

## **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 VIII: What the Church Is** (see Article VII too)

**Discussion:** How important are the teachings (doctrine) of the church as compared with the way the people assimilate with the congregation and relationship with the pastor? Do the sinful actions of a pastor or priest affect what happens in a worship service? How are you deepening your faith? Why are you a member of a specific church denomination?

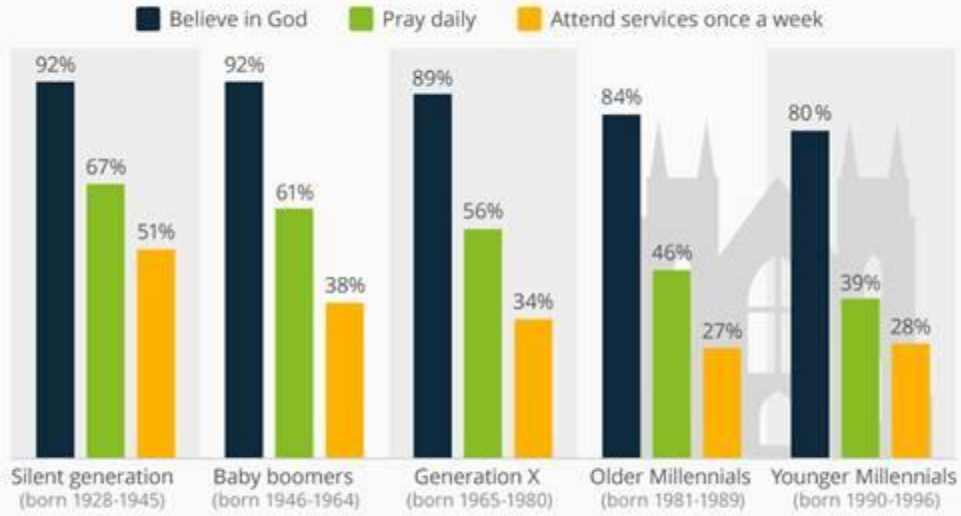
"Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: *The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat*, etc. [Matt. 23:2](#). Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men.

They condemn the Donatists, and such like, who denied it to be lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and of no effect."

**Importance:** This is likely a shocking statement for many people but it is based on the efficacy of the sacrament as something God is giving to His people rather than one that is based on the authority of the pastor or priest. Research suggests that 85% of the population visit a church website before visiting the church and an equal number attend church because of their relationship with the pastor or priest. Although the ministry of the pastor or priest as a spiritual leader is very important, the way we honor Jesus Christ in worship should not be compromised because of human interactions. We see a disappointing trend in the graph below of a decline by people under the age of 25 in prayer and worship. What are your observations as to how people are finding the love of Jesus Christ today?

# Religion's Generational Decline In The U.S.

% of Americans who say they...



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Source: Pew Research Center

n=35,071

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