

## Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Congregations

# IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

### LESSON 6 – UNIONISM & SYNCRETISM

(All citations of Holy Scripture are from the English Standard Version.)

**"You shall have no other gods before me."  
(Exodus 20:3)**

#### THE PROBLEM IN OUR SYNOD

Today, there are some LCMS pastors and congregations who have clergy from other Lutheran or non-Lutheran church bodies participate in joint wedding and funeral worship services, participate in community Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter worship services; and sometimes even in inter-faith worship services at which non-Christian clergy also participate. Sometimes clergy from church bodies with whom the LCMS is not in pulpit and altar fellowship are invited to take the pulpit in LCMS congregations to make a "presentation" rather than a sermon in worship services where no other sermon is provided.

Sadly, at times even officers of the Synod engage in such prohibited unionistic and/or syncretistic worship services with the approval of their ecclesiastical supervisor(s).

#### DEFINITIONS

**Unionism:** Leading worship with other Christian clergy with whom we are not in doctrinal agreement. This does **not** mean:

1. It is wrong for laity or clergy to attend funerals or weddings at non-Lutheran churches. (Understanding that they will likely hear false doctrine and need to be able to distinguish it from the truth.)
2. It is wrong for laity or clergy to attend worship at non-Lutheran Churches as a visitor or with family and/or friends.
3. It is wrong for laity or clergy to say "grace" at table with members of other Christian denominations or to pray for the sick or dying with them.
4. We believe non-LCMS Lutherans or non-Lutheran Christians are going to hell because they believe some false teachings. However, it also does not mean their errors are acceptable either to God or to those who hold the full Christian confession of faith. The eternal destiny of souls is God's call, not ours.

Unionism specifically refers to the leadership and participation of clergy in a service of worship at which others are leading or participating who hold a different confession of faith than our own.

**Syncretism:** Leading worship with non-Christian clergy.

Please notice the clear language of the LCMS Constitution respecting unionism and syncretism:

"Conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod are the following...

2. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as:
  - a. Serving congregations of mixed confession, as such, by ministers of the church;



- b. Taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession.
- c. Participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities."  
(2013 Handbook, Constitution, Bylaws, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Article IV, Conditions of Membership, p. 15.)

## QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the LCMS included this specific language, "Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description..." in the Constitution (not merely the Bylaws) of the Synod?
2. The Constitution says, "...such as:
  - a. Serving congregations of mixed confession, as such, by ministers of the church;
  - b. Taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession;
  - c. Participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities."

Are these a few examples of unionism and syncretism or is this meant to be a precise list of infractions to cover all violating instances?

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## UNIONISM IS A LUTHERAN TERM

The LCMS was born because of forced unionism that Lutherans in Prussia had to endure under the command of King Frederick Wilhelm III (1798-1840) and its spreading influence into the Church of Saxony. [For a more complete understanding of this important historic event, see: *Our Lutheran Heritage Part I* at the ACELC Web Site (<http://www.acelc.net/> → Teaching Materials → Our Lutheran Heritage Part I).



**King Frederick  
Wilhelm III**

During this period of history, Lutherans were forbidden (often by military force) to:

- a. Worship in accord with biblical Lutheran liturgies.
- b. Baptize their children according to the Lutheran rite of Holy Baptism.
- c. Avoid worship with non-Lutherans using unbiblical liturgies and rites of the Church.

If such laws were not kept, violators (especially Lutheran pastors) were often:

- a. Heavily fined.
- b. Subject to having personal property and businesses confiscated by the government.
- c. Imprisoned.

As a result of this persecution, five ships of about 700 Lutherans disembarked from Bremen, Germany, and established a settlement in Perry County, Missouri; they later joined other orthodox Lutherans in the United States to form the LCMS in 1847.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the German Lutherans suffering under the Prussian Union would be willing to leave extended family (and sometimes immediate family), careers, friends, and their own nation rather than submit to simply joining in worship with the Reformed?
  2. Would you be willing to make such a sacrifice in your own life if the government demanded of you and your family to join in a forced joint worship with those who believe, teach, and confess differently than our Lutheran Confessions, and to use a liturgy of compromised confession?
  3. What do you think moves people to want to join in joint, interdenominational or even interfaith worship?
  4. Why is the matter of unionism and syncretism important today?
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## IS THE TRUE GOD ONE OPTION AMONG FALSE GODS?

