

The Book of Concord and the Consecration

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As it even among confessional Lutherans, unfortunately, are different views on consecration, I would like to present an overview of the teaching of the Book of Concord on the matter. To illuminate the problem I here indicate the two main understandings (especially within B/ there are variants):

A/ The presence is caused by the words the pastor recites. The words have their effect immediately. As soon as the words are recited, the presence is at hand.

B/ According to the other position we don't know when the transformation occurs. Some would probably say that the presence depends on the recited words. They may also use the expression that the presence is caused by the recited words, but then it is synonymous with "depends on". The presence may occur later, though no later than at the reception.

It's confusing that both sides hold that the presence is caused by the recited words, although they mean different things. Another source of confusion is "the words of institution", because it can refer to both the first words that Jesus said the first Maundy Thursday, and the words that the minister pronounces in our mass. By this paper I hope to clarify these points.

INTRODUCTION

The method of this work is of course to analyze the text, to which belongs also to understand the situation it was written in. In order to properly understand the reformers' teaching on the Holy Supper, we will therefore study not only what they criticize, but also what they do not criticize. Let us therefore start from the beginning and first do a study on what separated the Lutherans from the Roman Catholic Church. It was here the Reformation started, before then disagreements also arose against Zwingli and Calvin.

We begin with what the Augsburg Confession says about the Holy Supper in Article X *Of the Lord's Supper*:

1] Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed **2]** to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise.¹

Here it is stated briefly, that the core of the Holy Supper is that Christ's body and blood are present (real presence) and that they are distributed to the communicants. That Christ is present in the

¹ In this paper (except for one quote, as indicated below) I use the text from *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: German-Latin-English*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), <http://bookofconcord.org>

physical elements is so obvious to those involved (Lutherans and Roman Catholics) that it did not need to be stated. This article was the on the whole agreed upon.

Article XXII rejected the abuse that the laity is given the sacrament only in one kind, and Article XXIV rejected the private mass.

These abuses are errors in the handling of the sacrament and do not affect the essence of the Lord's Supper.

In the next writing, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, is developed in Article XXII the criticism that the laity receives only the bread and in article XXIV is again the private mass rejected. There also Melanchthon gives a longer review of the different kinds of sacrifice, in substance a critique of the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass. The objections raised against the Roman Catholics about the use of the sacrament is thus found not in the article of the Lord's Supper, but is treated in separate articles. Melanchthon states in Article X that the sides essentially agree on the Holy Supper.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF THE CONSECRATION

About what then were Melanchthon and the Reformers united with the Roman Catholics? I would like to present their doctrine of the consecration. The Roman belief is that the presence of Christ's body and blood begins in consecration. When the words of institution are recited by the priest, the transformation takes place.

Regarding the Consecration there is a point that Melanchthon does not attack in the Augsburg Confession, the criticism comes later in the Book of Concord. The false doctrine is this: For the consecration to take place the priest must be properly ordained, that is, to have part of the apostolic succession. In ordination the priest, namely, is given an indelible spiritual mark (character indelebilis), which allows him to consecrate.

Four quotations from themselves, showing their doctrine of consecration:

When we speak of consecration without any special qualification, we ordinarily understand it as the act by which, in the celebration of Holy Mass, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. [...] This change is produced in virtue of the words: This is my body and This is my blood, or This is the chalice of my blood, pronounced by the priest assuming the person of Christ and using the same ceremonies that Christ used at the Last Supper.²

In the institution narrative, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood.³

Only validly ordained priests can preside at the Eucharist and consecrate the bread and the wine so that they become the Body and Blood of the Lord.⁴

By the consecration the transsubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about.⁵

² New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04276a.htm> 2017-01-28

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, second edition, 1353 b.

⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, second edition, 1411.

⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church, second edition, 1413

One more quote, from *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, which shows that the transformation takes place at the reciting of the words of institution. The text explains why the body of Christ even after the consecration (during which according to the Roman doctrine transubstantiation takes place and the substance of the bread ceases to exist) can be called bread:

Here the pastor will not omit to observe to the faithful, that we should not at all be surprised, if even after the consecration, the Eucharist is sometimes called bread : it is so called because it has the appearance and still retains the natural quality of bread.⁶

DEVIATIONS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS

Let us procede and see how the other writings in the Book of Concord criticize the Roman doctrine on the Lord's Supper.

