



Reformation History #7: Augsburg

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

Part of a year-long series on Reformation history and theology, from November 2016—October 2017, in commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

Augsburg, Germany was placed on the map of world history on June 25, 1530, through the formal presentation by Lutherans of what came to be known as the *Augsburg Confession*. Like the contemporary issue of abortion, Luther's doctrine in the 16th century would not go away. Many, I am sure, supposed that Luther and his teaching would go the way of Huss and all the other "church reformers" who appeared through the ages. This storm would pass and the issues would become irrelevant footnotes in history as the Pope and the Roman Church marched on. But 12 years after the nailing of the 95 theses, the division was raging like a forest fire, threatening the stability of Western civilization. The Muslim armies had devastated the Church of the East and were threatening the West. Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, desperately needed peace within his boundaries in order to mount a sufficient resistance against the Turks. He needed the full support of the church in order to fight the Turks. He could have simply declared war against the Lutheran "heretics" as the Pope desired him to do, but that would not be a politically wise move. There were too many Lutherans and Lutheran princes to deal with by this time.

The Emperor chose a more irenic course by inviting the Lutherans to present their

doctrines before him so that reconciliation could be achieved. Charles V was probably underestimating the severity of the theological division, thinking perhaps that things could be patched up in short order - a few compromises made, some handshakes and hugs, followed by a unanimous, rousing battle cry against the Turks. Politicians rarely comprehend the depth and power of religious convictions.

Lutherans received Charles' invitation to publicly present their doctrines for discussion and debate as a gesture of good faith. They felt confident they could defend their doctrines on the basis of Scripture. They used a statement of doctrines known as the *Schwabach Articles* as a basis for the presentation, but had to add an additional statement about changes in practice that were made in Saxony. The Wittenberg theologians compiled this statement at a meeting in Torgau. The Schwabach and Torgau articles were taken to Augsburg for the presentation before the Emperor. These two Articles were woven into a single document by Luther's assistant, a scholar named Philip Melancthon. It was signed by seven princes and representatives of two free cities. Though Luther was not present at Augsburg, he offered guidance through correspondence.



The Lutheran Confessors were very careful in their preface to restate the Emperor's purposes for the diet. *"The desire was expressed for deliberation on what might be done about the dissension concerning our holy faith and the Christian religion, and to this end it was proposed to employ all diligence amicably and charitably to hear, understand, and weigh the judgments, opinions, and beliefs of the several parties among us, to unite the same in agreement on one Christian truth, to put aside whatever may not have been rightly interpreted or treated by either side,*

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That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

to have all of us embrace and adhere to a single, true religion and live together in unity and in one fellowship and church." The Lutherans were very willing to pursue this purpose.

The Augsburg Confession outlined the basic doctrines of the Christian faith in 28 articles. The first 22 set forth the basic doctrines and the last 6 set forth abuses that Lutherans corrected in their churches. The document is written in a gentle and non-polemical style, in accord with the stated purpose of the diet to foster peace and reconciliation. It was read in the German language by Christian Beyer. He is reported to have articulated so distinctly that people standing outside could clearly hear the words. The reading lasted about 2 hours. The Roman Catholics

later presented their Confutation of the Augsburg Confession, accepting a few of the basic articles but attacking most of the doctrines presented as heretical. Their refusal to accept Article IV, the doctrine of Justification, provoked a stern response by Lutherans now known as *The Apology (Defense) of the Augsburg Confession*. Arguing that Justification by grace for Christ's sake is the very heart of the Gospel, Lutherans showed how this doctrine was being attacked in all points of Roman Catholic theology and practice in the debate. This cardinal doctrine will be addressed in the next newsletter.

The Augsburg Confession has become the basic statement of faith for Lutherans over the world. Though

many "Lutherans" have long forsaken the doctrines confessed in the Augsburg Confession, they still hold it as an historical witness in their tradition. Orthodox Lutherans, like the LCMS, regard the doctrines confessed in AC as an accurate exposition of the teaching of Scripture and bind their pastors and congregations to teach and practice in accord with it. Every pastor of the LCMS has vowed before God and the congregation that he holds this doctrine to be true and will not deviate from it.

The Augsburg Confession, together with all the other of our confessional statements, may be found at <https://www.lcms.org/lutheranconfessions>.

Roles and Goals for the Church by Pastor Tom Chryst

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph. 4:11-16)

In this passage from Ephesians 4, Paul lays out some "roles and goals" for the Christian congregation at Ephesus. These may also serve as a model for any Christian congregation.

In light of some recent discussions about Messiah's own mission, I'd like

to add some comments to the mix in the next several months. What follows will be a series of articles, based on this passage. I'll focus on these key ideas inspired by the Holy Spirit and set forth through St. Paul to the Ephesians:

- Different gifts and roles
- Unity of Faith
- Knowledge of the Son of God
- Mature Manhood
- Speaking Truth in Love
- Grow in every way

Mature Manhood

Another goal for the Christian, and for the Christian church as a whole, is to attain maturity. He suggests two basic definitions for this type of maturity: One, "measuring up" to Christ, and two, not being children who are "tossed about". We'll look at each in turn.

