

Study of Concordia - The Lutheran Confession of Faith

The Unaltered Augsburg Confession

Week 6 - Article V



Review/Summary:

The Augsburg Confession is the specific Lutheran confession of the Christian faith which we believe, teach, and confess in our churches according to God's Holy Word. It was written by Philip Melanchthon in consultation with Luther and others and presented to the Diet of Augsburg on June 25, 1530 AD. The aim of the confession was to present as fully as possible the doctrinal articles of the Orthodox Christian faith, as taught in Scripture and the "Church catholic" (universal). Rome had charged Luther and "the Lutherans" of teaching heresy. The Lutherans presented their case before Emperor Charles V, and the confession was accepted making it "legal" to be Lutheran Christians because our teachings did not dissent from the Orthodox Christian teaching of Scripture.

It consists of 28 articles of which the first 21 deal with the "chief articles of faith"— most following the model of Thesis-Antithesis. That is each states the belief we hold and then states the false beliefs which are condemned (as heresy). The last 7 articles are the abuses which had been corrected by the Lutherans, showing why Rome was actually guilty of heresy and justifying the changes made by the Lutherans with regard to customs and ceremonies.

Article I: Of God— This article proceeds from the creeds (especially the Nicene council) and teaches that there are three persons in the God-head who are of the same essence and power and who are co-eternal.

Article II: Of Original Sin— All men are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence (desire for sin); and this disease, or vice of origin is truly sin.

Article III: Of The Son of God— Christ Jesus, true God and true man, suffered and died to reconcile the Father unto us and be a sacrifice for all sins of men. He sends the Holy Spirit.

Article IV: Of Justification— The righteousness of Christ is imputed to those who believe.

Article V The Ministry

¹ So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. ² Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given [John 20:22]. He works faith, when and where it pleases God [John 3:8], in those who hear the good news that God justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. ³ This happens not through our own merits, but for Christ's sake.

⁴ Our churches condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that through their own preparations and works the Holy Spirit comes to them without the external Word.

Note: How can what Christ did for us two thousand years ago—through His life, death, and resurrection—become effective in our lives today? During the Reformation, as also today, some imagined they would experience the Holy Spirit through their own reflections, by enjoying nature, or by ecstatic religious experiences. The comforting truth is that the Holy Spirit works through objective, external, sure, and certain means of grace, through which we receive justification by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone. While the most direct concern of Article V is to confess the Holy Spirit's work through the means of grace, there is also in view, indirectly, the Office of the Ministry, which the German version of the Augsburg Confession calls "the Preaching Office" [*das Predigtamt*]. The Preaching Office is not instituted by man, but is established by God Himself. Article XIV discusses the necessity of the Church call. (See also SA III VII and X; Treatise.)

McCain, P. T. (Ed.). (2005). *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (p. 33). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Outline of the Article:

V. The Office of the Holy Ministry

- A. To obtain faith, God instituted the office of the ministry. That is, he provided means through which the Gospel and sacraments are administered. (1)
- B. Through these means, he gives the Holy Spirit who works faith, when and where he pleases. 2
- C. Rejects the Anabaptists and others who teach that the Spirit comes to us through our own preparations without the external word of the gospel. (4)

Terms Defined:

Anabaptists— A general term referring to several varied movements coming out of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. Often referred to as the "Radical Reformation" and primarily led by Ulrich Zwingli. Anabaptists rejected infant baptism as practiced in the Lutheran and Reformed churches. Furthermore, Anabaptists believed that these churches either had been corrupted or had not separated themselves "enough" from what the Anabaptists considered to be errors of the Roman Catholic Church. Anabaptists reject Sacraments (and the means of Grace) as well as any form of "ecclesiastical order" especially the Divine Call for Holy Ministry. (Essentially any Christian is qualified to preach and teach. Thus they call those who do, "brother" instead of "pastor.") Significant Anabaptists include the Amish and Mennonites on one end of the spectrum and Southern Baptists and most "non-denominational churches" on the other.

Regarding the Nature of Ministry of the Church and Her Pastors: Martin Chemnitz

What is the nature of the ministry of the church?

