala, "What Is the Protestant Principle and the Catholic Substance of Lutheran Identity?," unpublished paper presented at the Division of Theology, Lutheran Council in Canada, Concordia College, Edmonton, Alberta (May 28-29, 1979), pp.3-8, 19-20.

cerning disease and the unconscious, to demonstrate that Lutheran unity cannot “be found primarily from concepts and doctrines.”¹ When Siirala states that “the channel of consciousness is simply too narrow to be the only channel through which the living waters of grace reach us,” he is asserting a reality that is part of all identity formation.² Fruitful dialogue requires the recognition that participants speak out of experiential depths of which they are unaware (“the unconscious”), depths rooted in both their own personal development and the socioeconomic milieu of which they have been a part. This is the first presupposition out of which this study grows.

Second of all, Christian doctrine is, by its very nature, historical just as the Christian faith is rooted in history. God’s mighty acts of liberation — the Exodus, the giving of the land, the cross, the confession of the Resurrection — are tied inexorably to events that are earthy and material. The spiritual and the sensual are hopelessly intertwined, and because of this, the mystery of God and His revelation cannot be separated from matter, from the banal and from the tragic. Theologically, we call this incarnation, when the transcendent majesty of God is transmitted through the hiddenness of immanence. The radical Thomist Maurice-Dominique Chenu called this “the dialectic of nature and grace”, while Lutherans link such experiences of incarnation to the notion of the sacramental.³ Grace or liberation are encountered through the media of the ordinary (bread, wine, water, human speech) and the brutal (a criminal’s cross). Throughout Christian history the church has faced subversion from within by those philosophies which slandered matter and the physical. Whether the gnostics or Christian Platonists, these learned elites sought to guard and own a perfect knowledge (*gnosis*) of God which they could protect from the impurities and relativities of the earthy and transitory. For them, history and matter meant change and decay. Consequently, they sought to break from their reality by creating a religious system apart from this world, a system doctrinally untainted and timeless in content. They were absolutely correct that life does indeed mean change and decay, but their solution violated the Christian commitment to the historical reality of incarnation. By seeking to escape the material-historical nature of the faith, they acted out of insecurity and fear rather than out of faith and hope.

From this incarnational character of doctrine arises a third and final presupposition. The German Catholic theologian Karl Rahner puts it this way: “faith of its very nature has a constantly changing historical form.”⁴ Lutheran theologians have also recognized the relativity of doctrinal forms. William Lazareth, currently working for the World Council of Churches, warned Lutherans that “to follow Luther’s theology does not always mean the mechanical imitation of his own time-conditioned accents.”⁵ Our own Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relationships pointed out that confessional subscription involved an awareness that doctrinal concepts have

2. *Ibid.*, p.20.

3. M.-D.Chenu, “L’Homo oeconomicus et le chrétien,” *Economie et Humanisme* (May, 1945) found within his *Pour une théologie du travail* (Paris: Sevil, 1954), p.65. The notion of the sacramental noted above is described in depth in the systematic theology of Paul Tillich.

4. Karl Rahner, *Belief Today: Theological Meditations* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964), p.47.

5. William H. Lazareth, “In Christ — Responsible Care for Creation,” Addendum (Exhibit X, 4, 3) in Agenda of the Lutheran World Federation’s 6th Assembly (June 13-26, 1977) in Tanzania, p.2.

language and forms bound to the era out of which they grew.⁶ Recognition of this reality means that doctrine as well as dialogue has a history and is a process. The conditions of our existence, now as well as in the sixteenth century, demand a humility that acknowledges that truth is not a monopoly owned by one group, nor is it a fragile treasure to be protectively walled. Instead, truth is always in the process of being discovered within our mutual searches and of being experienced as the gift of God in His own good time. Our task is not to transport the sixteenth century Lutheran Church to twentieth century Canada. Rather we are to look to our common confessional history and, in dialogue with each other, bring our varied gifts and experiences into that process of *unitas* and *concordia* which becomes our continual task until faith becomes sight.

