

The Lord's Supper In The ELS Today

The purpose of this paper is to summarize the history of the Lord's Supper discussion in our midst, and explain the issues which are involved. Hopefully, this material will assist in clarifying the situation.

In 1971 Dr. Tom Hardt of Stockholm, Sweden wrote a book concerning the Lord's Supper. (*Venerabilis Et Adorabilis Eucharistia*) This book raised questions concerning the effectual cause of the presence, the time of the presence, and the *reliquiae*. In 1985 Dr. Bjarne Teigen of the ELS wrote a book, *The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz*, which espoused many of Tom Hardt's views. This book raised concerns both inside and outside of the ELS. The General Pastoral Conference of the ELS asked the Doctrine Committee to respond to the questions raised by the Teigen book. This was done at the General Pastoral Conference in 1988 in a paper entitled *The Theology of the Lord's Supper* [TLS] (Lutheran Synod Quarterly, December, 1988). The following major points were addressed in the paper:

The Effective Cause of the Presence:

Dr. Teigen in his book maintains that the Words of Consecration effect the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. The Doctrine Committee agrees with this. The Words of Institution by virtue of Christ's original institution are the effective cause of the presence.

In the institution narrative Jesus commands, "Do this in remembrance of Me." (I Corinthians 11:24) Our Lord directs us to do what He did. One is to take bread and wine and bless them with Christ's almighty Words "This is My body, this is My blood," which effect the presence, so that the true body and blood of Christ can be distributed and received. (LW 37:187; see also FC SD VII, 26 p. 573) St. Paul tells us the same when He commands us to bless the cup of blessing which is offered for drink. (I Corinthians 10:16)

In the *Large Catechism*, Luther says that the Word of God makes a Sacrament. "It is the Word (I say) which makes and distinguishes this Sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, the body and blood of Christ. For it is said: If the Word be joined to the element, it becomes a Sacrament. This saying of St. Augustine is so properly and so well put that he scarcely said anything better. The Word must make a Sacrament of the element, else it remains a mere element." (LC V, 10-11 [*Triglotta*, p. 755]) Luther specifically says that the Words of Institution spoken by the minister in each celebration of the Sacrament effect the presence. "If they now ask: Where is the power that causes Christ's body to be in the Supper when we say, 'this is my body'? I answer . . . Of course, it does not reside in our speaking but in God's command who connects his command with our speaking." (LW 37, 184)

The Lutheran Confessions likewise declare that the Words of Institution, by virtue of Christ's original institution, cause the presence of Christ's body and blood. "For where His institution is observed and His words are spoken over the bread and cup (wine), and the consecrated bread and cup (wine) are distributed, Christ Himself through the spoken words, is still efficacious by virtue of the first institution, through His Word, which He wishes to be there repeated." (FC SD VII, 75 [*Triglotta*, p. 999]) Again the Confessions state:

Now in the administration of the Holy Supper the Words of Institution are to be publicly spoken or sung before the congregation distinctly and clearly, and should in no way be omitted [and this for very many and the most important reasons. First,] in order that obedience may be rendered to the command of Christ: This do [that therefore should not be omitted which Christ Himself did in the Holy Supper], and [secondly] that the faith of the hearers concerning the nature and fruit of this Sacrament... may be excited, strengthened, and confirmed by Christ's Word, and [besides] that the elements of bread and wine may be consecrated or blessed for this holy use, in order that the body and blood of

Christ may therewith be administered to us to be eaten and to be drunk, as Paul declares (I Corinthians 10:16): The cup of blessing which we bless, which indeed occurs in no other way than through the repetition and recitation of the Words of Institution. (FC SD VII, 79-82, [*Triglotta*, p. 1001])

Notice that the consecration is not spoken only in order that the hearers may be prepared for what is taking place, but also in order that the body and blood of Christ may truly be present and be distributed to us. (TLS 13-25)

The Time of the Presence:

Because the Verba effect the presence Dr. Teigen states that the body and blood must be present immediately after the Verba have been spoken. (Teigen, pp. 98ff) It appears that some believe that one denies the efficacy of the consecration if one does not teach that it is immediately effective. This is the point of a memorial to the 1995 ELS Convention which states, "But we do say that the body and blood are immediately present . . ." (*1995 Synod Report*, p. 187)

