**Confessional Documents**

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is made up of two books: a Book of Order and the Book of Confessions.

What is the Book of Confessions?

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God’s grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in the Book of Confessions. In these statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do. These statements identify the church as a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions. They guide the church in its study and interpretation of the Scriptures; they summarize the essence of Reformed Christian tradition; they direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines; they equip the church for its work of proclamation. They serve to strengthen personal commitment and the life and witness of the community of believers.”

In other words, it’s not about the prayer of confession – an admission of guilt

When are new confessional documents needed?

“Throughout the history of the Christian movement churches have written confessions of faith because they feel that they *must* do so, not just because they think it would be a good idea. Confessions of faith may result from a sense of urgent need to correct some distortion of the truth and claim of the gospel that threatens the integrity of the church’s faith and life from within the church. They may result from some political or cultural movement outside the church that openly attacks or subtly seeks to compromise its commitment to the gospel. Sometimes the urgency to confess comes from the church’s conviction that it has a great new insight into the promises and demands of the gospel that is desperately needed by both church and world.”

Our Book of Confessions contains 11 confessional statements/documents including:

* Apostles Creed
* Nicene Creed
* Westminster Confession

**Theological Declaration of Barmen (1934)**

Adopted by Christians in Nazi Germany who opposed the German Christian movement. In the view of the delegates to the Synod that met in the city of Barmen, the German Christians had corrupted church government by making it subservient to the state and had introduced Nazi ideology into the German Protestant churches that contradicted the Christian gospel. – *Wikipedia*

Six major themes of Barmen:

1. The source of revelation is *only* the Word of God — Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus Christ is the only Lord of all aspects of personal life. There should be no other authority.
3. The message and order of the church should not be influenced by the current political convictions.
4. The church should not be ruled by a leader. There is no hierarchy in the church.
5. The state should not fulfill the task of the church and vice versa. State and church are both limited to their own business.
6. Therefore, the Barmen Declaration rejects (i) the subordination of the Church to the state and (ii) the subordination of the Word and Spirit to the Church.

So what about Romans, Chapter 13?