The Smalcald Articles

In the Smalcald articles the Roman Catholic conception of Holy Supper is again criticized: The Sacrifice of the Mass (Part 2.2.1), that the laity could only receive the bread, not the wine (Part 3.6.2) and the transubstantiation (the doctrine that the substances of the bread and wine cease, Part 3.6.5).

The Epitome

We will then come to the first part of the Formula of Concord, Epitome. Article VII is about the Holy Supper. The article is written explicitly against "Sacramentarians", that is, theologians of Reformed influences, so when we see this rejection of the Roman Catholic belief, it is mainly a defense against allegations of papism from theologians influenced by Zwingli.

First – in the section *Affirmative Theses* – the authors reject the Roman teaching that the priest through his ordination receives a special power and ability to consecrate, they say *that no work of man or recitation of the minister [of the church] produces this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper*. These words have often been misunderstood, some have believed that the Formula of Concord does not teach that Christ's body and blood are present when the words of institution are spoken. But the authors of the Formula of Concord don't want at all to reject with these words, the concept that the words of institution bring about the presence, they want only to keep away the minister's person, his merits and characteristics. The presence is not based in any part of the minister or his qualifications, but only on the Word of God (which the minister speaks). Notice the parallelism of *recitation of the minister*. It is *work of man*. Had those who don't claim the direct action of the words of institution been right, it would here instead had said something like the presence is not brought about by "any reciting or the minister's words." But, once again, when they reject the *recitation of the minister* as the cause, it is not the words but the minister they want to put away. The consecration doesn't request any qualities of the minister and it is not his work.

Thereafter – in the section *Negative Theses* – the most important Roman deviations of the Holy Supper is again summed up: The transubstantiation, The Sacrifice of the Mass and that the laity only receive the bread, not the wine.

⁶ The Catechism of the Council of Trent, published by command of Pope Pius the Fifth, translated by Rev. J Donovan, Baltimore 1833, s 215. (Hämtad på www.archive.org) Pope Pius V lived 1504-1572.

The Solid Declaration

In the second part of the Formula of Concord, Solida Declaratio, the criticisms made in the Epitome are repeated. Moreover the Roman Catholic doctrine is blamed on another point; the practice of using consecrated bread for other purposes than eating is extensively criticized. Such use is rejected: *For apart from the use, when the bread is laid aside and preserved in the sacramental vessel [the pyx], or is carried about in the procession and exhibited, as is done in popery, they do not hold that the body of Christ is present.* (SD VII:15, cf. SD VII:83ff.) They are careful to define the sacramental use. They write:

86] And the use or action here does not mean chiefly faith, neither the oral participation only, but the entire external, visible action of the Lord's Supper instituted by Christ, [to this indeed is required] the consecration, or words of institution, the distribution and reception, or oral partaking [manducation] of the consecrated bread and wine, [likewise the partaking] of the body and blood of Christ.

87] And apart from this use, when in the papistic mass the bread is not distributed, but offered up or enclosed, borne about, and exhibited for adoration, it is to be regarded as no sacrament;

The sacramental action then consists of the consecration (the speaking the words of institution), the distribution and the reception. Outside this practice there is no sacrament.

Summary

In the Book of Concord five errors of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Holy Supper are rejected. The Roman Catholic doctrine that Christ's body and blood is made present by the reciting of the words of institution is not criticized. Two of the criticisms concern the Holy Supper's substance and the consecration: Their doctrine of transubstantiation and their doctrine that there must be a validly ordained minister who recites the words of institution.

THE BOOK OF CONCORD ON CONSECRATION

We will now look at the Book of Concord's view of the words of institution and the consecration. To try to make the presentation clear, I use two expressions, *the first words* (which Our Lord Jesus Christ said on the first Maundy Thursday when he instituted the Holy Supper) and the recited words (which the minister speaks in our service).