The following analysis of the Lutheran Reformation's drive for both *unitas* and *concordia* is an attempt to utilize these three presuppositions in the service of Canadian Lutheranism's parallel hopes and struggles.

CONCORD

The need for *concordia* ("concord") dominated the framers and legalizers of both the *Book* (1580) and the *Formula of Concord*. Indeed, the very titles of both are an indicator of that. When all the symbolic writings of the Lutheran Reformation were bound within one cover, the preface of the collection itself was simultaneously the preface of the *Formula of Concord* which, after years of conflict, had met with the theological and political approval of most German Lutheran jurisdictions by the year 1577. Again and again the word *concordia* appeared in the introductory defining sections of these consolidating documents of second-generation Lutheranism.

What did the term *concordia* mean to those theologians and princes who looked back on Luther's era with hagiographic nostalgia? First of all, it involved the idea of unanimity. Both the *Formula* and *Book of Concord* are called a "unanimous confession of the doctrine and faith" of the undersigned political leaders and their theologians "who embrace the *Augsburg Confession*." Indeed, the very publication of the documents was due to "the unanimous agreement and order" of these signatories.⁷ A thorough examination of the preface creates the decided impression that *concordia* meant political and theological peace, a peace which seemed to demand doctrinal uniformity at almost any cost.⁸ Controversy was feared as a Satanic attempt to use contentious spirits to "bring about destructive and scandalous division," to "adulterate the pure doctrine of God's Word" and to "sever the bond of Christian charity and agreement."⁹ The grave anxiety that theological disagreements and disputes would lead to doctrinal libertinism and the complete loss of Christian doctrine prompted the princes and their theologians to impose doctrinal

6. "Theses on the Meaning of Lutheran Confessional Subscription", Theological Committee of the JCILR, revised draft (October, 1975), thesis CS, p.8.

7. Preface of the *Book of Concord*, Theodore Tappert, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p.1.

8. *Ibid.*, pp.13-14.

9. *Ibid.*, p.4.

uniformity on Lutheran lands and to enforce this by an organized system of censorship.¹⁰ To the framers of the *Formula* and *Book of Concord* doctrinal purity seemed to be an obsession. In their eagerness to protect the truth, they developed a hierarchy of documentary authority designed to prevent the entry of “adulterated doctrine” and to ensure “that a pure declaration of the truth might be transmitted to . . . posterity as well.”¹¹ At the pinnacle of this hierarchy were “the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments” which were called “the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged.”¹² However, to insure that this sole norm was properly normative the Reformation authority of the *Augsburg Confession* was needed to interpret the Bible correctly. Being “based solidly on the divine Scriptures,” Melancthon’s *Confession* was judged by the framers of the *Formula* to be the definitive “witness of the unalterable truth of the divine Word.”¹³ Indeed, pure doctrine was “based on the Holy Scriptures of God” but was “embodied in the *Augsburg Confession* and its Apology, correctly understood.”¹⁴ It is this “correctly understood” notion that demanded another authoritative document to interpret the *Augsburg Confession* properly, and that was the role which was assigned to the *Formula of Concord*. The *Formula* was declared to be “agreeable and conformable first of all to the Word of God and then to the *Augsburg Confession* as well.”¹⁵ In fact, it was called “the correct Christian interpretation of the *Augsburg Confession*.”¹⁶ So desirous were these Lutheran theologians to achieve a *concordia* of changelessness in doctrinal matters that they not only called their efforts “a final explanation of our conviction” which they would uphold until Judgment Day but also felt that their formulations would guarantee that posterity would be able to bask in doctrinal placidity and purity.¹⁷ *Concordia* for the second-generation elites of Lutheranism meant a theological uniformity based upon a clear hierarchy of documentary authority which would produce religious, political and social peace.

