

## HARMONY OF THE ARMINIAN FAITH

### ABSTRACT

*The Arminian Confession of 1621*, written by Simon Episcopius, is in full harmony with *The Twenty-Five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church*, which is an abridgment of the *Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* created by John Wesley. By giving the first ever comparative analysis between these two Arminian creeds it will be demonstrated that the two confessions are in theological harmony with one another. *The Arminian Confession of 1621* is the much-needed doctrinal supplement to the brief *Twenty-Five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church*, and encapsulates in creedal form, the distinctive Arminian theology espoused by John Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* and his *Standard Sermons*. The future Global Methodist Church should adopt *The Arminian Confession of 1621* as a new doctrinal standard for itself.

## Chapter One: Introduction

Methodism is dead, but it is about to be resurrected. Out of the ashes of America’s third largest church denomination, the United Methodist Church (UMC), a new more traditional and evangelical Methodism will arise, the Global Methodist Church (GMC). Before the GMC officially formed on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2022, the new Methodist denomination had already released a *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.<sup>1</sup> This transitional prototype of a “Book of Discipline” (i.e., the official “rule book” of Methodism) is very similar, and at times even completely identical to, the earlier *Draft Book of Doctrines and Discipline for a New Methodist Church* created by the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA).<sup>2</sup> These two documents will govern the future GMC until such a time that a new *official* “Book of Doctrines and Discipline” is made.<sup>3</sup>

Both transitional prototypes state verbatim: “Recognizing the complementary streams of the Methodist and the Evangelical United Brethren faith communities, both the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith define the doctrinal boundaries of our church, until such time as a combined Articles of Faith may be approved by the church.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, [https://peopleneedjesus.files.wordpress.com/2021/02/82948-englishtransitionalbookofdoctrinesanddiscipline\\_.pdf](https://peopleneedjesus.files.wordpress.com/2021/02/82948-englishtransitionalbookofdoctrinesanddiscipline_.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Lambrecht, *Comparing The United Methodist Church with the Global Methodist Church (in Formation)*, <https://wesleyancovenant.org/2021/09/07/comparing-the-united-methodist-church-with-the-global-methodist-church-in-formation/>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Wesleyan Covenant Association, “Doctrines and Doctrinal Standards 105 Constitutive Standards,” *Draft Book of Doctrines and Discipline for a New Methodist Church*, <https://wesleyancovenant.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Doctrines-and-Discipline-Version-1.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Global Methodist Church, “Part One Doctrine 106 Constitutive Standards,” *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church*, <https://globalmethodist.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Transitional-Discipline.20211010-1.pdf>.

However, no details have been given on the meaning of the phrase, “until such time as a *combined* Articles of Faith may be approved by the church” (emphasis added). What does this combination entail? Is this merely a stitched together concoction, copying and pasting statements from the *Twenty-Five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church* and the *Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church* (EUB) together? Or will this new “Articles of Faith” be an entirely different document created out of nothing, but incorporating ideas from, and the theology of, the two former creeds of the UMC? Or will the GMC act more liberally and create a new creed that is more independent from its theological heritage? What will be the theology of this new *evangelical* Methodism?

I. The Problem: The Arminian movement lacks a definite creed.

There is a crisis in Methodism and in Arminianism in general. The Arminian branch of Christianity lacks a definitive creed or confession of faith that clearly defines the content of Arminian theology. Where is the Arminian equivalent of the *Augsburg Confession of Faith* or the *Westminster Confession of Faith*? This flaw is even seen by those who are not Methodist, thus the Rev. E. P. Humphrey in a sermon delivered on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1852, before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church stated:

It is to be remembered, also, that the Arminian scheme has yet to be reduced to a systematic and logical form. Where are its written formularies, pushing boldly forth to their final and inevitable conclusions; all its doctrines touching predestination, free will, and efficacious grace? We have its brief and informal creed in some five and twenty articles; but where is its complete confession of faith in thirty or forty chapters? Nay, where is even its shorter catechism? Where is its whole body of divinity, from under the hand of a master, sharply defining terms, accurately stating its belief, laying down the conclusions logically involved therein, trying these conclusions, no less than their premises, by the Word of God, refuting objections, and adjusting all its parts into a consistent and systematic whole? ...It is clear that an exposition of this theology which shall satisfy the logical consciousness is indispensable to its perpetuity, otherwise it cannot take possession of educated and disciplined minds educated by the Word and Spirit of