Is it so that the recited words bring about the presence, or is it the first words? This seems to be a hard question, but it is misleading to put the question that way. It is a false dichotomy. Both are necessary. Without Christ instituting the supper there had of course been no sacrament. The first words are the root cause of the Real Presence. We can call it *causal cause*. But it is not enough that the sacrament was instituted, it also must "happen" by us. And the Book of Concord teaches that the recited words bring about and accomplish the real presence. We can call that the *instrumental cause*.

It is the same as with baptism. There is the institution of baptism, in the Great Commission (the causal cause), but baptism does not "pop up" by itself anywhere a man is perfused with water, no, for a baptism to be, the pastor has to say by the command of Christ "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". The minister's words are the instrumental cause. Because

of them there will be a baptism. Not because there is a minister who speaks, but because of Christ's institution (the first words), and the fulfillment of his command (the recited words).

Now to the places in the Book of Concord which pertain to the words of institution.

REVIEWING THE BOOK OF CONCORD

The Augsburg Confession, the Apology and the Smalcald Articles

I have not found any words about the words of institution in these writings. Why not? Because they are written against the Pope. Melancthon, Luther and the other signatories agreed with the Roman Catholics on the Real Presence and that it commences at the consecration.

Small Catechism

The Small and the Large Catechism are not written in polemical purpose, but to teach the parishioners and ministers the Christian faith. We can therefore expect that they treat the words of institution, which they do.

In the Fifth Part of the Small Catechism, Luther refers to the the words of institution. In Part I, the first words are referred to. Then, in Part II, III and IV Luther also refers to the words, and there both the first words and the recited words can be meant.

Large Catechism

Luther begins explaining the meaning of the words of institution, the first words:

1] In the same manner as we have heard regarding Holy Baptism, we must speak also concerning the other Sacrament, namely, these three points: What is it? What are its benefits? and, Who is to receive it? And all these are established by the words by which Christ has instituted it, **2]** and which every one who desires to be a Christian and go to the Sacrament should know. For it is not our intention to admit to it and to administer it to those who know not what they seek, or why they come. The words, however, are these:

3] Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

4] Here also we do not wish to enter into controversy and contend with the traducers and blasphemers of this Sacrament, but to learn first (as we did regarding Baptism) what is of the greatest importance, namely, that the chief point is the Word and ordinance or command of God. For it has not been invented nor introduced by any man, but without any one's counsel and deliberation it has been instituted by Christ.

Luther now proceeds and connects the first words (**8]**) with the recited words (**9]**). By the minister's speaking the bread and the wine are comprehended by the word and connected to it. They become a sacrament.

8] *Now, what is the Sacrament of the Altar?*

Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by the Word of Christ to eat and to drink. **9]** And as we have said of Baptism that it is not simple water, so here also we say the Sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine, such as are ordinarily served at the table, but bread and wine comprehended in, and connected with, the Word of God.

Luther then explains what makes the sacrament. He is speaking about the sacrament, but not abstractly, but concretely about our sacrament, here and now.

10] 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: *Accedat verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum*. 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 has scarcely said anything better. The Word must make a Sacrament of the element, else it remains a mere element.

Luther speaks here in **10]** about the recited words, not about the institution, but about our Service, about the sacrament, which rightly of us Christians "is called the body and blood of Christ." When the word, the recited words, come to the external thing, it becomes a sacrament. Note that the subject is in the present tense, Augustine does not speak about what happened when Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, but about the word which here and now comes to the elements. The word makes the element a sacrament! Without the recited words there is no sacrament.

It is also defined what the sacrament of the Holy Supper consists of: That the elements become a sacrament, means that they are the body and blood of Christ. If Christ's body and blood are not present, then there is no sacrament: *The Word must make a Sacrament of the element, else it remains a mere element*. When the word, recited by the minister, comes to the element it becomes a sacrament!

Now in **11]** is an important sentence. Naturally a Christian believes everything God says. But what saying does the text refer to?