It is not civil government, by which political affairs, or the matters of this world, are administered (Lk 22:25-26; 2 Ti 2:4). Nor is it spiritual power lording it arbitrarily and, as it were, by naked power over the church of God in matters of faith (2 Co 1:24, 1 Ptr 5:3). Nor is it a business or a tricky way for indulging greed (1 Ti 3:2-3, 8; 6:5; 1 Ptr 5:2). But it is a spiritual, or ecclesiastic (church), office instituted and ordained by God Himself for discharging and performing necessary functions of the church, so that pastors, or preachers, are and ought to be ministers of God and of the church in the kingdom of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Co 4:1; Cl 1:25; 2 Co 4:5).

What, then, is the office of ministers of the Church?

This office, or ministry, has been committed and entrusted to them by God Himself through a legitimate call

- I. To feed the church of God with the true, pure, and salutary doctrine of the divine Word (Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Ptr 5:2)
- II. To administer and dispense the sacraments of Christ according to His institution (Mt 28:19, 1 Co 11:23)
- III. To administer rightly the use of the keys of the church, or of the kingdom of heaven, by either remitting or retaining sins (Mt 16:19; Jn 20:23), and to fulfill all these things and the whole ministry (as Paul says, 2 Ti 4:5) on the basis of the prescribed command, which the chief Shepherd Himself has given His ministers in His Word for instruction (Mt 28:20).

Questions:

In the last session we studied our Christian assurance in the article on justification—that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone. Article V it begins, “So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted.”

What does this indicate is important about the Office of Holy Ministry (or Office of the Means of Grace)? How is the correct teaching on the Ministry of the Gospel necessary to preserve the doctrine of justification?

God tends to work in His creation through means.

Read Psalm 33:6-9. *Identify the means which God uses to create the world.*

Read Hebrews 1:3. *What is the means through which God upholds and sustains the world?*

Read Romans 10:13-17. *What are the means by which God creates justifying faith (Art. IV)?*

Read Acts 2:38, Matthew 26:26-28, & John 20:22-23. *What are other means by which God works justification (ie. the forgiveness of sins)?*

In the Lutheran Church the Gospel and Sacraments are called “The Means of Grace”. According to Isaiah 55:10-11, how certain can we be that God will work through His Means of Grace?

Exodus 29:38-46 teaches us that in the Old Testament priests offered sacrifices to merit grace (ie. forgiveness of sins). But the animal sacrifices offered by those priests were mere types and shadows of the one sacrifice made by Christ. By the one sacrifice made by Jesus, He put an end both to the Levitical priesthood and the Old Testament law. Thus Hebrews 7:22-28 teaches that priests are no longer need to offer sacrifices for sins because Christ offered up himself as the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice.

Does this mean that we no longer need pastors and the Office of Holy Ministry (ie. priests)?
(Eph. 4:11-12; Matt 28:18-20; 16:19; 18:18; Luke 24:47-48; 1 Cor 4:1-2; John 20:23)

The term ministry is derived from the Latin word *ministerium* which means “service.” *What does this teach us about the nature of the Office of Holy Ministry? Is your pastor’s office and work part of God’s Gospel for you?*

What are the dangers in the errors regarding the Means of Grace condemned by Article V?

Application Questions:

1: *One of your friends has not been to church at all in the past five years, though you have offered to bring him. He insists that he is still a Christian. Is he? What do you say to him?*

2: *One of your friends, who is very active church member, tells you that good Christians do not really need a pastor since they themselves have the Bible and the forgiveness of sins. How do you answer?*

3: *You are puzzled by the Lutheran Church’s emphasis on the importance of preaching, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. If Christ has already won the forgiveness of sins for us, and we have that forgiveness by faith, why do we still need preaching or the sacraments?*

Scripture Passages Cited:

Psalms 33:6–9 (ESV)

- ⁶ By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.
⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;
he puts the deeps in storehouses.
⁸ Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!
⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)

³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Romans 10:13–17 (ESV)

¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

³⁸ And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 26:26–28 (ESV)

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”
²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you,
²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

John 20:22–23 (ESV)

²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Isaiah 55:10–11 (ESV)

- ¹⁰ “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Ephesians 4:11–12 (ESV)

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 16:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 18:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Luke 24:47–48 (ESV)

⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

1 Corinthians 4:1–2 (ESV)

¹ This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.