

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

Part 5 - Matters of Church & State

Opening discussions:

- 1) Where does the concept of “separation of church and state” come from?
- 2) How do churches find pastors today? How was it done in the past?
- 3) What is *amillennialism*?

V) Various matters of Church and State

A) The pastoral call - Article XIV

- 1) What is a pastor called to do?
- 2) What is “a rightly ordered call”? (**I Timothy 3:10**)
- 3) How were pulpits filled in Luther’s day (1530)?
 - How was this done in the early days of Synod (before Seminary founded)
 - Should the civil government have a role in ordination?
- 4) How does one *privately* teach or preach? Is this allowable?
- 5) Does this article mean that only pastor should teach? What of Sunday School? VBS?
- 6) What is a congregation to do if there’s no pastor Sunday morning? (Vacancy)
- 7) What are “sub-offices” of the Office of Holy Ministry?

B) Rites and ceremonies - Article XV

- 1) What are some “church traditions” you would be reluctant to give up?
- 2) How do you feel about “non-traditional” churches? Why?
- 3) Is a cross (or statuary or stained glass) a form of idolatry?
 - those who believe so are called *iconoclasts*
- 4) What does Paul say about these things in **Colossians 2:16-17**
- 5) Which Roman Catholic traditions did Lutherans keep?
- 6) How do certain traditions become harmful to one’s salvation?
- 7) What is the point of a liturgical calendar (or liturgy for that matter), vestments / robes, candles, crucifixes, stained glass, and the like?

C) Civil government - Article XVI

- 1) Do you remember why Luther was not at Augsburg?
- 2) How does this teaching fit with **John 17:14-17**

- 3) How do we view this article in light of **Romans 13:1-7**?
- 4) Does this mean that even bad governments should be obeyed and respected?
 - How does this mesh with **Acts 5:29**?
- 5) How are Christians to operate in the political sphere?
- 6) Should Christians be pacifists (never take up arms)?
- 7) What is “Christian nationalism” and why is it a danger?

D) Christ’s Return - Article XVII

- 1) What is “the rapture”?
 - Where is this found in scripture?
 - See **Matthew 24:37-44**
 - See **I Thessalonians 4:17**
- 2) How is one to understand **Revelation 20:6**?
- 3) Why is basing a doctrine on only a single verse so dangerous?
- 4) What will happen when Christ returns to earth?
- 5) Why do both heaven and hell have no end?
- 6) Will there ever be a “Kingdom of heaven” on earth?
- 7) What are some of the misconceptions about the end times popular today?

E) Free will - Article XVIII

- 1) What is the common usage of the phrase “of your own free will”?
- 2) In what way(s) do we have free will?
- 3) In what way(s) do we not have free will?
- 4) What is “decision theology”?
- 5) How is civil (civic) righteousness different from the righteousness of God?
- 6) What is man’s basic nature according to **Romans 8:7** and **I Corinthians 2:14**?
- 7) What is *Pelagianism*?

For next week: Roman Errors part I - Articles XIX - XXV (these are longer articles)

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Part VI - Romanist Errors I

We need to talk:

- 1) What are *polemics*?
- 2) What are ways the word “saint” might be understood?
- 3) What is marriage?

VI) Polemics against Rome

A) The cause of sin - Article XIX

- 1) Does the argument, “The Devil made me do it” carry any weight?
- 2) How does the Devil tempt us? (**John 8:44**)
- 3) How does the world lead us astray?
- 4) How does our own flesh and blood conspire against the soul? (**Romans 7:21-25a**)
- 5) By what arguments do some try to blame God for sin?
- 6) Can sin be compared to a genetic defect?
- 7) Why did nature become corrupted when man sinned?

B) Good Works - Article XX

- 1) What makes a work “good”?
- 2) How can even “good” works be “bad”?
- 3) What is the problem of trusting in one’s works for salvation?
- 4) What (if any) is the different between the *guilt* of sin and the *penalty* for sin?
- 5) How is faith more than just intellectual belief? (**James 2:18-19**)
- 6) Why is it necessary to do good works?
- 7) Where does the power to do these good works come from?

C) Worship of the saints - Article XXI

- 1) Why does the LCMS keep “All Saints Day”? I thought we didn’t believe in saints?
- 2) Who is your favorite saint and why?
- 3) Wouldn’t calling on the saints for aid “interrupt” their blessed rest?
- 4) Who is our one Mediator, Intercessor, High Priest,...?
- 5) How does this article tie into the 2nd Commandment?