11] Now, it is not the word or ordinance of a prince or emperor, but of the sublime Majesty, at whose feet all creatures should fall, and affirm it is as He says, and accept it with all reverence, fear, and humility.

Obviously the words of institution are referred to, but does Luther here mean the first words or the recited words? This is a crucial issue. I assert that Luther says that when the minister recites the words of institution, it is God who speaks! The minister is the mouth of Christ, see below.

I admit that **11]** is not in itself unambiguous. If we only read **11]**, we can not determine whether "the word of the sublime Majesty" refers to the historical bible word or to the words that the minister recites. To determine this, we need to read further.

13] Now here stands the Word of Christ: *Take, eat; this is My body; Drink ye all of it; this is the new testament in My blood*, etc. Here we abide, and would like to see those who will constitute themselves His masters, and make it different from what He has spoken. It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word or regard it without the words, you have nothing but mere bread and wine.

The word is mentioned twice in this section. I admit that the first place ([We] *would like to see those who will constitute themselves His masters, and make it different from what He has spoken*)

can be understood differently, either about the first words or about the recited words. But in the second place it is the recited words. It is only the spoken words that can be taken away from the Supper. Thus "what he has spoken" in the first sentence refers to the words that the minister recites in the Service. To question them is to question Christ. For it is as Christ speaks and says, because he can not lie and deceive, he is God.

That this is a proper understanding of the text, is confirmed in the next paragraph. Then Luther lets the words just taken away come back into the text again. It becomes quite clear that the words referred to are those of the minister:

14] But if the words remain with them, as they shall and must, then, in virtue of the same, it is truly the body and blood of Christ. For as the lips of Christ say and speak, so it is, as He can never lie or deceive.

This is an important passage. It shows that Luther refers to the words that the minister recites in our Service. The words are recited, and they give their testimony of the elements. The recited words are true. Why? Christ himself has spoken them. Note that the expression "the lips of Christ" is referring to the minister. It is not the first words which are referred to, then Luther would have written 'For as Christ says and speaks'. When the minister acts on Christ's mission and command, then he is God's instrument. With that inscribed in the text, it will be like this:

14] But if the [recited] words remain with them, as they shall and must, then, in virtue of the same [recited words], it is truly the body and blood of Christ. For as the lips of Christ [the minister] say[s] and speak[s], so it is, as He can never lie or deceive.

Luther speaks also in other places about the minister as the mouth of God and Christ. See for example the following quotes from a sermon:

29] But for the absolution to be right and efficacious, it must spring from the command of Christ, which is as follows: I declare thee free from all thy sins, not in my own name, nor in the name of any saint, nor for the sake of any human merit, but in the name of Christ and by the authority of his command, who has commissioned me to say to you that all your sins are forgiven, hence, not I but he himself by his own mouth forgives thee thy sins, and thou art under obligation to receive this and believe it firmly, not as the word of man, but as if thou hadst heard it from the lips of the Lord Christ himself.

35] Yea, you say, thou hast indeed given me absolution, but who knows whether it is certain and true with God that my sins are forgiven? Answer: If I have done this and said this as a man, then thou mayest well say: I do not know whether thy absolution is effective and efficacious or not, but that thou mayest be sure concerning this, thou must be instructed in the Word of God, that thou canst say, I have been absolved neither by the minister nor by any other man; for thus the minister has not taught me to believe: but God has spoken and done it through him; of this I am sure, for my Lord Christ has commanded and said: As my Father hath sent me, so also send I you. Here he indeed puts those to whom he gives the command on an equality with himself.

39] ... Thou art, therefore, bound to believe him as though Christ were standing there himself and would lay his hand upon thee and speak the absolution.⁷

And in another sermon for the same Sunday:

⁷ Sermon *Sunday after Easter*, Martin Luther's Church Postil, 1544. English translation by John Nicholas Lenker 1905. <http://www.lutherdansk.dk/1%20Web-AM%20-%20Introduction/Kirkepos.htm> My underscoring.

8] This is a great and precious thing, that the mouth of every upright pastor and preacher is the mouth of Christ, and his word and forgiveness is the word and forgiveness of Christ.⁸

Epitome of the Formula of Concord

In article VII, on the Lord's Supper, there is not much in the Epitome on consecration. The article is written against contemporary theologians with reformed influences and their false teachings.