Today there are many congregations and pastors (sometimes Synodical officers) who join with other Christians and sometimes non-Christians in public worship essentially embracing the same practices that the Lutherans under the Prussian Union fled homes, families, businesses, and even their own nation to avoid! Sadly, it is not unusual for some LCMS clergy to jointly participate with clergy of other faiths in weddings, funerals, community Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter services in addition to interfaith worship services following a-national catastrophes.

Unionism and syncretism are abhorrent to orthodox Lutherans because such practices compromise Christian doctrine and therefore the Gospel of Christ itself!

Often such unbiblical worship is supported by LCMS Lutherans as a means of "evangelizing" the lost and therefore justifying what Scripture, our Lutheran Confessions and our own Synodical Constitution condemn. Here is the basic objection: By placing truth alongside falsehood in the same context, the truth is always seen as one option among other equal options to be accepted or rejected and is, therefore, compromised. In the case of syncretism the harm is much greater: By placing false gods alongside the One, True God, the One True God is seen as simply one option among other equal options. Rather than a good venue for evangelization of unbelievers, such joint worship only confuses believers and affirms unbelievers in their error.

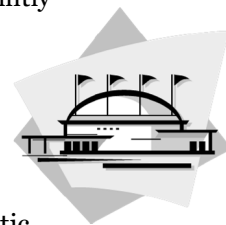
### QUESTIONS

1. By declining to participate in joint worship, are we judging the salvation of others (c.f. John 12:47-48; Romans 14:12-13)?
2. When an LCMS clergyman jointly participate in a community worship service, it is inevitable that contrary doctrines will be expressed by the various clergy. Why is this a problem especially before an "audience" of Americans who mostly hold to a pluralistic, subjective view of religion? Do Jesus' words in Matthew 7:6 apply here?
3. When interfaith or interdenominational worship occurs, is the integrity of the truth compromised or is falsehood compromised? (c.f. 2 Corinthians 6:14-16a). Is it even possible to compromise falsehood?

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### EVENTS AT YANKEE STADIUM ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2001

- ▶ **September 11, 2001:** The twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City were attacked and destroyed. (Also the Pentagon was attacked and a third attempt was thwarted by passengers on United Flight 93 that crashed into a field in Pennsylvania.) Collectively the lives lost were nearly 3,000.
- ▶ **September 13, 2001:** Atlantic District President, David Benke, and ELCA Bishop of Metropolitan New York, Stephen Bouman, received the Lord's Supper together at an ELCA church.
- ▶ **September 19, 2001:** LCMS President Gerald Kieschnick, ELCA Presiding Bishop George Anderson, Atlantic District President David Benke, and New York ELCA Bishop Stephen Bouman jointly participate at two worship services at an ELCA congregation in Manhattan.
- ▶ **September 20, 2001:** Mayor Rudolph Guiliani announced "A Prayer for America," an interfaith worship service, to be held at Yankee Stadium the following Sunday inviting people to come "worship together." Specifically mentioned in the Mayor's press release as participating in the worship service were "Cardinal Egan, Imam Pasha, and other leaders of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths."
- ▶ **September 20 - 22, 2001:** Twice, LCMS President Gerald Kieschnick granted to Atlantic District President David Benke permission to participate in this unionistic/syncretistic worship service.
- ▶ **September 23, 2001:** The uninvited LCMS Atlantic District President, David Benke, linked arms with Cardinal Egan (in order to get past security) and thereafter, participated in the joint interfaith worship service along with five Jewish clergy, five Muslim clergy, Sikh and Hindu clergy and other representatives of Christian denominations with whom the LCMS is not in pulpit and altar fellowship. The event was broadcast internationally.



This event prompted a storm of protest in our Synod that has yet to subside and has resulted in rendering the language of the Synod's Constitution meaningless. Seventeen pastors and three congregations filed formal char-

ges to removed President Benke from membership in the LCMS and from his position as District President of the Atlantic District:

**Pastors:**

Rev. Joel Baseley, Dearborn, MI  
Rev. Walter Otten, Brookfield, IL  
Rev. Todd Pepperkorn, Kenosha, WI  
Rev. John Berg, Pleasant Prairie, WI  
Rev. Daniel Bremer, Grand Island, NE  
Rev. Eric Christiansen, Libby, MT  
Rev. Gene Holtorf, Palmer, KS  
Rev. Dean Kavouras, Parma, OH  
Rev. Robert Wurst, Evansville, IN

Rev. Charles Froh, San Mateo, CA  
Rev. Brent Kuhlman, Murdock, NE  
Rev. James Bauer, Denver, CO  
Rev. Dennis Brech, Boulder, CO  
Rev. Clark Brown, Center, MO  
Rev. James Dahlke, Hebron, NE  
Rev. Donald Hunter, Taylorsville, NC  
Rev. Michael McCoy, Emmet, ID

**Congregations:**

Lamb of God, Pleasant Prairie, WI  
Our Savior, Pagosa Springs, CO  
Christ, Sioux Falls, SD

This was the largest number of complainants ever to file such charges in the history of the LCMS. President of the Synod, Gerald Kieschnick, both approved of Rev. Benke's participation and continued to defend his participation throughout his tenure as President of the Synod (2001-2010).