God and disciplined to exact analysis and argument; otherwise again, although it may exert a temporary influence, it will retire before advancing spiritual and intellectual culture. It is also clear, that the first century of its existence has not produced that exposition. Another century may clearly demonstrate that such a production is clearly impossible, by showing that the logical and Scriptural element is not in the Arminian system...<sup>6</sup>

The problem with the *25 Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church* is that the creed is Arminian simply because John Wesley stripped the Calvinism out of the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England* when he abridged the document. Thus the *25 Articles* spell out a Wesleyan-Arminian theology simply because the *25 Articles* do not affirm Calvinism! Contrast this to the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Formula of Concord*, the *Westminster Confession*, the *Belgic Confession*, and the *Cannons of Dort*, all of which, *positively assert and define the contents* of Lutheranism and Calvinism respectively.<sup>7</sup> The Methodist theologian, Thomas C. Oden, acknowledged the problem:

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<sup>6</sup> Allan A. Jameson, *Notes on the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion as Received and Taught by Methodists in the United States* (Cincinnati, OH: Applegate & Co, 1853), ix-x.

<sup>7</sup> For more on the history of the Lutheran and Reformed confessions and the confessions themselves, see Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985), 3 vols. The best place to find the doctrinal standards of Lutheranism together in a single volume, see *Concordia The Lutheran Confessions- A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006). For studies, defenses, and explanations of the Lutheran creeds, see Philip Melancthon's *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*; Martin Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works Volume 10 Apology or Vindication of the Christian Book of Concord in Which the True, Christian Doctrine, Drawn up in the Book of Concord is Defended with Good Reasons from God's Holy Scriptures, Whereas the Sophistry and Calumnies Which Have Been Dispersed in Print By Turbulent People Against this Christian Book Are Refuted*, (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2018). For more modern studies, see: Robert D. Preus, *A Contemporary look at the Formula of Concord* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1978); John P. Meyer, *Studies in the Augsburg Confession* (Waukesha, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1995); Arnold J. Koelpin, *No Other Gospel Essays in Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Formula of Concord 1580-1980* (Waukesha, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1980).

For studies on the Reformed creeds, see: Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/ursinus/Commentary%20on%20the%20Heidelberg%20Catechism%20Zacharias%20Ursinus.pdf>; Theodore VanderGroe, *The Christian's Only Comfort in Life and Death: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016), 2 vols; David J. Engelsma, *The Belgic Confession: A Commentary* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2018), 2 vols; Thomas Scott, *The Articles of the Synod of Dort* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841); A. A. Hodge, *The Westminster Confession: A Commentary* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2004); Johannes Geerhardus Vos, *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002); and R. C. Sproul, *Truths We Confess: A Systematic Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019).

If one possessed only the *Articles of Religion* without the *Minutes, Sermons, or Notes*, one would have general Anglican teaching without specific Methodist teaching. The *Articles of Religion* affirm what is commonly held in Protestant religion...these *Articles* are not the best place to discover doctrine that is distinctively Methodist...<sup>8</sup>

This lack of theological distinctiveness was recognized early on. Thus, in the 1806 Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in England, Joseph Benson, Adam Clarke, and Thomas Coke were appointed “to draw up a Digest or Form, expressive of Methodist doctrine.”<sup>9</sup> Benson and Clarke created thirty-eight articles, and Coke, working separately because he was away in the United States, produced twenty-nine articles. Both works were failures.<sup>10</sup>

Regrettably, Mr. Wesley never gave in writing an official explanation on why he abridged the *39 Articles* the way that he did. To continue the compounding of our Methodist mistakes, when the *25 Articles* were sent over by Mr. Wesley to the Methodists in America,<sup>11</sup> the abridged creed replaced the *Larger Minutes*.<sup>12</sup> The *Larger Minutes*, being the minutes of conversations between John Wesley and other Methodist ministers, does lay out in question-and-answer format, the distinctives of Methodism. But these theological distinctives were lost when Wesley himself replaced the *Larger Minutes* with the *25 Articles*! However, minutes of a

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas C. Oden, *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1988), 26.