8] 3. Now, as to the consecration, we believe, teach, and confess that no work of man or recitation of the minister [of the church] produces this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that this is to be ascribed only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As I have shown above, this is not contrary to the belief that the consecration brings about the presence, see section *Deviations of the Roman Catholics* (p 3)

9] 4. But at the same time we also believe, teach, and confess unanimously that in the use of the Holy Supper the words of the institution of Christ should in no way be omitted, but should be publicly recited, as it is written 1 Cor. 10:16: *The cup of blessing which we bless*, etc. This blessing occurs through the recitation of the words of Christ.

Here we see how the Formula of Concord describes the power of consecration: This blessing occurs through the recitation of the words of Christ. The blessing means that Christ's body and blood are present, for St Paul writes *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?* (1 Cor. 10:16) The cup is blessed by the reciting of the words of institution. Then there is the body and blood of Christ.

The theologians influenced by Zwingli argued, that only the faithful were partakers of Christ's body and blood. The Formula of Concord rejects this, and says here that it is the words of Christ that bring about the presence. These places can be understood both as referring to the first words and the recited words:

35] 14. That not the omnipotent words of Christ's testament, but faith, produces and makes [is the cause of] the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper.

42] ... This mystery is not apprehended otherwise than by faith alone, and revealed in the Word alone.

The Solid Declaration

Here are repeated arguments from the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechism and the Epitome. I do not repeat these points, but only treat what is said about the words of institution in this writing, which mainly deals with Zwinglian tendencies. Since this writing is so extensive, I do not mention the references to the words of institution which either refers only to the first words, or that can be understood equally well about both the first and the recited words, but only those occurrences that affects the recited words only.

⁸ "Das ist ein gross, trefflich Ding, dass eines jeglichen rechtschaffenen Pfarrherrn und Predigers Mund Christi Mund ist, und sein Wort und Vergebung Christi Wort und Vergebung ist." Am ersten Sonntage nach Ostern, Quasimodogeniti, Erste Predigt. House Postil according to Roerer, W2 XIIIb, col. 1941

54] So also that repetition, confirmation, and explanation of the words of Christ which St. Paul makes 1 Cor. 10:16, where he writes as follows: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? is to be considered with all diligence and seriousness [accurately], as an especially clear testimony of the true, essential presence and distribution of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper. From this we clearly learn that not only the cup which Christ blessed at the first Supper, and not only the bread which Christ broke and distributed, but also that which we break and bless, is the communion of the body and blood of Christ, so that all who eat this bread and drink of this cup truly receive, and are partakers of, the true body and blood of Christ.

The cup which the minister blesses in the Service is the communion of the blood of Christ. As above in Epitome **9]**: *This blessing occurs through the recitation of the words of Christ*. When the minister has recited the words of institution over the cup, it is blessed and a communion of the blood of Christ.

Now we come to the passages on the consecration which have caused so much trouble and have been adduced by both sides in our time. The background to this part of the Solid Declaration is that there had been different views about the statement that Christ is not present without the use.

73] Since a misunderstanding and dissension among some teachers of the Augsburg Confession also has occurred concerning consecration and the common rule, that nothing is a sacrament without the appointed use [or divinely instituted act], we have made a fraternal and unanimous declaration to one another also concerning this matter to the following purport,

Then is rejected that the presence is brought about by any man, and it is asserted that it comes from “the word, institution, and ordination of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

74] namely, that not the word or work of any man produces the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, whether it be the merit or recitation of the minister, or the eating and drinking or faith of the communicants; but all this should be ascribed alone to the power of Almighty God and the word, institution, and ordination of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As I wrote above, this is not a rejection of the view that the presence is produced by the reciting of the words of institution in our Service, but the view that this reciting is a work of man is rejected. Compare paragraph **121]** *[T]he papistic consecration is justly rebuked and rejected, in which the power to produce a sacrament is ascribed to the speaking as the work of the priest.*