The Doctrine Committee maintains that this cannot be proved on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions. The Words of Institution indeed effect the presence, but the Scripture and the Confessions say nothing about the exact time when the presence begins. In fact, Jesus did not name the elements as His body and blood except in offering them. One can only assert that what Jesus offered His disciples to be eaten and drunk were His body and blood. The same is true in our celebration. Therefore we hold that we cannot fix from Scripture and the Confessions the point within the sacramental usus when the real presence of Christ's body and blood begins, yet we know from Scripture and we acknowledge in the Confessions that what is present, distributed and received is the body and blood of Christ. (TLS 25-40)

Part of the problem in the issue of the moment of the presence is

that we, in our administration of the Lord's Supper, establish a time interval between the pronouncement of the Verba and the distribution of the elements which was not there in the first Lord's Supper. Then we speculate about the real presence in that time interval which we have created. For theological purposes the three-fold sacramental action of consecration, distribution, and reception should therefore be viewed and considered holistically as a factual and conceptual unity rather than sequentially as a series of three distinct occurrences. The consecration, distribution, and reception should be viewed as simultaneous actions rather than as consecutive actions.

In the first Supper the distribution and our Lord's Words, "This is My body, this is My blood" were simultaneous. Often the present participle "saying" is used which would indicate that the "saying" is simultaneous with the main verb "He gave." (Luke 22:19) Jesus blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to them saying, "This is My body." He did not say when His body was united with the bread, but He did say that it was present so that it could be distributed and received. Likewise, the pastor today, standing in the place of Christ, blesses the bread with Christ's almighty Words of Institution, which effect the presence, and later distributes to the faithful declaring, "This is the true body of Christ." While he cannot point out an exact beginning of the presence, he declares as Jesus did, that that which is present, distributed, and received in the Supper is the body of Christ. Because Christ said the elements were His body and blood only as He offered them, so we need to assert the presence of Christ's body and blood only as the elements are being offered to be eaten and drunk. (See also TLS: 33-50 and Addendum III & IV) No more precise definition of time is to be made on the basis of Scripture.

The question of the moment of the presence, the exact beginning of the presence was a non-issue in the Ancient Church. It only became a burning question with the Scholastics of the High Middle Ages. In trying to explain the "how" of the Lord's Supper, they appealed to Aristotelian causation and to transubstantiation, an instantaneous replacing of one substance with another. The Lutheran fathers defended the truth that the Words of Institution

effect the presence, but they did not accept the Aristotelian concept of causation with its transubstantiation and an instantaneous replacing of one substance with another. They found no scriptural basis for this theory. They did not develop a dogma of an immediate presence. Luther states in the Carlstadt letter concerning the Supper, "For we are commanded to believe that the Word of God is true; but we are not to investigate as to which moment or how they are true or fulfilled." (St. L. XX, 333) Now, to be sure, Chemnitz and Luther at times speak of Christ's body and blood being on the altar as did many of the Ancient Church fathers. But in Article VII of the *Formula of Concord*, a statement which was to bring peace among Lutherans on this very issue, (remember the Saliger Controversy, in which Chemnitz participated, had recently occurred in northern Germany) Chemnitz and the other authors of the *Formula* demand only this for confessional agreement: that one teach that Christ's body and blood are truly present in the elements of bread and wine in the Supper so that His body and blood may be distributed (*reichen*, *exhibeo*) by the minister and received by the communicant. (FC SD VII 10-11, p. 571) This statement does not assert an immediate presence after the Verba are said. It states only that the Lord's body and blood are present in the Sacrament and that they are offered by the minister. (MWS 124) Nor does this statement limit the presence to the reception, the idea that Christ's body and blood can be present only at the eating and drinking. In this regard Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch of the WELS CICR writes: "It should perhaps be mentioned also that some of our Lutheran teachers limited the real presence to the moment of eating and drinking. This, too, goes beyond the specific words of Christ. Careful reading of the text indicates that Christ was referring to what he was offering his disciples and inviting them to take when he said, "This is my body . . . This is my blood." Precisely when his body was united with the bread and his blood with the wine we are not told." (Wilbert R. Gawrisch, *A Review of Dr. B. W. Teigen's Book The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz*, Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, Vol. 84, No. 2, page 155)

It has been asserted that God's Word must always be immediately effective and, therefore, when the pastor stands in the place of Christ and says Christ's Words, "This is My body," His body must

be present immediately. However, there are places in Scripture where the Word did not work at once, as in the case of the Gadarene Demoniac (Luke 8:26-33; see also Luke 17:11-19; Matthew 21:19; Mark 11:12-14, 20-24) showing that this assertion cannot be proved. In addition to this, when the Lord commands us to speak His Word in the Sacraments, He commands us to speak it for an intended purpose. The command to speak His all powerful Word is restricted by His prescribed institution. We are not commanded to speak His Word so that His body and blood may rest on the altar or in a tabernacle. In the Supper we are commanded to speak the Verba so that His body and blood may be distributed and received. Since His intended purpose is that His body and blood be offered and received, we have the certain promise of His presence only in the distribution and reception. To assert dogmatically more than this goes beyond what God intended us to know or be our concern.