If we want to know what mature manhood means, we can certainly look at the perfect man himself, Jesus Christ. Because he was and is without sin, we can look to him

and see a glimpse of what God truly intends for humans to be like. He was an obedient son, both to his earthly parents and to his Heavenly Father. He was entirely free of sin, and always defeated temptation. A model of compassion, moral strength, and service to his neighbor. Truly, there is some wisdom in asking that simple question, "What would Jesus do?" He is the model man.

Of course, we must always remember that "Jesus as example" is only part of the story. And that "Jesus as example" is NOT how we are saved. Jesus as our substitute on the cross does that for us. We are saved by grace through faith, and not by works. But the God who has called us by grace to faith, also calls us to follow Christ's example, as we would "measure up to the stature of the fullness of Christ". This is not to be saved, but because we are saved, and we would be mature Christians. We would be like Christ, conformed to his image.

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For example, when Jesus teaches his disciples to love one another, and explains, “greater love has no one than that he would lay down his life for his friends”. Jesus, did this for us, of course, to the ultimate. But his call to us is to do the same in our vocations. To love one another, laying down even our lives for one another if necessary. And especially for Christian men, who are called to love our wives “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”. Self-sacrifice. Putting others before yourself. These are the kind of Christ-like things that are entailed in mature Christianity.

No Longer Children

A second part of maturity that Paul brings out here is that the men of God would “*no longer be children*” and that the danger or the downside to being a child is this: that you get “*tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes*”

The picture here is of a little boat, thrown about in choppy, maybe



stormy waters, with no rudder or sail to give it direction. Completely at the mercy of the wind and wave, but he's not talking about literal winds here. We are warned about the winds of false doctrine, and the deceptions of the devil.

And so, part of Christian maturity is also having a firm foundation in the doctrine of Scripture. A sure rudder that can help you navigate the choppy and treacherous waters of life. We could make some application, then: Know your catechism. Read your Bible. Study it with other Christians. Deepen your knowledge and understanding of the

faith. In these ways you will guard yourself against the schemes of the evil one, who would lead you astray if he could.

Rather than being carried along by “human cunning”, or man-made and man-centered ideas, rather let your mind be conformed to the mind of Christ. Let your view of the world be governed, first, by his word. Always be on guard against deceptions and lies, which fill the world, and build your sure foundation on the rock that is Christ. Know the truth, for the truth will set you free (John 8:32)

Having a mature footing in Scripture and its doctrine doesn't mean that you are scholar or expert theologian (though you may be). But maturity here means an ever-deepening sense of repentance for one's sins and trust in Christ for deliverance. A mature Christian knows how to be forgiven, and forgives freely. A mature Christian supports God's work generously, out of love (not guilt). And a mature Christian, steeped in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is well-prepared even to meet the final enemy, death.

Miscellany (/ˈmɪsəˌlānē/) noun. —a mixture or collection of different things

The ending of the school year is upon us! MLCA's last day for the year is May 26. You are invited to join us on Thursday, May 25, for **MLCA's Closing Program and Art Show** at 6:30pm.

Summer Swaddling Clothes:

Our Swaddling Clothes store is open year-round. Please keep it in mind as you shop. All donations of diapers and wipes are particularly appreciated!

Summer Chess Camp: July 10—14, from 1:00-4:00pm, with Pastor Chryst. Go to the blog page at mlcatexas.org to register!

Summer Sunday Shool will begin soon. If you would like to help teach, contact Meredith Sifford

Sr. Youth: Registration is now open for the July 20-23 trip to Camp Lone Star, in La Grange, TX. Cost is \$60 per youth. The theme will be “Baptism: Identified with Christ”



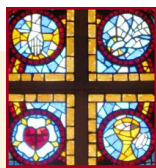
Our 2017 Vacation Bible School will be held July 24-27, 9am to noon, with the theme “Mighty Fortress.” **VBS Registration** is now open on our website, messiahkeller.org. For

more information and/or to sign up to help, contact Lindsay Brandt, VBS director, for more information at lindsay2584@gmail.com

Messiah's Young Adults Group

- meets every Monday evening at 7pm in the Messiah Activity Center on 377. We are also planning a Whirleyball outing for May 27th at 3pm. Stay tuned for details. Join our Facebook group to keep up with all the latest.

Our **Oktoberbest 2017** will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. See Roland Towers if you want to help.



Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Academy Office: (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Thomas Chryst, Associate Pastor

www.messiahkeller.org



Our 2017 Confirmands:

Joseph Buhler

Daniel Chapa

Landon Howell

Max Tonniges

Spring at MLCA



Preschool Donuts with Dad and Muffins with Mom, Piano Recitals, K—7 field trip to the Fort Worth Zoo, Boot-Scootin' BBQ and Auction, Chess Tournaments... it has been a very busy spring for the whole school!

Please plan to come to our closing program on May 25 at 6:30pm. An art show, featuring examples of all the art projects from the 2016/17 school year will be on display following the program. Come, see the beautiful work accomplished by our talented students!

Now enrolling for next year, ages 2 years—8th grade!