Also note that the cause of the presence is not ascribed to only the first words, the institution, but to *the word, institution, and ordination of our Lord Jesus Christ*. In “ordination” can also be included that the minister recites the words of institution. This becomes clear in the next paragraph:

75] For the true and almighty words of Jesus Christ which He spake at the first institution were efficacious not only at the first Supper, but they endure, are valid, operate, and are still efficacious [their force, power, and efficacy endure and avail even to the present], so that in all places where the Supper is celebrated according to the institution of Christ, and His words are used, the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed, and received, because of the power and efficacy of the words which Christ spake at the first

Supper. For where His institution is observed and His words are spoken over the bread and cup [wine], and the consecrated⁹ 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.

The words that the minister recites *are valid, operate, and are still efficacious*. Those who advocate that the presence does not necessarily begin as soon as the minister has recited the words of institution, but that a delay is possible, try to claim that they can unite their position with that sentence. They say that they too claim that the words are valid, operating and efficacious, but that the words do not take effect immediately. This, however, does not really fit into to the text, because it says that the bread and wine, over which the words of institution are spoken, are blessed. Compare Epitome 9]: *This blessing occurs through the recitation of the words of Christ*. And what is blessed is the body and blood of Christ according to 54]: *[T]hat which we break and bless, is the communion of the body and blood of Christ*.

The reciting of the words of institution in our Service is highlighted further in the next paragraph, which is an explanation of the preceding:

76] As Chrysostom says (in Serm. de Pass.) in his Sermon concerning the Passion: Christ Himself prepared this table and blesses it; for no man makes the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ, but Christ Himself who was crucified for us. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but by God's power and grace, by the word, where He speaks: "This is My body," the elements presented are consecrated {German text: **blessed**} in the Supper. And just as the declaration, Gen. 1:28: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," was spoken only once, but is ever efficacious in nature, so that it is fruitful and multiplies, so also this declaration ["This is My body; this is My blood"] was spoken once, but even to this day and to His advent it is efficacious, and works so that in the Supper of the Church His true body and blood are present.

Here it is again stated: By the word the minister speaks are the elements blessed. No power is ascribed to the minister, but only God's power and grace are working in the word. Note that Chrysostom synonymously uses to prepare the table, to bless the table/the elements and to make the bread and the wine the body and blood of Christ. Blessed elements are blessed, because they are the body and blood of Christ. If they are not the body and blood of Christ, they are not blessed.

The second part of the quotation from Chrysostom can be confusing. Reading only that, one gets the impression that the Real Presence depends only on the the words once said, the first words, and nothing else. Did we have only this quote, I would conclude that Chrysostom did not believe that the elements are transformed by the reciting of the words of institution. But now the preceding sentences are there, that the elements are transformed by the minister's words (the words where He [the priest as the mouth of Christ] speaks). The second part of the quote should therefore not be taken as contrary to the first, but the second part highlights the first words as crucial, the words of institution which Jesus said the first Maundy Thursday. For without Christ's institution, we would not have had any communion. This is also the content of the next paragraph:

77] Luther also [writes concerning this very subject in the same manner], Tom. VI, Jena, Fol. 99: This His command and institution have this power and effect that we administer and

⁹ The text should read **blessed**! German text: *das gesegnete Brot*, Latin text: *benedictus panis*. By writing "consecrated", the passage's connection to 1 Cor. 10:16 is obscured.

receive not mere bread and wine, but His body and blood, as His words declare: "This is My body," etc.; "This is My blood," etc., so that it is not our work or speaking, but the command and ordination of Christ that makes the bread the body, and the wine the blood, from the beginning of the first Supper even to the end of the world, and that through our service and office they are daily distributed.

And in the same way, if we would have had only **77]** I would have declared my opponents right and concluded that Luther says that the transformation is not caused (instrumental cause) by the reciting of the words of institution! But now, we have much more material from Luther, allowing us to put the parts together. Take for example the next paragraph:

78] Also, Tom. III, Jena, Fol. 446: Thus here also, even though I should pronounce over all bread the words: This is Christ's body, nothing, of course, would result therefrom; but when in the Supper we say, according to His institution and command: "This is My body," it is His body, not on account of our speaking or word uttered [because these words, when uttered, have this efficacy], but because of His command-that He has commanded us thus to speak and to do, and has united His command and act with our speaking.