Therefore if one believes, as it seems much of the Ancient Church believed, that after the consecration Christ's body and blood are on the altar, he should not be accused of error. In the same way, the brother should not be condemned who does not want to assert precisely when the presence begins, but who is certain that he receives the true body and blood of Christ offered to him in the Sacrament. (TLS 25-40)

The Reliquiae:

Related to the discussion of moment and time in the Sacrament is the question of the *reliquiae*, the elements remaining after the Lord's Supper celebration. In the High Middle Ages the reservation of the Sacrament for the purpose of adoration and ocular communion became common. In regard to this Chemnitz writes, "And there is no word of God about the bread of the Eucharist being reserved or carried about in processions; in fact, it conflicts with the Words of Institution when the bread which has been blessed is not distributed, not received, not eaten." (Ex. 2,281) From this statement and others like it, Dr. Teigen assumes that Chemnitz maintains that all consecrated elements must be

consumed in the communion service. (Teigen, pp. 125ff.) However, these words of Chemnitz must be seen in their context. He is rejecting the Roman practice of reservation, veneration, ocular communion, and the Corpus Christi Festival. He is not saying that all the elements must be consumed in the communion service, for even in the ancient church the elements were sometimes burned or carried to the sick. (Ex. 2, 298, 301ff) Rather, he is rejecting the abuses of the Medieval Church. The sacrament was not instituted to be carried around, but to be eaten.

In *De Duabus Naturis*, Chemnitz specifically says that there is no sacramental presence outside the sacramental action:

In the fifth place, by the external ministry of the Word and Sacraments God is truly present in the church, working with us and effectually acting in us through these means. He is present even in the external signs in the use of the sacraments, dispensing and communicating through these visible signs His invisible grace, according to His Word. But the signs themselves, by themselves, add nothing toward this grace. God is not present with them inseparably, but because of the covenant and according to the Word they are not Sacraments apart from their use. When these Sacraments have been completed, they either pass away, as Augustine says, or are separated from the Sacramental union. (*De Duabus Naturis in Christo*, 109; see also Ex. 2,151; LS 37; MWS 121)

Chemnitz is in complete agreement with the *Nihil Rule* of our Confessions: Nothing has the character of a Sacrament apart from the divinely instituted use or action. "For when the Words are indeed spoken over the bread but the action which is prescribed and commanded in the institution is either not observed or is changed into another use, then we do not have the promise of the presence of the body and blood of Christ there as it is present in His Supper." (Ex. 2, 280) The *Nihil Rule* is based on the *Hoc Facite* directive of the institution narrative. When our Lord's "Do

This" is not carried out, there is no promise of His presence.

Because the sacramental union exists only in the sacramental action, the remaining species at the completion of the Lord's Supper celebration are simply bread and wine. There is no basis for the reservation, ocular communion, and the veneration of the sacrament outside the use. There is no dogmatic demand that all the consecrated elements be consumed in the sacramental service. (Teigen, p. 125) Such a demand could imply an enduring presence outside the use. At the same time, the remaining species should be handled with respect. (TLS 40-47)

Subsequent Events:

As a result of this Doctrine Committee paper in 1988, the pastoral conference adopted the following resolutions: BE IT RESOLVED, That the 1988 General Pastoral Conference adopt the essay, *The Theology of the Lord's Supper*, as being in full agreement with the theses adopted by the ELS in 1981, and BE IT RESOLVED, That we reaffirm that the theses of 1981 are a valid representation of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as taught in the Holy Scriptures and the *Book of Concord*.

In the spring of 1989 the Doctrine Committee met with Prof. Erling Teigen. At this meeting the following six statements were agreed upon as an explanation of Theses 9 of the ELS Lord's Supper Statement. These six points were adopted by the 1989 Synod Convention.