Such notions of *concordia* had their own historical incarnation, and while one might mourn the defensive and fortress mentality of these convictions, one should sympathize with the deep tragedies out of which they grew. For second-generation Lutherans, division and conflict made them vulnerable to loss of life, limb and liberty. Immediately after the death of Luther, the divided forces of political Lutheranism fell victim to the united armies of the Catholic Imperium. The church of the Reformation faced almost total collapse, and by the notorious Leipzig Interim, the Lutherans were forced to capitulate to their victorious Catholic foes on certain essential doctrines. This humiliation was able to insure for the evangelicals only the most insecure of legalities. To be sure the political fortunes of the Lutherans soon

10. *Ibid.*, pp.13-14.

11. *Ibid.*, p.7.

12. “Epitome”, *Formula of Concord* in Tappert, *Book of Concord*, p.464. Also see the Preface of the *Book of Concord*, p.12.

13. Preface, *Book of Concord*, pp.3-5. Also note p.12.

14. *Ibid.*, p.11.

15. *Ibid.*, p.8.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, pp.5,9.

changed. The imperial forces experienced some serious reverses which led to the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. Resulting from this truce was the compromise position that the ruling prince of a given German territory could determine whether the legal religion of his jurisdiction would be Roman Catholic or Lutheran. This agreement, based upon a military balance of power rather than trust, gave the Lutherans over sixty years to consolidate their faith and build upon secure political grounds, but it must also be pointed out that the situation remained potentially violent, a fact testified to by the brutal Thirty Years War which followed the *Book of Concord's* publication within a generation.

In the wake of the signing of the Peace of Augsburg, German Lutheranism was torn internally by major theological disputes which threatened to divide its still fragile forces and expose its vulnerability to further attacks by its watchful Catholic foes. Consequently, the evangelical princes and their theologians felt a pressing, even desperate, need to resolve these differences in order to present a united front before the apparently united Catholics. It took a full generation of theological wrangling and torn spirits to iron out the difficulties. The *Formula of Concord* (1577) and the subsequent *Book of Concord* were the result of this herculean effort. Thus, by 1580 German Lutheranism had resolved its serious external and perceived internal threats. No wonder, given the context of the era, that they defined *concordia* in terms of doctrinal unanimity.¹⁸

Nevertheless, while it is incumbent upon us to understand their *Sitz im Leben*, one must also realize that it is not ours. Toward that end, it is important to come to terms with the tensions and contradictions of their position. While a fortress mentality is understandable in light of Lutheranism's exposed weaknesses at the time, this fearful spirit produced a legalism and theological paranoia which threatened to undermine the basic spirit of the Reformation itself. The *Formula of Concord* and the preface to the *Book of Concord* came dangerously close to replacing the spirit with the letter. Increasingly, faith became more assent (*assensus*) to unanimously accepted doctrine than it did trust (*fiducia*) in the graciousness of God experienced in Christ. To be sure, these theologians were humbly aware of the limitations and relativity of their doctrinal assertions. In the "Epitome" of the *Formula of Concord*, they called their efforts "witnesses and expositions of the faith" which set forth "how at various times the Holy Scriptures were understood in the church of God by contemporaries with reference to controverted articles."¹⁹

However, the tone of the documents was defensive and uncharitable toward fellow Lutherans who espoused some doctrinal deviations. The *modus operandi* of these theologians was to use a neo-scholasticism to prove irrefutably and for posterity the truth of their doctrinal interpretations. This medieval methodology was united with an authoritarian hierarchy of documents calling for a *concordia* of compulsion rather than dialogue. Although the Scriptures were called "the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged,"²⁰

18. The history and conflicts of second-generation Lutheranism may be consulted in Willard Dow Allbeck's, *Studies in the Lutheran Confessions* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1952), pp.239-253.

19. "Epitome", *Formula of Concord* in Tappert, p.465.

20. *Ibid.*, p.464.

the pragmatic reality of the situation made the *Formula of Concord* the chief doctrinal tribunal. Both the Bible and the *Augsburg Confession* were eulogized and declared to be definitive in authority, yet the Lutheran theologians and their princes declared that their formula was "the correct" interpretation of the two supposedly higher authorities. Indeed, the lesser authority became the legal document employed to police the higher authorities of both the *Augsburg Confession* and the canonical Scriptures.