These words have been much discussed. Luther wants to show that the recited words are not some kind of magic formula or hocus-pocus that work automatically, but the words are related to a given context. The Roman Catholics are abusing the recited words in such a way, partly through their private masses where they have no communicants. They have made the consecration to "assertive words" which the priest uses to produce the body of Christ, putting the wafers in a tabernacle, carrying the host in procession and so on. Luther is attacking the notion that the reciting of the words of institution *per se* is an act that the priest performs, an act which he has the power to perform because of his ordination and the Apostolic Succession.

Note again that Luther does not criticize the Roman doctrine that Christ's body and blood are present when the priest recites the words of institution, no, he assumes that:

[W]hen in the Supper we say, according to His institution and command: "This is My body," it is His body,

and then he attacks the Pope:

not on account of our speaking or word uttered [because these words, when uttered, have this efficacy], but because of His command-that He has commanded us thus to speak and to do,

because the power does not originate from the ordination of the priest, but from the institution and command of Christ. When you follow His command you get His blessing:

and has united His command and act with our speaking.

Yes, Christ has united His action (the preparing of the table, the blessing of the elements, the real presence) to our speaking. Not to our celebration of the Supper or the act of communion.

The Formula of Concord proceeds on the importance of the reciting of the words:

79] 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.

80] 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],

81] and [secondly] that the faith of the hearers concerning the nature and fruit of this Sacrament (concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ, concerning the forgiveness of sins, and all benefits which have been purchased by the death and shedding of the blood of Christ, and are bestowed upon us in Christ's testament) may be excited, strengthened, and confirmed by Christ's Word,

82] and [besides] {the words of institution are to be publicly spoken or sung} 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 [1 Cor. 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.

Once again is said that the elements are blessed through the speaking of the words. Cf **54]**: *[T]hat which we break and bless, is the communion of the body and blood of Christ.* It does not say *becomes the communion*, but *is the communion*.

Someone might object that if "the consecrationists" had been right, it would stand in 82] in the underlined sentence: *in order that the body and blood of Christ may therewith be present.* This sentence certainly is true and correct, but it opens to the Roman fallacy that after the consecration is performed you can do what you want with the elements in a pious way. Such a sentence is therefore impossible to write. That the eating not should be taken away, the authors of the Formula of Concord write as they do. And this is further emphasized in the following paragraphs:

83] However, this blessing, or the recitation of the words of institution of Christ alone does not make a sacrament if the entire action of the Supper, as it was instituted by Christ, is not observed (as when the consecrated bread is not distributed, received, and partaken of, but is enclosed, sacrificed, or carried about), but the command of Christ, This do (which embraces the entire action or administration in this Sacrament,

84] that in an assembly of Christians bread and wine are taken, consecrated, distributed, received, eaten, drunk, and the Lord's death is shown forth at the same time) must be observed unseparated and inviolate, as also St. Paul places before our eyes the entire action of the breaking of bread or of distribution and reception,

That the whole action must be kept together according to Christ's institution is explained further:

85] [Let us now come also to the second point, of which mention was made a little before.] To preserve this true Christian doctrine concerning the Holy Supper, and to avoid and abolish manifold idolatrous abuses and perversions of this testament, the following useful rule and standard has been derived from the words of institution: *Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum* ("Nothing has the nature of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ") or *extra actionem divinitus institutam* ("apart from the action divinely instituted"). That is: If the institution of Christ be not observed as He appointed it, there is no sacrament. This is by no means to be rejected, but can and should be urged and maintained with profit in the Church of God.

The presence is limited to the use, that is the consecration, distribution and reception:

86] And the use or action here does not mean chiefly faith, neither the oral participation only, but the entire external, visible action of the Lord's Supper instituted by Christ, [to this indeed is required] the consecration, or words of institution, the distribution and reception,

or oral partaking [manducation] of the consecrated bread and wine, [likewise the partaking] of the body and blood of Christ.