<sup>9</sup> Horace Mellard Du Bose, *The Symbol of Methodism Being an Inquiry into the History, Authority, Inclusions, and Uses of the Twenty-Five Articles* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1907), 21.

<sup>10</sup> Bose explains that they were poorly written, lacked certain key doctrinal points, and that confessions of faith are created in times of controversy, something Methodism was not going through at that time. *Ibid.*, 21–23.

<sup>11</sup> Note: Originally, when Wesley abridged the *39 Articles*, he reduced the Anglican creed to 24 Articles. However, when the American Methodist adopted the 24 Articles, they added another article, numbered 23<sup>rd</sup>, “Of the Rulers of the United States.” Thus, bringing the number of Articles to 25, from which they have been ever since. See, Thomas Neeley, *Doctrinal Standards of Methodism including the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), 173–185.

<sup>12</sup> John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley Complete and Unabridged* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), VIII:275–338.

conversation is not the best way to lay out propositional statements positively stating, defining, and affirming what a particular church denomination believes in. In Mr. Wesley's defense, it was only logical to replace the *Minutes* with a creed.

The lack of theological distinctiveness in our creed was also demonstrated by Bishop John J. Tigert, who passionately argued for the inclusion of the *Six Tracts*<sup>13</sup> in our doctrinal standards and even published them himself, in two volumes in 1902.<sup>14</sup> However, the *Six Tracts* have never been published in the *Book of Discipline* since 1808, have never been republished since Bishop Tigert's 1902 republication and have never been a part of our doctrinal standards and therefore have *no authoritative* doctrinal standing.<sup>15</sup> Couple this with the fact that the *Six Tracts* do not systematically define the Methodist faith, rather they just address five random topics from a Wesleyan-Arminian perspective.

Traditionally, the solution to our lack of theological distinctives in our Methodist creed was resolved by a collection of fifty-two sermons by Mr. Wesley, commonly called the *Standard Sermons*. The *Standard Sermons*, along with John Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament*, are the other two parts of our three-fold system of doctrinal standards. Wesley inherited this triad of doctrinal standards from his Anglican heritage which likewise had a trio of doctrinal standards: the creedal, the homiletical (sermons) and the exegetical. Thus, for Methodism the trio of

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<sup>13</sup> The *Six Tracts* are a set of six theological tracts, some written by, and others abridged by, John Wesley that appeared at various times in the official *Book of Discipline* from 1788–1808. These *Six Tracts* do encapsulate Wesleyan distinctives. The *Six Tracts* are one tract on Predestination, one on Perseverance of the Saints, two tracts on Christian Perfection, one on Baptism and one tract against Antinomianism.

<sup>14</sup> John J. Tigert, *The Doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America* (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings and Pye, 1902), 2 vols.

<sup>15</sup> For a very brief but sufficient refutation against Bishop Tigert's assertion that the Six Tracts were once a part of the official doctrinal standards of Methodism; see Oden, *Doctrinal Standards*, 49–50.

doctrinal standards became the *25 Articles* (the creedal), the *Standard Sermons* (the homiletical) and the *Notes on the New Testament* (the exegetical).

While Mr. Wesley's sermons and New Testament notes do contain our theological distinctives, history has proven that one man's sermons and exceedingly brief notes to be an insufficient and ineffective way of maintaining doctrinal integrity. Sermons, even sermons that appear to be very academically orientated by watered down 21<sup>st</sup> century standards, cannot function as doctrinal standards. It is impossible to impose on the minds of every clergyman every sentence, paragraph -or even every idea- in one man's sermons. Sermons by their very nature, cannot compete academically with theological treatises and massive Bible commentaries. Thus, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when German Liberalism made its way to America, the *Standard Sermons* and *Notes* could not compete with the more academically orientated works of Liberal Germany. Not surprisingly, Methodism was carried away by the new scholarship and abandoned its own theological heritage.