LCMS Second Vice President Wallace Schulz was assigned to investigate the matter and in 2002 found in favor of the charges of the complainants on the basis of violations of Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Constitution of the LCMS. Thus, Rev. David Benke was suspended from his office as Atlantic District President. However, upon appeal to the Synod's Dispute Resolution Panel on April 10, 2003, the panel found President Benke innocent of the charges brought against him. The basis for this finding did not include any evidence from Scripture or the Confessions, but only cited the bylaws of the Synod and a Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) document that the CTCR itself stated did not apply to such events as Yankee Stadium. Rev. David Benke was reinstated to his office as Atlantic District President and continues to serves in that capacity today.

## QUESTIONS

1. How many violations of the Synod's prohibition against unionistic and/or syncretistic worship occurred between September 13, 2001, and September 23, 2001?
2. Other than Rev. David Benke, what other Synodical official also participated in joint worship with other clergy/church bodies with which the LCMS is not in fellowship?
3. If these violations of Scripture, our Confessions, and our Constitution are not unionism and/or syncretism, then what would qualify?

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## THE SANDY HOOK SCHOOL SHOOTING, NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT

On December 14, 2012, Adam Lanza (a 20 year old mentally ill person) shot and killed twenty children and six adult staff people at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Connecticut. On December 17, 2012, an interfaith worship service was held in Newtown at which Rev. Rob Morris, pastor of Christ the King, Newtown, Connecticut, read Scripture and gave a benediction to conclude the service.



At first LCMS President, Matthew C. Harrison reprimanded Rev. Morris for his participation, which then prompted an apology from Rev. Morris, who indicated that he did not consider his participation to be an act of worship, but rather an act of community chaplaincy. This prompted an outcry from the secular media against their perception of a heavy-handed Synodical President, and later President Harrison apologized for "mishandling" the matter referring to it as a "debacle."

This confusion left the LCMS in complete disarray as to whether or not it is proper for an LCMS clergyman to participate at such an interfaith worship service. In such an atmosphere of uncertainty and with precedents having been set at Yankee Stadium and again at Newtown, Connecticut, there really is no impediment for any LCMS clergyman to participate at an interfaith worship despite the very clear language in our Synodical Constitution condemning such acts.

## QUESTIONS

1. What prompted President Harrison's apology for "mishandling" the Newtown matter?
2. How did President Harrison's apology add confusion to this matter in our Synod?
3. What are the Witness of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions Regarding Unionism and Syncretism?

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## SEARCHING GOD'S WORD & THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

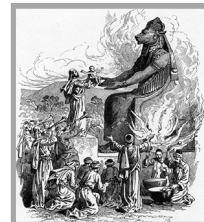
### Exodus 20:3-6, 23

<sup>3</sup> You shall have no other gods before me." [*Hebrew: literally no other gods before my face.*]

<sup>4</sup> You shall not make for yourself a carved image of any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

<sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup> but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments...

<sup>23</sup> You shall not make gods of silver to be with me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold.



### Questions

1. While there are many false religions that still build statues to false gods, more prevalent in our culture is the belief in no god or in the "divinity" of man as his own final arbiter of the truth. Do you think that the First Commandment also speaks to such people? Why?
2. Can the true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – accept equal standing with false gods?
3. Can the true God accept multi-choice truth of any kind? Why not?
4. Is the true God willing to share a stage with false Gods and/or false doctrine?

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### Exodus 23:13

Pay attention to all that I have said to you, and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips.

### Exodus 32:5, 19-28

<sup>5</sup> When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord..."

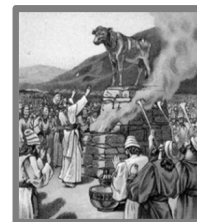
<sup>19</sup> And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. <sup>20</sup> He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.

