

January 21, 1970

The Reverend Robert L. Wise
Lakeside United Methodist Church
2925 N. W. 66 Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73116

Dear Bob:

I appreciate very much your good letter and I am sorry I am so late in getting a response to you. I hope you will understand my situation. I have been involved in the transition of moving from Enid to Houston where I will be on leave until August.

I found your question most interesting on whether a local church might utilize a historic catechism as a basis for a kind of commonly accepted statement of faith. In fact, I read your letter to a class in Methodist Polity at the seminary and we spent about an hour discussing what might be done in this regard. It was their consensus, and I shared it, that a historic catechism would be less useful than another procedure which they wanted me to communicate to you.

How would it be to have a small select task force work toward the of an original statement of faith which comes out of the experiencing life of the congregation. To be sure, this statement could and should be developed in dialogue with the historic creeds and symbols; but it would seem to me to be most creative to allow it to take on contemporary language and thought forms. Among the historic statements you would wish to utilize as you worked on your own statement, I would suggest: The Methodist 25 Articles; Wesley's Standard Sermons; The Anglican 39 Articles; the Apostles Creed; the Westminster Confession; the New Presbyterian Confession; the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ; and perhaps some of the classical statements (like Augsburg, the Gallican Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, etc.). If you had some more time after that you might also take a look at the new Roman Catholic Dutch Catechism which has created so much excitement. You might assign a couple of these statements to each person in the task force, have them study them carefully and then come together for discussion, putting the emphasis upon how your own local church perceives the Christian faith in the light of these historical statements.

Again, forgive my lateness of reply. I wish you well in this experiment and if you should get down to Houston during the spring or summer, please give me a call.

Yours cordially,

Thomas C. Oden

TCO/ra