Thus, the words cited above by the Rev. Humphrey at the 1852 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in which he sneered at the lack of a well-defined confession of faith among the Arminians in general and the Methodist in particular, proved to be prophetic:

It is clear that an exposition of this theology which shall satisfy the logical consciousness is indispensable to its perpetuity, otherwise it cannot take possession of educated and disciplined minds educated by the Word and Spirit of God and disciplined to exact analysis and argument; otherwise again, although it may exert a temporary influence, it will retire before advancing spiritual and intellectual culture.<sup>16</sup>

History proved his words true. The hearts and minds of the Methodist clergy were swept away by the newer scholarship of Theological Liberalism. To add the final death nail to Wesley's

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<sup>16</sup> Jameson, *Notes on the Twenty-Five Articles* ix-x.

*Standard Sermons and Notes on the New Testament*, consider the following: only the 25 Articles were considered the “basis for testing correct doctrine”<sup>17</sup> and “the charge of doctrinal irregularity against preachers or members was for disseminating doctrines contrary to our Articles of Religion”<sup>18</sup> and not the sermons and notes. Thus, when George W. Wilson demonstrated in his book, *Methodist Theology vs. Methodist Theologians, A Review of Several Methodist Writers*,<sup>19</sup> that the Boston Personalist and other theological liberals within Methodism were disseminating doctrines contrary to Wesley’s *Standard Sermons and Notes*, no action was taken.

Even in the conservative leaning WCA and GMC, both of which are rightly restoring our traditional trio of doctrinal standards, do not follow Wesley in all details found in his sermons and notes.<sup>20</sup> I myself do not adhere to the postmillennial eschatology espoused in Wesley’s *Notes*. Not surprisingly, the GMC has correctly made a distinction between our creeds, “The Constitutive Standards,” and Wesley’s sermons and notes, the “Normative Standards.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2016), 103. Henceforth, all citations of the official Methodist Book of Discipline will be referred to as BOD.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> George W. Wilson, *Methodist Theology vs. Methodist Theologians, A Review of Several Methodist Writers* (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings and Pye, 1904).

<sup>20</sup> The most perfect example of this is the WCA and GMC stringent affirmation of woman ordination. When the WCA was formed and when I joined the organization, the WCA made it clear that any changes to woman ordination was off the table. Thus, while they pride themselves in being open about future possibilities of doctrinal and ecclesiastical changes in creating a new Methodism, they inexplicably made this one issue as some sort of untouchable truth that cannot be reconsidered. Thus, they contradict the very doctrinal standards that they themselves are trying to resuscitate, Mr. Wesley’s *Notes on the New Testament*. On his note on 1 Cor 14:34, Mr. Wesley states that it is “to the man whose proper office it is to lead and to instruct the congregation.” John Wesley, *Notes on the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986), II: page unknown. Note: the page numbers, for unknown reasons, are not given in the edition of this book that I own. For citation purposes, I will list the Biblical passage Wesley cites.

<sup>21</sup> See *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church Part One Doctrine*.



In conclusion, the *Standard Sermons*, *Notes on the New Testament*, the *Larger Minutes*, the *Six Tracts*, Clarke and Benson's *Articles* and Coke's *Articles* cannot properly function as our confession of faith. Right now, the only solution is to abolish the *25 Articles* and create a new creed. I submit to the candid reader a better solution. Instead of creating a new creed by abolishing the *25 Articles*,<sup>22</sup> the GMC should take a larger and more profound step; a step that will simultaneously restore the traditional theology of early Methodism and correct a wrong that has plagued one of the largest branches of Christian theology for 400 years: the Global Methodist Church should adopt as its own creed, the *Arminian Confession of 1621* written and ratified by the Remonstrants, the early Dutch Arminians.<sup>23</sup> Let it be resolved then, my thesis is this: *The Arminian Confession of 1621, written by Simon Episcopius, is in full harmony with The Twenty-Five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church, which is an abridgment of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England created by John Wesley.*