Such protection of these two exalted authorities produced, in effect, their disuse and demise as primary witnesses to the Reformation faith. They were enshrined, while the daily theological controversies and teaching were legitimized by the *Formula of Concord*. Thus, these theologians proclaimed one pattern of authority, but unwittingly, they practiced its reverse. Such an incongruity has been a part of church history for centuries. The "preserve and protect" spirit has a tendency to become enmeshed in the creation of impregnable notions of authority as well as doctrinal casuistry. Sadly, the *concordia* which emerges from such an *elan* is rarely life-affirming and instead breathes the foul air of a legalism which may be doctrinally correct while, at the same time, stifling the freedom of the Gospel.

UNITAS

The *Augsburg Confession's* notion of *unitas* is in marked contrast to this defensive spirit. In comparison with the *Formula's* need to establish *concordia* via an intricate listing of correct doctrinal interpretations, Philip Melanchthon's credo attempted to build *unitas* around one central reality, "the Gospel" of "a gracious God." For Luther's younger protege, church unity was fundamental, but it was not founded upon a complete uniformity. Indeed, he asserted that "it is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies, instituted by men, should be observed uniformly in all places."²¹ Nevertheless, basic church *unitas* was threatened if these ceremonies were "instituted by men for the purpose of propitiating God and earning grace," for such a conception was "contrary to the Gospel and the teaching about faith in Christ."²² Indeed, when Melanchthon referred to the Gospel "in its purity" and "in conformity with a pure understanding of it," he was not echoing the *Formula's* need for doctrinal infallibility. Rather, he was engaging in a radical single-mindedness which claimed that "sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church" was the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in accord with that Gospel.²³

It was this Reformation experience of the Gospel which became, for Melanchthon, the sole criterion of church unity, and, in all other respects, religious pluralism might be possible. Put another way, the church was based solidly upon the experience of *sola gratia* and *sola fidae*, what we, as Lutherans, call justification by grace alone through faith alone. As if to underline the centrality of this conviction, Melanchthon introduced previously this Gospel-based *unitas* by the following definition: "And the

21. Article VII, *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, p.32.

22. Article XV, *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, pp.36-37.

23. Article VII, *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, p.32.

Gospel teaches that we have a gracious God, not by our own merits but by the merit of Christ, when we believe this.”²⁴ The *unitas* issue so tersely described in Article VII is clarified and expanded in Articles IV and XX, the two articles which deal with “justification” and the relationship of “faith and works.” An examination of these propositions makes it abundantly clear that faith was defined as trust and confidence in the grace of God experienced through Christ and not simply as a doctrinal acceptance of a series of redemptive facts. In fact, this latter is called a faith “possessed by the devil and the ungodly, who also believe the history of Christ’s suffering and his resurrection from the dead.” In contrast with this is the faith of “the assembly of all believers” who know that “in Christ” they have “a gracious God” and truly know God.²⁵ Instead of a one-dimensional scholastic or cognitive faith, Melancthon asserted that the Gospel and faith were characterized by the experiential intimacy and trust so profoundly described by the Hebrew verb “to know.” *Unitas* had as its sure foundation a community of acceptance growing out of a covenant of costly graciousness that involved the outpouring of a broken-hearted God. It is not the doctrine of justification by faith which is the basis of unity, it is rather the personal and corporate experience of justification by faith.

Such a notion of *unitas* cannot be programmed nor can it be guaranteed by doctrinal and theological refinement. Melancthon’s *Augsburg Confession* was just that, a confession, a corporate testimony to a reality not a proof of that reality. It was a *credo*, a response to the collective experience of being divinely accepted in the midst of all human ambiguities. Out of this grew the glorious confidence that *unitas*, like grace, is both a promise and a gift. Both Melancthon and Luther believed that unity was a certainty. Church catholicity was part of the promise of Christ. After all, the “one holy Christian church will be and remain forever.”²⁶ Why? Because God has so promised to be with His church always. The Gospel, as basis of church unity, is the gift of “the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases in those who hear the Gospel.”²⁷ A similar glorious confidence erupted from Luther as he explained the meaning of the Creed’s third article: I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.²⁸

Such assurance that *unitas* is and will be a reality is an element of our confessional heritage which should underline all our worried strivings. Indeed, we already have a unity, a healing wholeness in the midst of brokenness, the experience of acceptance articulated by a *theologica crucis*. It is ours as a present gift of grace, and it will be ours as a future promise of grace. This reality should not minimize the importance of our task to realize an increasing *concordia*, but it should remove from us

24. Article IV, *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, p.31.

25. *Ibid.* and Article XX, *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, p.31.