We understand Thesis Nine in the light of the following statements:

a) The words of consecration effect the real presence of Christ's body and blood in a valid administration of the Lord's Supper (consecration, distribution and reception).

b) Because of this consecration Christ's body and blood are present in the elements of bread and wine before the reception of the elements by the communicants.

c) We reject any attempt to fix the mathematical point or exact moment when the real presence begins.

d) We reject the teaching that the presence of Christ's body and blood is in any way effected by the eating and drinking of the elements by the communicants.

e) We reject the doctrine of transubstantiation, i.e., that the earthly elements cease to exist when the real presence of Christ's body and blood begin.

f) We reject any celebration of the Lord's Supper without communicants.

There continued to be confusion in our midst concerning the meaning of Thesis 9b. The confusion centered around the meaning of the phrase "before the reception." It became evident that some were equating the statement "Christ's body and blood are present before the reception" with the statement "Christ's body and blood are present immediately after the Words of Institution are said." This can be seen in a memorial to the 1995 ELS Convention: "The explanation is exactly the point of saying, as we presently do in Thesis 9b, that the body and blood are present before the reception or that the body and blood are present immediately after the consecration." (1995 Synod Report, p. 188) This is not how the Doctrine Committee understood this statement. The Doctrine Committee understood "before the reception" to mean that the pastor offers Christ's body and blood to be eaten and drunk.

There was also a historical problem involved with this phrase. The terminology "before the reception" was used in the Saliger Controversy of the 1560s before Article VII of the *Formula of Concord* was written. The *Wismar Recess* which was intended to end the Saliger Controversy, used the terminology "before the reception" in a number of places. (G. Schmeling, "The Saliger Controversy, *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, [June, 1987], 31-48) Yet, in spite of the fact that portions of the *Wismar Recess* were taken into the *Formula*, the Fathers chose not to use this terminology in Article VII of the *Formula of Concord* because of the

misunderstanding that had arisen around this usage. Rather, to express the duration of the presence they state, "We confess that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present and are truly offered with the visible elements, the bread and the wine, to those who receive the sacrament." (FC SD VII 10-11, p. 571) Since the writers of the *Formula* avoided using the terminology "before the reception", even though they did not limit the presence of Christ's body and blood to the reception, the better part of wisdom says we should do the same and rather express ourselves in confessional language.

Because of the confusion and misunderstanding concerning the phrase "before the reception", the Doctrine Committee proposed the following revision of Thesis 9b of the ELS Lord's Supper Statement to the 1994 Convention. This revision is presently under discussion.

b) Because of this consecration by virtue of our Lord's original institution "the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received." (AC X, p. 34; see also AC XXII 6, p. 50; Ap X I, p. 179; Ap XXIV 80, p. 264; FC SD VII 10-11, p. 571) The Scripture and the Confessions, therefore, teach that in the Supper the body and blood of Christ are received by the communicant and also that the "minister who consecrates shows forth [tenders] the body and blood of the Lord to the people" (Ap XXIV 80, p. 264; see also SC VII-2, p. 351; SA Part III VI 1, p. 311; AC XXII 6, p. 50; Ap X 4, pp. 179-80), that they are "truly offered with the visible elements" (FC SD VII 10-11, p. 571; see also Ap X I, p. 179), and that they are "really present in the Supper ... under the form of bread and wine." (AC X, p. 34)

At the 1995 ELS Convention the floor committee proposed the following resolutions for adoption:

A. BE IT RESOLVED, That the synod adopts the proposal of the Doctrine Committee relating to the Lord's Supper, and,

B. BE IT RESOLVED, That the synod thanks those who have diligently studied and labored over this matter, and,

C. BE IT RESOLVED, That the synod encourages individuals who have further concerns with Thesis 9b to meet with the Doctrine Committee.

A substitute resolution was adopted by the convention to read as follows:

A. BE IT RESOLVED, That resolution #1, A, B, and C be referred back to the synod's Doctrine Committee with the instructions that they consider the phrase "without the intervention of any other cause or agency" as a substitute for the words "before the reception" in the 1989 Thesis 9b.

B. BE IT RESOLVED, That the Doctrine Committee announces and holds an open hearing on the matter possibly concurrently with the January General Pastoral Conference. (1995 Synod Report, p. 111)

The Terminology "Without the Intervention of any Other Cause or Agency":

As we discuss the terminology "Without the intervention of any other cause or agency" the following points must be considered:

1. Time and space are agencies through which we perceive reality. Philosophically time may be understood as an agency. Then this addition to Thesis 9b of the ELS Lord's Supper Statement would teach that Christ's body and blood are present without any intervention of time or that they are immediately present. It would imply that there is no lapse of time after the Verba are said before the presence begins.