<sup>21</sup> And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?" <sup>22</sup> And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. <sup>23</sup> For they said to me, 'Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' <sup>24</sup> So I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

<sup>25</sup> And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), <sup>26</sup> then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. <sup>27</sup> And he said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.'" <sup>28</sup> And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.

### Questions

1. Since God reveals Himself to be a "jealous God", and since He seems to prove it with acts of divine judgment, then how wise it is to anger the Almighty through joint worship with false teachers and false gods?
2. Some argue that joint worship of mixed confession or interfaith worship shows respect to other faiths. While we acknowledge that others have the right to believe as they wish, are false gods and false doctrine to be respected by us?



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### Deuteronomy 12:31

You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods.

### Psalms 96:5

For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

### Romans 14:23

For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

### Questions

1. Does the fact that many people sincerely believe in false gods or false doctrine somehow make their beliefs acceptable?
2. How does St. Paul describe the prayers and worship of false gods and the teaching of false doctrine in Romans 14:23?
3. If we were to participate in unionistic/syncretistic worship, are we doing something that encourages others to sin?

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### Romans 16:17-18

<sup>17</sup> I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. <sup>18</sup> For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

### I Corinthians 10:14

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

### II Corinthians 6:14-16a

<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

### Questions

1. God is unity itself. Division (and whatever leads to or causes division) is a violation of God's nature and the faith He has revealed to us. Does this help us understand why we must avoid and reject false teachers when they attempt to insinuate themselves into the Church or want to be seen as the "Church"?
2. In II Corinthians 6:14-16a, is St. Paul also speaking to other Christians who hold to false teaching? In what sense are such Christians "unbelievers"?
3. Why is it that falsehood and truth cannot be in fellowship with each other?

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### I Corinthians 10:14, 19-22

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ... <sup>19</sup> What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup> No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. <sup>21</sup> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. <sup>22</sup> Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?"

### I Timothy 4:1, 4-7

<sup>1</sup> Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons...

<sup>4</sup> For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, <sup>5</sup> for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

<sup>6</sup> If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. <sup>7</sup> Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;

#### Questions

1. Who is the power behind every false god and false teaching?
2. If worship given to a false god is demonic, then if Christians are participating in joint worship with false teachers and those worshipping false gods, to who is their worship offered?
3. According to St. Paul, what is the true God's reaction to such worship?
4. St. Paul says, "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer." Is he saying that God has revealed Himself perfectly through His Word and that none of His doctrine is to be rejected but received with joy? What then does this mean for those who teach false doctrine and worship false gods?

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### Apology, Article XXI (The Invocation of Saints), 13

Therefore the adversaries should not force us into an uncertain matter because a prayer without faith is not prayer.

### Apology, Article XXIV (The Mass), 77

Without faith, a ceremony cannot benefit either the one performing it or others.

#### Questions

1. How can joint worship with false teachers and worshippers of false gods be anything but uncertain? Who experiences the uncertainty?
2. Were the prayers of the Imams, Rabbis, Hindus and Sikhs at Yankee Stadium and at Newtown actually prayers? If so, to whom? Is this a good place for Christians and Christian clergy to be?
3. What good is a faithless ceremony?

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### Apology, Article XXIV (The Mass), 98

The godless priests in Judah held a false belief about such sacrifices; Baal worship even continued in Israel. Nevertheless, a Church of God was there that objected to these godless services [I Kings 19:18]. Baal worship remains in the realm of the Pope: the abuse of the Mass. By it they think they can merit the pardon of guilt and punishment for the unrighteous. It seems that this Baal worship will persist as long as the reign of the pope. It will continue until Christ comes to judge and by the glory of His return destroy the reign of the Antichrist [2 Thess. 2:1-8]. Meanwhile, all who truly believe the Gospel should condemn these wicked services. Against God's command, they were created to cloud over Christ's glory and the righteousness of faith.

#### Questions

1. Notice above that the Apology citation equates false gods with the abuse of the Mass under the Pope. Both are described as "Baal worship." What response from true Christians is to be made to such worship according to the above citation?
2. According to the last sentence above, what is the result of such false worship?



**Baal with  
Thunderbolt**

### **The Large Catechism, First Commandment, 18-21**

So even in the mind of the heathen to have a god means to trust and believe. But their error is this: their trust is false and wrong. For their trust is not placed in the only God, beside whom there is truly no God in heaven or upon earth [Is. 44:6]. Therefore the heathen really make their self-invented notions and dreams of God an idol. Ultimately, they put their trust in that which is nothing. So it is with all idolatry. For it happens not merely by erecting an image and worshipping it, but rather it happens in the heart. For the heart stands gaping at something else. It seeks help and consolation from creatures, saints, or devils. It neither cares for God, nor looks to Him for anything better than to believe that He is willing to help. The heart does not believe whatever good it experiences comes from God [James 1:17].