## II. The Solution: Rediscovering a lost Arminian Confession of Faith.

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<sup>22</sup> Make no mistake, any stitched together creation combining the EUB's *Confession* and the *25 Articles*, even if the combination at times draws verbatim from the two creeds, will nevertheless be a revocation of the *25 Articles*. The *25 Articles* have been the creed of Methodism since its very founding and have gone through little to almost no change since their creation. Unlike Wesley's *Standard Sermons* and *Notes on the New Testament* which nearly faded out of existence at end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and almost went extinct in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *25 Articles* have always appeared in the official Book of Discipline and have always been the official (and enforceable) creed of Methodism- even when this was merely given lip service in our darkest of years. Can the Presbyterians abolish the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and still be Presbyterian? Can the Lutherans abolish the *Augsburg Confession of Faith* and still be Lutheran? If the Global Methodist abolish the *25 Articles*- and everyone knows the *25 Articles* will be even more meaningless in the liberal remnants of the UMC- then the Methodism founded by John Wesley will finally become extinct. If the GMC repeals and replaces its *Articles*, then it will set a dangerous precedent in Methodism and will destroy the conservative forward momentum that is wanting to relearn what traditional Methodism means.

<sup>23</sup> Mark A. Ellis, *The Arminian Confession of 1621* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2005). This is the only modern English translation of Episcopius' *Confession*. Episcopius' colleague and fellow Remonstrant leader, Johannes Wtenbogaert, published a Dutch translation in 1622. The first English translation was given in 1676; Simon Episcopius, *The Confession or Declaration of the Ministers or Pastors which in the United Provinces are Called Remonstrants, Concerning the Chief Points of Christian Religion* (London, England: Francis Smith, 1676). This longer title is the original title of Episcopius' work and not the shorter title given by Dr. Ellis. For the purposes of the Global Methodist Church, the Confession should be renamed as "The Arminian Confession of Faith."

This whole time, for four hundred years, there has been an Arminian Confession of Faith that is on par with the *Augsburg Confession of Faith* and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. This Arminian Confession of Faith is the *Arminian Confession of 1621* which was written by Simon Episcopius who was the leader of the Arminian party condemned at the Synod of Dort.

The *Confession* is brilliantly written, Orthodox, and captures Methodism's emphasis on practical divinity and holiness. It espouses the same evangelical Arminian soteriology of Wesley's *Standard Sermons* and *Notes* and is in full harmony with the *25 Articles*. By harmony, I mean that every article and statement in the two creeds are reconcilable with one another. They can be standardized as doctrinal standards in a church denomination without plunging the denomination that adopts them into internal contradiction. Creeds and confessions are not meant to define every minute detail that a person must believe in regarding the Bible. Rather, they draw a circle or fence by which one must operate within. Together, the *Confession* and *Articles* can build a sound and coherent perimeter.

The *Confession* is written in twenty-five chapters whereas the *Articles* is merely twenty-five articles, so naturally, the *Confession* addresses more than the *Articles*. But this should not be seen as a contradiction. When one addresses a topic, another does not, then the lacking creed is being *supplemented not contradicted*. Together they make a coherent whole.

However, due to the limitations of this thesis paper, I am forced to curtail major portions from my original intentions.<sup>24</sup>

1. *I must bypass important historical analyses:*
  - a. I will not be able to explore the Reformed background that the Remonstrants grew out of. Thus, no examination of the *Heidelberg Catechism* or *Belgic Confession* will be given.

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<sup>24</sup> However, I fully intend on expanding this thesis paper into a full-length book that is much longer and much more in depth.

