

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

The Augsburg Confession was written in 1530 as part of the Lutheran Reformation. It was presented by the Lutheran princes of Germany—laymen, not clergymen—to the Emperor Charles V at the city of Augsburg, Germany. Charles V ruled Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain. This Statement of Belief or Confession of Faith was presented by the princes to Charles V in response to his invitation to bring their disagreements against the Roman Catholic Church. Charles was loyal to Rome and was seeking to end the religious strife in his realm. Martin Luther did not attend the meeting; the emperor had already declared him “wanted” in 1521. Using Luther’s writings, Philip Melancthon, a trusted fellow professor of Luther, drafted the Augsburg Confession. The Augsburg Confession became a statement of Biblical truth, to which the princes stood committed. The emperor was unable to force them to abandon their Confession.

Today the Augsburg Confession remains one of the staunch confessions of conservative Lutheran Christians. The statements following are drawn from Articles 1-6 of the Augsburg Confession, of which there are 28.

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION, ARTICLES 1-6

Our churches with common consent teach:

1

P: There is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God—

C: Eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible.

P: And yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal—

C: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

P: The term “person” signifies, not a part or quality in God,

C: But, as the church fathers used it, that which “subsists of itself.”

2

P: Since the fall of Adam, all people are born with sin,

C: That is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with evil desire.

P: This inborn, original malady is truly sin

C: And brings eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.

3

P: The Son of God took on man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary,

C: So that in Him, two natures, the divine and the human, are inseparably joined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true Man.

P: He truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that He might reconcile the Father unto us,

C: And be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of humanity.

P: He also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day;
C: Afterward He ascended into heaven that He might sit on the right hand of the Father, and forever reign and have dominion over all creatures,
P: And sanctify those who believe in Him, by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts,
C: To rule, to comfort, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin.
P: The same Christ shall openly come again
C: To judge the living and the dead.

4

P: We also believe and confess that men [*mankind*] cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works;
C: But are freely justified for Christ's sake through faith,
P: When they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins.
C: This faith God accounts as righteousness in His sight.

5

P: So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted.
C: For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given,
P: Who works faith where and when it pleases God, in all who hear the Gospel.
C: And the Gospel is this, that God, not because of our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake.

6

P: We also teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits,
C: And that it is necessary to do good works commanded by God because it is God's will.
P: Yet we should not rely on those works to merit justification before God,
C: For the forgiveness of sins and justification are ours by faith in Christ

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