87] And apart from this use, when in the papistic mass the bread is not distributed, but offered up or enclosed, borne about, and exhibited for adoration, it is to be regarded as no sacrament; just as the water of baptism, when used to consecrate bells or to cure leprosy, or otherwise exhibited for worship, is no sacrament or baptism. For against such papistic abuses this rule has been set up at the beginning [of the reviving Gospel], and has been explained by Dr. Luther himself, Tom. IV, Jena.

An objection

Finally, an objection that someone might raise. In the Solid Declaration VII is also the following, according to the edition of Kolb/Wengert:

14] They confess, in the words of Irenaeus, that there are two things in this Sacrament, one heavenly and one earthly. Therefore, they hold and teach that with the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, distributed, and received. Although they do not believe in a transubstantiation (that is, in an essential transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood) and they do not hold that the body and blood of Christ are *localiter*, that is, spatially enclosed in the bread or are permanently united in some other way apart from reception in the sacrament, they nevertheless admit that through the sacramental union the bread is the body of Christ, etc.

Does not the text here say, that there is no presence apart from the reception? Yes, it does. But as this paper shows, the Book of Concord does not defend receptionism. This choice of words was not the best. In the Latin translation of the Book of Concord, which was completed in 1583, three years after the adoption of the German original, it was changed to *the use of the Sacrament*, (as it also is translated in the Triglot) in accordance with **85] - 87]** above.

That the authors don't want to attack the "consecrationists" is clearly shown in the next sentence, as they indicate against what they are defining themselves.

15] For apart from the use, when the bread is laid aside and preserved in the sacramental vessel [the pyx], or is carried about in the procession and exhibited, as is done in popery, they do not hold that the body of Christ is present.

A PASSAGE FROM LUTHER

Now I've examined the entire testimony of consecration in the Book of Concord. Finally, I would insert a Luther Quote, because the Solid Declaration explicitly invokes Luther's writings:

91] ... inasmuch as since his {Luther's} death nothing new has been advanced by the factious spirits, we would for the sake of brevity have the Christian reader directed to them and have referred to them.

The quotation is from *The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ – Against the Fanatics*¹⁰:

¹⁰ Martin Luther, *The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ – Against the Fanatics*, *Luther's Works* 36 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 341-42

Now see, as I have said, how much the poor bodily voice is able to do. First of all it brings the whole Christ to the ears; then it brings him into the hearts of all who listen and believe. Should it then be so amazing that he enters into the bread and wine? Is not the heart much more tenuous and elusive than bread? You will probably not attempt to fathom how this comes about. Just as little as you are able to say how it comes about that Christ is in so many thousands of hearts and dwells in them – Christ as he died and rose again – and yet no man knows how he gets in, so also here in the sacrament, it is incomprehensible how this comes about. But this I do know, that the word is there: “Take, eat, this is my body, given for you, this do in remembrance of me.” When we say these words over the bread, then he is truly present, and yet it is a mere word and voice that one hears. Just as he enters the heart without breaking a hole in it, but is comprehended only through the Word and hearing, so also he enters into the bread without needing to make any hole in it.

Take yet another example. How did his mother Mary become pregnant? Although it is a great miracle when a woman is made pregnant by a man, yet God reserved for him the privilege of being born of the Virgin. Now how does the Mother come to this? She has no husband [Luke 1:34] and her womb is entirely enclosed. Yet she conceives in her womb a real, natural child with flesh and blood. Is there not more of a miracle here than in the bread and wine? Where does it come from? The angel Gabriel brings the word: “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, etc.” [Luke 1:31]. With these words Christ comes not only into her heart, but also into her womb, as she hears, grasps, and believes it. No one can say otherwise, than that the power comes through the Word. As one cannot deny the fact that she thus becomes pregnant through the Word, and no one knows how it comes about, so it is in the sacrament also. For as soon as Christ says: “This is my body,” his body is present through the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit. If the Word is not there, it is mere bread; but as soon as the words are added they bring with them that of which they speak.