

THE SATIS EST IN THE PROPOSED ELCA ECUMENICAL STATEMENT .
(See "Revised Text," pp. 7-8)

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Reactions to the treatment of the satis est in the revised text.

1. First a principled objection. It is inappropriate for one office or committee of the Church (in this case the Office of Ecumenism and its standing committee) to impose a reinterpretation of the church's confession on the Church which will determine its policy for years to come.
2. It is deceptive to say the least to propose alteration in the text of the original draft only in the introductory section but not in the proposed policy statement upon which the assembly is to vote.
3. It is superficial to think that the matter of the satis est can be dismissed merely by appeal to a difference in context between 1530 and today, especially without substantial interpretation of both context and content.
4. It is no doubt true that the context today is differently from that when CA VII was first proposed in 1530. but the major change came already in 1530 when the Imperial party rejected the CA and the Lutherans nevertheless adopted it as their confession. The Lutherans, that is, continued to hold to the satis est as enough for unity, their Roman opponents insisting on something more. Lutherans continue so to hold today and should be ready to enter into closer fellowship with those who agree with the satis est. The Office for Ecumenical Affairs appears to be ignorant of the fact that the satis est is itself a very broad and open ecumenical principle and that to make concessions to further conditions is to restrict ecumenical possibility. To admit or concede the necessity for further clerical orders or ceremonies is to narrow and reduce possibilities, not to broaden them. To put the matter bluntly vis a vis Roman Catholicism and other episcopal communions: The satis est means Lutherans stand ready for fellowship. Rome refused it once. It is up to them to revise their stance now. This is as far as we go because to go farther is itself an abuse of the gospel.
5. It is historically inaccurate even for 1530 to assume so easily that the satis est was proposed simply to preserve an existing unity. The evidence is rather that the Lutheran electoral advisors at Augsburg proposed it to provide justification for the visitation program and the changes proposed already under way in Saxony. The Roman party wanted such changes to take place only with papal approval and therefore raised the charge of schism. The satis est was therefore already at the outset a defence against the charge of schism and a justification for the electoral right to carry out the visitation program and make changes without papal interference. By it the Lutherans said that they were not about to go back on their reforms to gain papal sanction. In other words, the Lutherans therewith rejected the idea that the reforms already in place were responsible for rupturing the true unity of the church. The satis est therefore defines the unity of the church in the face of the charge of schism. If one wants to talk about historical context one cannot speak in banal generalities which are at best only half-truths. It is not appropriate to proceed in the cavalier fashion evidenced by the proposed statement on ecumenism. We do not need sand thrown in our faces.
6. In any case these matters are of such magnitude and consequence for the future life of the Church that they must be carefully discussed and considered before policies are determined and moves made which simply bowdlerize everything.

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