- b. I will not be able to explore the Anglican background that the Methodist grew out of. Thus, no examination of the *39 Articles of Religion of the Church of England* will be given. Nor will I be able to explore the relationship between the Episcopal Arminianism of England with that of the Dutch Arminianism of Holland. Thus, I will not explore William Laud's reading of Remonstrant literature, Anglican defenses of the Remonstrants, the strong praise given to the *Arminian Confession of 1621* by Jeremy Taylor, or the great influence of Hugo Grotius on John Wesley's father, the Rev. Samuel Wesley.
  - c. While I have already mentioned some of the background, development, and problems of Methodism's trio of doctrinal standards, much more can be said about it but for the purposes of this thesis paper I must move on.
- 2. *I must bypass Methodist views of Remonstrant theology.* I will not be able to spend the amount of time that I originally intended but suffice it for this thesis paper to say, upon reading 19<sup>th</sup> century Methodist theologians' writings, a clear pattern emerged: Methodist think very highly of early Remonstrant theology, but they regret that the Remonstrants fell into heresy later on, and at a very quick rate.
- 3. *I must bypass discussions on the importance of creeds and confessions.* My thesis paper will merely assume that a church denomination, such as the GMC, should have a confession of faith to begin with. I will not explore the relationship between confessionalism and *Sola Scriptura*, nor will I explore the profound consequences that fell upon Arminianism of all stripes precisely because the Arminians lacked a confession of faith that was owned by a church denomination or movement. It is this lack of a clearly acknowledged creed that led to a greater diversity and stronger sense of doctrinal confusion among the Arminians; an internal confusion not found among the Lutherans and Calvinists precisely because they did have a plainly acknowledged creed that clearly defined the contents of their faith. By not embracing and maintaining their own confession, the Remonstrants fell into heresy and guaranteed that the *Arminian Confession of 1621* would be forgotten in the pages of history, leading Arminianism to be ill defined and never codified like Lutheranism or Calvinism. This was further compounded by Methodism's failure to create their own creed when they embraced the Arminian faith and separated from the Church of England. Both of these mistakes, the anti-confessionalism of the Remonstrants and the lack of a clearly defined creed among the Methodists, directly led to the collapse of Evangelical Arminian theology and a profound confusion on what Arminianism is.
- 4. *I must bypass contrasts between the Confession and Articles with that of the later Remonstrant and Methodist theologies.* Thus, while I am examining the creeds doctrine by doctrine, I will not include later theological deviations. Originally, I intended on doing this as a vindication of the *Confession and Articles* by demonstrating that the fall of the Remonstrants and the Methodists was not due to any internal errors in their creeds or early theology.
- 5. *I must bypass discussions on the Evangelical United Brethren Church all together.* Thus, I will ignore the EUB's *Confession of Faith*, which is a part of the doctrinal standards of the United Methodist Church and the future Global Methodist Church. This is unfortunate since the EUB sets up two important precedents:

- a. When the Methodist adopted the EUB's *Confession of Faith* in the 1968 merger, creating the UMC, they set the precedent that it was okay to adopt another church denomination's *Confession*, so long as it was in theological harmony with our own confession. Thus, the EUB's *Confession* sets the precedent that it is okay for Methodist to adopt another tradition's confession (such as the *Arminian Confession of 1621*) as their own, provided that it is in harmony with our doctrinal standards.
- b. The history of the EUB, and how it has a precedent of constantly abolishing its old creed and replacing it by creating a new creed, every time it merges with another church or undergoes immense changes, sets the precedent of abolishing its own *Confession of Faith* and replacing it with a different confession. Now that the UMC is undergoing a massive schism and creating a new Methodism, the precedent set by the EUB itself, allows for the complete repeal of the EUB's *Confession*; thus, the GMC should replace the EUB's *Confession* with the *Arminian Confession of 1621*. Contrast this to the highly conservative disposition of Methodism that has constantly resisted, *and rightly so*, any changes to its doctrinal standards. By preserving the original trio of doctrinal standards, Methodism's wise and conservative disposition is honored on the one hand, while on the other hand, by replacing the EUB *Confession* with the *Arminian Confession*, those who have longed for a standardization of our Arminian theology will finally have their wishes fulfilled. Thus, both sides will have their wishes fulfilled without either side having to make any compromises!

Since the *Arminian Confession of 1621* is much larger than the brief *25 Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church* and because they address doctrinal points in a different order, I will categorize the articles from the two creeds by *doctrinal topic* and will examine them in the doctrinal order common in systematic theologies.

In chapter two, I will draw on all relevant material in the two statements of faith on the doctrines of Bibliology and Theology Proper. In chapter three I will examine the doctrines of Christology and Pneumatology in the *Confession* and *Articles*. Chapter four will examine the topic of Anthropology and chapter five will address Soteriology. The sixth chapter will investigate the Ecclesiology and Eschatology of the *Confession* and *Articles*. The last chapter, chapter seven, will contain my concluding remarks.