2. This addition introduces unfamiliar language in our statement, philosophical terminology if you will, which at best would require a considerable amount of explanation in the body of the

statement, and at worst would be very confusing and could lead to false interpretations. We have seen the danger of using new and strange terminology in our experience of problems arising from the use of the phrase "before the reception." It has become quite clear that that terminology was understood in two different ways. A public confession of faith must be written in plain, simple language that is understandable to those who read the statement.

3. Can this terminology be understood to mean that there is a valid Sacrament without distribution and reception? This is contrary to the *Nihil Rule* which says that nothing has the character of a Sacrament outside its intended purpose. To be sure, the only cause of the presence is the Words of Institution spoken by virtue of our Lord's original institution. But if there is no distribution and reception, there is no Sacrament, that is, no real presence.

4. This terminology adds nothing to our present statement. If this terminology is meant to say that the presence is effected alone by the consecration, in other words, that the distribution and reception in no way causes the presence, this has already been done in Thesis 9d. Thesis 9d reads: "We reject the teaching that the presence of Christ's body and blood is in any way effected by the eating and drinking of the elements by the communicants." If, however, this terminology is meant to say something about time, that is, that there must be an immediate presence, then this terminology is contrary to the spirit of our present statement.

Concluding Thoughts:

We are all agreed that the Words of Institution by virtue of Christ's original institution are the effective cause of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. His body and blood are present, distributed, and received for the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation. Here are received the very body born of Mary, and the very blood that ran from His wounds. They are received by both believer and unbeliever alike, the believer for salvation, and the

unbeliever for judgment. All this is taught on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions.

Yet, when one makes definite statements about when and how the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood, and when dogmatic demands are made about what must be done with the remaining elements, then we are going further than Scripture or the Confessions. When we delve into these things and are consumed by them we are dangerously close to speculative and presumptuous questions that are not wholesome to faith and life. Such things were never raised to dogma by our forefathers. They were not made doctrinally binding because they were not based on clear Scripture. Rather, we are urged to avoid delving into the hidden things of God.

Speculation concerning an immediate presence, especially if it leads to a demand for the consumption of the *reliquiae* could easily imply an enduring presence outside the use. This idea of an enduring presence was the basis for the reservation and ocular communion which Luther and Chemnitz so disdained.

While this discussion of the Lord's Supper in our midst has been salutary in that we have received a deeper understanding of the power and efficacy of the Word, it has also resulted in potential danger to faith and life. Is there any one of us who can go to Holy Communion without thinking about the endless wrangling about the moment of the presence? How many lay people have not been confused in their faith when they are told they have been improperly handling the remaining elements, or that they must believe that the Lord's body and blood are present at an exact time? We must boldly confess everything that the Scripture teaches concerning the Holy Supper, but no more than the Scripture teaches.

Gaylin R. Schmeling

* At the 1996 (June) ELS Convention, the Statement of the Doctrine Committee (on p. 10) was passed. A few negative votes were recorded.

On the basis of the Words of Institution (Matthew 26:26, 27; Mark 14: 22, 24; Luke 22: 19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-25) and other Scripture passages concerning the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 10: 16, 17 and 11: 26-29)

1. We hold with Luther that "[the Sacrament of the Altar instituted by Christ himself] is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink." (SC VI, pp. 351)

2. We hold that "in the Holy Supper the two essences, the natural bread and the true body of Christ, are present together here on earth in the ordered action of the sacrament, though the union of the body and blood of Christ with the bread and wine is not a personal union, like that of the two natures in Christ, but a sacramental union . . ." (FC SD VII 37, 38, p. 575f)

3. We hold that this sacramental union is in effect during the *usus* or *actio*: "Nothing has the character of a sacrament apart from the divinely instituted action (that is, if one does not observe Christ's institution as he ordained it, it is no sacrament). This rule dare not in any way be rejected, but it can and should be profitably urged and retained in the church of God. In this context 'use' or 'action' does not primarily mean faith, or the oral eating alone, but the entire external and visible action of the Supper as ordained by Christ: the consecration or words of institution, the distribution and reception, or the oral eating of the blessed bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ." (FC SD VII 85, 86, pp. 584f)

4. We hold that "it is the institution of this sacrament, performed by Christ, that makes it valid in Christendom, and that it does not depend on the worthiness or unworthiness of the minister who distributes the sacrament or of him who receives it, since, as St. Paul says, the unworthy receive the sacrament too.