26. Article VII, *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, p.44.

27. Article V, *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, p.31.

28. Martin Luther, *Small Catechism* in Tappert, p.356.

the gripping anxiety of manipulating, rushing or freezing the process. A Reformation confidence in *unitas* should strengthen our corporate critical faculties which will lead us to experience the varied and powerful winds of the Spirit.

These liberating and open-ended notions of *unitas* were rooted in the painful history of Lutheranism's birth. Feeling the burden of being labelled as outcasts and trouble-makers, the princes and theologians of the *Augsburg Confession* labored mightily to remain as cherished brothers within a common Christian family. They took great pains to assert that they had "introduced nothing, either in doctrine or in ceremonies, that is contrary to Holy Scripture or the universal Christian church."²⁹ We are neither divisive nor heretical, they were saying, and they implored the imperial Reichstag to believe that they had come to settle dissensions and to unite "in one fellowship and church" as all were "enlisted under one Christ."³⁰ Toward that end they were prepared to be open to both sides of the controverted issues, to overlook more minor divisions and to adopt a spirit of mutual respect between the contending parties.³¹ The very outcast and vulnerable character of the Lutherans forced them to approach the Augsburg Diet in an irenic and dialogical spirit. Emblazoned across Lutheranism's prime confessional document is the imprimatur of an olive branch. Fear of the advancing Turk brought the two warring Christian groups together, but, in addition, the Lutherans came forward propelled by the collective pain of a rejected sibling crying out to be loved and accepted as a legitimate member of the common family. Their gift to church unity was the *Augsburg Confession* and a process of openness and dialogue which is today being reciprocated by the papacy in the spirit of Vatican II.³²

Nevertheless, there remain tensions and contradictions in the *unitas* which emerged from the *Augsburg Confession*. Its glowing words of Gospel unity are tarnished by the incipient violence out of which the document grew. In their desperation to be accepted into the imperial family they promulgated the same hostilities shared by their Catholic counterparts at the Diet. What had brought the contending parties together originally was their common hatred and fear of the "infidel Turk." It cannot be denied that the Ottoman armies were a genuine threat to the political stability of the German lands, for the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent were knocking on the gates of Vienna. However, the notion of holy war by the godly against the godless, which united both evangelicals and papists against Islam, was steeped in the ambiguities that violence always carries in its wake. Only the pacifistic Anabaptists rose up against the idea of a crusade, which used the name of God to justify war, bloodshed, torture and other atrocities. Further, these very Anabaptist visionaries were anathematized by Catholic and Lutheran alike. Time and time again one reads in the *Augsburg Confession*, "condemned also are the Anabaptists who . . ."³³ Cojoined with an *unitas* cemented by the liberating gospel of God's graciousness is an ecumenism of blood backed by a crusading mentality. As Siirala has pointed out,

29. *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, p.95.

30. *Ibid.*, p.25.

31. *Ibid.*, pp.24-26, 94-96.

32. For the historical background which gave birth to the *Augsburg Confession*, consult Allbeck, *Studies*, pp.46-57 and Tappert, *Book of Concord*, pp.23-24.

33. *Augsburg Confession* in Tappert, pp.24-25.

part of our identity struggle to attain a Lutheran wholeness involves facing “the burdens and shadows” of our existence as well as claiming an honest ownership of those “unfinished, prejudiced, ‘narrow-minded’ and self righteous” elements of our corporate personality and history. It is one of the deep tragedies of our Reformation heritage that the *unitas* of confident trust that a gracious God would create unity was not deemed to be sufficient. The words of the *Augsburg Confession* affirmed such a *solus*, but the deeds of its framers tarnished this vision with the blood of religious crusade. To say blithely that they were men of their day only puts us into the category of those who offer excuses in the place of genuine repentance. Our *unitas* must be an open affirmation which portrays the confidence of both *δικαιοσύνη* (“justification”) and the humility of *μετανοία* (“repentance”).

