

The Augsburg Confession *Talking About Faith with Family and Friends*

Emperor Charles V summoned the Protestant and Catholic theologians to Augsburg in 1530 to settle the divisions between them. The emperor asked for a concise statement of their beliefs with the intended purpose of finding areas of agreement to keep the empire united.



Discussion: How does someone come to faith in Jesus Christ? Does a faithful relationship require regular church worship or membership in a church? What is your job description or expectations for a pastor or priest?

Article V: Of the Ministry

"That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake.

They (our Lutheran churches) condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works."

Importance: It is important to notice that the Lutheran Church refers to the Ministry of the Gospel as one of teaching and not preaching. The reason for ministers, the clergy, is to teach the Word of God, along with the pastoral responsibilities of forgiving sins, caring for the sick, and administering the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. This is referred to as the means of grace through which the Holy Spirit is working to bring people to faith and to nurture the spiritual growth of people who have a faithful relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Lutheran Church condemns as heresy the teaching that people can come to repentance and faith without hearing the Word or through their own intellectual ability or good works. The people hear the Word of God, the Holy Spirit calls the people to faith in Jesus Christ and a life of repentance, and Jesus Christ knows us by name and gives us an eternal and right relationship with God.