Therefore (we) hold that, where Christ's institution and command are observed, the body and blood of Christ are truly distributed to the unworthy too, and that they truly receive it." (FC SD VII 16, p. 572)

5. We hold that it is the almighty Word of Christ "which distinguishes it from mere bread and wine and constitutes it a sacrament which is rightly called Christ's body and blood . . . 'When [if] the Word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament' . . . The Word must make the element a sacrament; otherwise it remains a mere element." (LC V 10, p. 448)

6. We hold that "no man's word or work, be it the merit or the speaking of the minister, be it the eating and drinking or the faith of the communicants, can effect the true presence of the body and blood of the Christ in the Supper. This is to be ascribed only to the almighty power of God and the Word, institution and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ." (FC SD VII 74, p. 583)

7. We hold that the words of consecration repeated by the minister in a proper celebration of the Sacrament are the effective means by which the real presence of Christ's body and blood is brought into being. "For wherever we observe his institution and speak his words over the bread and cup and distribute the blessed bread and cup, Christ himself is still active through the spoken words by the virtue of the first institution, which he wants to be repeated . . . 'No human being, but only Christ himself who was crucified for us, can make of the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but by God's power and grace through the words that he speaks, "this is my body," the elements set before us in the supper are blessed' . . . This his command and institution can and does bring it about that we do not distribute and receive ordinary bread and wine but his body and blood, as his words read, "this is my body," etc., "this is my blood," etc. Thus it is not our work or speaking but the command and ordinance of Christ that, from the beginning of the first Communion until the end of the world, make the bread the body and the wine the blood that are daily distributed through our ministry and office.' Again, 'Here, too, if I were to say over all the bread there is, "This is the body of Christ," nothing would happen, but when we follow his institution and command in the Lord's Supper and say, "This is my body," then it is his body, not because of our speaking or of our efficacious word, but because of his command in which he has told us so to speak and to do and has attached his own com-

8. We hold that "the words of institution are to be spoken or sung distinctly and clearly before the congregation and are under no circumstances to be omitted. Thereby we render obedience to the command of Christ, 'This do . . . ' And thereby the elements of bread and wine are hallowed or blessed in(for) this holy use, so that therewith the body and blood of Christ are distributed to us to eat and to drink, as Paul says, 'The cup of blessing which we bless,' which happens precisely through the repetition and recitation of the words of institution." (FC SD VII 79-82, p. 584)

9. We hold that we cannot fix from Scripture the point within the sacramental usus when the real presence of Christ's body and blood begins, yet we know from Scripture and we acknowledge in the confessions that what is distributed and received is the body and blood of Christ.

We understand Thesis Nine in the light of the following statements:

- a) The words of consecration effect the real presence of Christ's body and blood in a valid administration of the Lord's Supper (consecration, distribution and reception).
- b) Because of this consecration by virtue of our Lord's original institution "the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received." (AC X, p. 34; see AC XXII 6, p. 50; Ap X I, p. 179; Ap XXIV 80, p. 264; FC SD VII 10-11, p. 571) The Scripture and the Confessions, therefore, teach that in the Supper the body and blood of Christ are received by the communicant and also that the "minister who consecrates shows forth [tenders] the body and blood of the Lord to the people" Ap XXIV 80, p. 264; see also SC VII-2, p. 351; SA Part III VI 1, p. 311; AC XXII 6, p. 50; Ap X 4, pp. 179-80), that they are "truly offered with the visible elements" (FC SD VII 10-11, p. 571; see also Ap X 1, p. 179), and that they are "really present in the Supper . . . under the form of bread and wine." (AC X, p. 34)
- c) We reject any attempt to fix the mathematical point or exact moment when the real presence begins.
- d) We reject the teaching that the presence of Christ's body and blood is in any way effected by the eating and drinking of the elements by the communicants.
- e) We reject the doctrine of transubstantiation, i.e., that the earthly elements cease to exist when the real presence of Christ's body and blood begins.
- f) We reject any celebration of the Lord's Supper without communicants.

NOTE: References to and citations from the *Book of Concord* are according to the Tappert Edition.