#### **Questions**

1. Is it possible for someone to have a truly sincere belief in something that is completely wrong?
2. If we engage in joint worship with those who believe in false gods or false teachings does our participation enable them to see their worship as legitimate?
3. According to the citation above, what finally is the hope of those who trust in false gods?
4. Why then would we want to encourage them to think that such a hope is real by worshipping with them? Would such participation actually be an act of Christian love?

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### **Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article X (Church Practices), 22**

...all Christians should beware of participating in the godless doctrine, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty of the pope. They should desert and condemn the pope with his followers as the kingdom of Antichrist, just as Christ has commanded, 'Beware of false prophets' [Mt. 7:15]. Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and condemned as cursed [Gal. 1:8, Titus 3:10]. And he says, 'Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers...What fellowship has light with darkness?' (2 Cor. 6:14).

#### **Questions**

1. The above citation from the Formula clearly and expressly tells us that participating with those who hold to false teachings and false gods is to be avoided. What then is the proper Christian response to such things?
2. Rather than run to such joint worship events, what advice do our Confessions give us?

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### **SOLID DECLARATION, ARTICLE X (CHURCH PRACTICES), 5, 10, 16, 29**

**5]** Under the title and excuse of outward adiaphora, things are proposed that are in principle contrary to God's Word, although painted in another color. These ceremonies are not to be regarded as adiaphora, in which one is free to do as he wants. They must be avoided as things prohibited by God. In a similar way in such a situation ceremonies should not be regarded as genuine free adiaphora, or matters of indifference. This is because they make a show or pretend that our religion and that of the papists are not far apart in order to avoid persecution, or they pretend that the papist's ceremonies are not at least highly offensive to us. When ceremonies are intended for this purpose, and are required and received (as through them contrary religions are reconciled and became one body), we cannot regard them as adiaphora...

**10]** We also believe, teach, and confess that at a time of confession, when the enemies of God's Word want to suppress pure doctrine of the Holy Gospel, God's entire church, indeed, every single Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word, as the directors of the community of God, is bound by God's Word to confess the doctrine freely and openly. They are bound to confess every aspect of pure religion, not only in words, but also in works and actions. In this case, even in adiaphora, they must not yield to the adversaries or permit these adiaphora to be forced on them by their enemies, whether by violence or cunning, to the detriment of the true worship of God and the introduction and sanction of idolatry...

**16]** Furthermore, idolaters are confirmed in their idolatry by such yielding and conforming in outward things, where there has not previously been Christian unity in doctrine. On the other hand, true believers are grieved, offended, and weakened in their faith...

**29]** We likewise regard it as a sin that deserves to be rebuked when during persecution anything done that is



**Vatican City  
Coat of Arms**



contrary and opposed to the Christian confession. This includes matters of doctrine and what otherwise applies to religion, for the sake of the enemies of the Gospel in word and act.

### Questions

1. Adiaphora are things neither commanded nor forbidden in Holy Scripture, but that does not necessarily mean that they are indifferent matters. The adiaphora that is the subject of the above citation is the worship of the Roman Catholic church body. The Lutheran Reformers are indicating that even though some are claiming that something is adiaphora, such matters respecting the worship of Rome are not. Indeed, the Confessors are saying with clarity that there is only one possible response to participating in such worship. What is that proper response?
2. Specifically, it says that when the impression is given that joining together in such worship implies that various doctrines and confessions are reconciled and that there are no significant differences, then what can't such worship services be regarded as?
3. Is there any "wiggle room" above for considering some doctrine to be less significant and therefore more acceptable?
4. Is joining together in such worship considered by the Reformers to be "idolatry"? If so, then what Commandment would be violated if such participation were to be done?
5. What would be the result of such joint worship for unbelievers? For believers?

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### Conclusion

Worship that is offered to false gods is offensive to the One, True God. False teaching is an affront to God's perfect revelation of the Christian faith and brings nothing but division in the Church. Joining together with false teachers and worshipping false gods makes the true God angry because it permits that which is demonic and false to be associated with Him. Such participation affirms the unbeliever in their unbelief; believers should be grieved and offended by it. The proper Christian response to false gods and false teaching is to object to them and condemn them, not to participate with those promoting them. Such participation clouds over God's glory and obfuscates the Gospel itself.

