

## **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.



**Article VII: Of the Church** (see Article VIII too)

**Discussion:** How do you define and explain the concept of the "Church"? Is the "church" people who believe in Jesus Christ or is the "church" the people who follow the teachings of the Augsburg Confession (i.e. a Triune God), a Catechism (i.e. administration of the sacraments), or something else? Do social issues unite or divide the Christian church? Are the words "Church" and "church" the same?

"Also they (our Lutheran churches) teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.

And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: "*One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all,*" etc. [Eph. 4:5-6](#).

**Importance:** The importance of the individual congregation, the priesthood of all believers, the invisible church as a congregation of saints/believers is the message of the Gospel. The priesthood of believers, justification by faith, and the source of truth in the Holy Bible are the three foundational teachings of Martin Luther. Luther introduced the concept of the priesthood of all believers, who are given authority by their faith in Jesus Christ to forgive sins, and read and interpret the Word of God. Luther will still recognize the importance of called and ordained clergy in the church but his understanding of the grace of Jesus Christ empowered ordinary people with an evangelical role of sharing God's grace and love in the church.

This article is a challenge to the Roman Catholic Church through which the clergy (pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests) determine the laws and teachings of the faith. As a result of the Reformation, there several Protestant denominations (Reformed, Presbyterian, Anglican) became united by one baptism, belief in the Trinity, and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Ephesians 4:5,6: **"There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."**