- 6) Why didn't the Roman Church have a "Come to Jesus" moment?
- 7) How is invocation of the saints for aid different from asking someone to pray for you?

D) Take and drink - Article XXI

- 1) Do you prefer common cup or individual? Is one better than the other?
- 2) Why was the cup withheld from the laity?
- 3) From **Matthew 26:27** and **I Cor. 11:27** we see this was not the practice of the early Church. So when did withholding the cup become a thing?
- 4) Why does Melancthon (Luther's proxy) cite Canon Law?
- 5) What is the *Corpus Christi* procession?
- 6) Why is intinction (dipping the bread in the cup) discouraged among us?
- 7) What other abuses of the Lord's Supper have happened (ancient and modern)
- see **I Corinthians 11:17-34**

E) Vows of celibacy - Article XXIII

- 1) What is celibacy?
- 2) Why would an unmarried man make a better priest, bishop, or leader?
- 3) Why would a married man make a better priest, bishop, or leader?
- 4) How is marriage tied to Creation? (**Genesis 1:28**)
- 5) How long had enforced celibacy been in Germany? What was the result?
- 6) At what age were monastic / priestly vows usually taken?
- 7) Is marriage / nuclear family the bedrock of a stable society? Why / why not?

F) The Mass - Article XXIV

- 1) What is "mass"?
- 2) What are the key components of the mass?
- 3) How are church ceremonies and rites "teachable moments"?
- 4) What is / was the "linguistic controversy"? Did the LCMS face this too?
- 5) What was the chief abuse that crept into the Church on this matter?
- 6) What is the "remembrance" part of the mass? How has this been abused, even today?
- 7) How often should we partake of Holy Communion?

For next week: Articles XXV - XXVIII (long reads)

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Part VII - Further Roman Errors

Let's talk it over:

- 1) How do you feel about individual / private confession? Have you ever done it?
- 2) What is a “monk”?
 - How can this be a good, God-pleasing thing?
 - How can it be an evil, soul-destroying thing?
- 3) Describe your church's hierarchy (authority structure). Is this Biblical?

VII) Some particularly egregious abuses

A) Mandatory private confession - Article XXV

- 1) Have you heard of the office of *Anam Cara*?
- 2) How can individual confession and absolution be comforting?
- 3) How is this different from corporate confession and absolution?
- 4) What is “The Office of the Keys”? See **Matthew 16:19**
- 5) “When I do good, no one remembers. When I do bad, no one forgets.”
 - Why is it so hard to remember our sins, when others can easily recall them?
- 6) How is confession “useful to the conscience”?
- 7) How can acts of penance be seen like physical therapy but for the soul?

B) Meatless Mondays - Article XXVI

- 1) What does diet have to do with one's faith?
- 2) Why was meat forbidden on Fridays (and all but Sundays in Lent)?
- 3) Is there any benefit to abstinence / fasting? (See **I Timothy 4:8**)
- 4) What is the danger in making fasting a *required* good work?
- 5) How did some traditions become “noble” and others “base”?
- 6) What happens when a saint's *feast* day falls on a *fast* date? (St. Pat's always in Lent)
- 7) What is *adiaphora*?
- 8) Why should a Christian practice discipline? (**I Corinthians 9:27**)
- 9) What is meant by “Christian freedom”?

C) Monastic Vows - Article XXVII

- 1) What were the primary vows a monk / nun would make? (Rule of St. Benedict)
- 2) Is attending church a holier work than changing diapers? Why / why not?
- 3) How did taking “holy orders” become a sacrament meriting grace?
- 4) What is needed for a vow to be a true vow?
- 5) How do these (and other works) go against Jesus’ words in **Matthew 15:9**?
- 6) What is “true Christian perfection”? (Paragraphs 49 & 50)
- 7) Is there any benefit to the monastic life?

D) Church authority - Article XXVIII

- 1) How did / does the Church come to wield earthly / civil powers and authority?
- 2) How do you think Charles V (*Holy Roman* Emperor) would have felt about this?
- 3) How does **John 20:21-22** show what the Church is to be about?
- 4) Does **Philippians 3:20** mean Christians shouldn’t be involved in politics?
- 5) What are we to do with “ordinances” imposed on us from St. Louis (for LCMS)?
- 6) Where does the authority for making decisions for the church come from?
- 7) What are some of the other abuses that didn’t make it into the Augsburg Confession?