THE ELUSIVE GOALS

Lutheranism has travelled four hundred and fifty years since Augsburg and four hundred years since the *Book of Concord* first appeared, and the elusive goals of formal *unitas* and *concordia* still elude her grasp. Nevertheless, our struggles continue, and in my own branch of Lutheranism, the Lutheran Church in America, we are attempting to forge a unity not only with our brother and sister Lutherans but also with fellow Christians and the entire human family. Our current unity talks in Canada, symbolized by this symposium, and the escalating talks in the United States between three major Lutheran bodies are two examples of inter-Lutheran *unitas* and increasing *concordia*. The continuing work of the Lutheran Council in Canada is another manifestation of this. Joint celebrations and *colloquia* between Lutherans and Catholics on the subject of the Augsburg Confession give testimony to a wider Christian unity built upon a common Christ.³⁴ Finally, Lutherans testify to the oneness of the human family by their commitment to social justice with all those of good-will, Christian or not. Witnessing to this reality is the prophetic work of John Zimmerman, the Executive Secretary of the LCA-Canada Section, and the ringing appeal by William H. Lazareth to the Lutheran World Federation urging it to be open to the possibility of a “just revolution” in certain dire circumstances.³⁵

Where do we go from here? Following in the steps of the *Augsburg Confession*'s formulators, let us be conscious of that *unitas* which is the work of a loving God that we experience as both present gift and future promise. In other words, our unity, to be most fruitful, must grow out of experiential trust and mutual openness to the Spirit's leadership rather than out of the defensive narrowness of a fortress mentality. Priority must be given to the process rather than to perfected doctrinal formulations. Using Siirala's words, our task is to discover our common Lutheran personality “in relationships where we experience mutual love, trust and respect, and where we learn to do justice to one another's identities.”³⁶ Our unity may be described as a healthy family which is characterized by all the strife and affection that intimacy

34. Edgar R. Trexler, “Closing in on Unity?” *The Lutheran* (January 21, 1981), pp.4-5; Edgar R. Trexler, “1980: Year of Narrowness,” *The Lutheran* (January 7, 1981), p.19; and “Bishop and pope: Crumley visits John Paul II in Rome,” *The Lutheran* (February 18, 1981), p.17.

35. Lazareth, “In Christ,” p.4.

36. Siirala, “Protestant Principle,” p.23.

inevitably brings. The social critic Christopher Lasch's observations about the positive contribution of sexual conflict to male-female relationships may be applied descriptively to the *unitas* we all share as Lutherans. "The abolition of . . . tensions is an unworthy goal in any case; the point is to live with them more gracefully than we have lived with them in the past."³⁷

Around this liberating center of an open-ended unity based on God's gifts and promises lies the ebb and flow of both concord (*concordia*) and discord. Both are characteristics of intimacy which remains a necessary ingredient of our unity. We are united already, and our continuing tasks involve broadening and deepening that unity not only among ourselves but also with other Christians, indeed, with the entire human family. Our gospel and witness must be manifestly present to bring healing and wholeness within all facets of life where illness and destruction threaten to reign at the expense of humanity. In the face of hunger, poverty, war, desperate loneliness and meaninglessness, a doctrinal and ecclesiastical *unitas* remains a pale shadow of the Creator's intentions. The "already now . . . not yet" nature of our unity demands a tireless commitment to the glorious and frightful process of trusting God to use us as His instruments of unity until faith becomes sight. As for *concordia*, let Augustine of Hippo have the last words: "In this diversity of true opinions, let Truth Himself beget concord."³⁸

37. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: Warner Books, 1979), p.349.

38. Augustine of Hippo, quoted in Allbeck, *Studies*, p.ii.

The Good Samaritan Society

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