

Augsburg Confession

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The **Augsburg Confession**, also known as the "Augustana" from its Latin name, *Confessio Augustana*, is the primary confession of faith of the Lutheran Church and one of the most important documents of the Lutheran reformation. The Augsburg Confession was written in both German and Latin, and was presented by a number of German rulers and free-cities at the Diet of Augsburg on June 25, 1530. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V had called on the Princes and Free Territories in Germany to explain their religious convictions in an attempt to restore religious and political unity in the Holy Roman Empire, and rally support against the Turkish invasion. It is the fourth document contained in the Lutheran Book of Concord.

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Background



Diet of Augsburg by Christian Beyer.

On January 21, 1530, the Emperor Charles V issued letters from Bologna, inviting the German diet to meet in Augsburg April 8, for the purpose of discussing and deciding various important questions. Although the writ of invitation was couched in very peaceful language, it was received with suspicion by some of the Evangelicals. The far-seeing Landgrave of Hesse hesitated to attend the diet, but the Elector John of Saxony, who received the writ March 11, on March 14 directed Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen,

Lutheranism



Luther's Seal

Book of Concord

- Apostles' Creed
- Nicene Creed
- Athanasian Creed
- **Augsburg Confession**
- Apology of the Augsburg Confession
- Smalcald Articles
- Luther's Small Catechism
- Luther's Large Catechism
- Formula of Concord

Word & Sacrament

- Justification
- Law and Gospel
- Sola gratia
- Sola scriptura
- Baptism
- Infant Baptism
- Lord's Supper
- Eucharist
- Sacramental union
- Confession
- Absolution
- Christology
- Sanctification
- Two Kingdoms
- Priesthood of all

and Melanchthon to meet in Torgau, where he was, and present a summary of the Lutheran faith, to be laid before the emperor at the diet.

This summary has received the name of the "Torgau Articles". On April 3 the elector and reformers started from Torgau and reached Coburg on April 23. There Luther was left behind because he was an outlaw according to the Diet of Worms. The rest reached Augsburg May 2. On the journey Melanchthon worked on an "apology", using the Torgau articles, and sent his draft to Luther at Coburg on May 11, who approved it. Several alterations were suggested to Melanchthon in his conferences with Jonas, the Saxon chancellor Bruck, the conciliatory Christopher von Stadion, bishop of Augsburg, and the imperial secretary Alfonso Valdez.

On June 23 the final form of the text was adopted in the presence of the Elector John of Saxony, the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, the Margrave George of Brandenburg, the Dukes Ernest and Francis of Luneburg, the representatives of Nuremberg and Reutlingen, and other counselors, besides twelve theologians. After the reading the confession was signed by the Elector John of Saxony, Margrave George of Brandenburg, Duke Ernest of Luneburg, the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, the Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt, the representatives of Nuremberg and Reutlingen, and probably also by the electoral prince John Frederick and Duke Francis of Luneburg.

During the diet the cities of Weißenburg in Bayern, Heilbronn, Kempten, and Windesheim also expressed their concurrence with the confession. The emperor had ordered the confession to be presented to him at the next session, June 24; but when the Evangelical princes asked that it be read in public, their petition was refused, and efforts were made to prevent the public reading of the document altogether. The Evangelical princes, however, declared that they would not part with the confession until its reading should be allowed. The 25th was then fixed for the day of its presentation. In order to exclude the people, the little chapel of the episcopal palace was appointed in place of the spacious city hall, where the meetings of the diet were held. The two Saxon chancellors Bruck and Beyer, the one with the Latin copy, the other with the German, stepped into the middle of the assembly, and against the wish of the emperor the German text was read. The reading lasted two hours and was so distinct that every word could be heard outside. The reading being over, the copies were handed to the emperor. The German he gave to the imperial chancellor, the Elector of Mainz, the Latin he took away. Neither of the copies is now extant.

believers

- Divine Providence
- Theology of the Cross

Liturgy & Worship

- Divine Service
- Matins
- Vespers
- Easter Vigil
- Agenda
- Cantata
- Chorale
- Chorale prelude
- Common table prayer
- Confirmation
- Hymn of the day
- Postil
- Deutsche Messe
- Liturgical Calendar
- Sign of the Cross

Hymnody & Music

- A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
- Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands
- God's Word Is Our Great Heritage
- How Great Thou Art
- How Lovely Shines the Morning Star
- Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
- In Thee alone, O Christ, my Lord
- O Lord, Look Down from Heaven
- Now Thank We All Our God
- O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
- Passion Hymns
- Passion music
- Wake, Awake, for

Night is Flying

- Johann Sebastian Bach
- Dieterich Buxtehude
- Johann Crüger
- Paul Gerhardt
- Johann Heermann
- Felix Mendelssohn
- Johann Pachelbel
- Hallgrímur Pétursson
- Michael Praetorius
- Johann von Rist
- Johann Walter
- Catherine Winkworth

Globally

- Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference
- International Lutheran Council
- Lutheran World Federation
- List of Lutheran church-bodies

History

- Protestant Reformation
- The start of the Reformation
- Reformation in Denmark
- Reformation in Finland
- Reformation in Germany
- Reformation in Iceland
- Reformation in Norway
- Reformation in Sweden
- Lutheran Orthodoxy
- Gnesio-Lutherans
- Pietism

- Laestadianism
- Old Lutherans
- Neo-Lutheranism
- High Church
Lutheranism
- Confessional
Lutherans

Missionaries

- John Campanius
- Bartholomäus
Ziegenbalg
- Hans Egede
- Paul Henkel
- John Christian
Frederick Heyer
- Wilhelm Sihler
- F. C. D. Wyneken
- Hans Paludan Smith
Schreuder
- Lars Olsen Skrefsrud
- Ludwig Ingwer
Nommensen
- Onesimos Nesib
- Paul Olaf Bodding
- Walter A. Maier

Theologians

- Martin Luther
 - Wife:
Katharina
Luther
- Philipp Melanchthon
- Johannes
Bugenhagen
- Johannes Brenz
- Justus Jonas
- Lucas Cranach the
Elder
- Hans Tausen
- Laurentius Petri
- Olaus Petri
- Matthias Flacius
- Johann Gerhard
- Abraham Calovius
- Johannes Andreas

The first official publication (*Editio princeps*) was edited by Philipp Melancthon, a professor at the University of Wittenberg and close friend of Martin Luther.

Contents

Preface

The preface of the Augsburg Confession shows that the entire document is addressed to the Emperor Charles V in compliance with his summons (January 21, 1530^[1]) of all rulers and representatives of the estates of the Holy Roman Empire to Augsburg for an imperial diet. The Lutherans pledge themselves to follow the emperor's directive to present a statement of their beliefs and confer with estates who disagree with them with the goal of achieving consensus in faith.

The 28 Articles

The Augsburg Confession consists of 28 articles presented by Lutheran princes and representatives of "free cities" at the Diet of Augsburg that set forward what the Lutherans believed, taught and confessed in positive (theses) and negative (antitheses) statements. The theses are 21 Chief Articles of Faith describing the normative principles of Christian faith held by the Lutherans, the antitheses are seven statements describing what they viewed as abuses of the Christian faith present in the Roman church.

The Chief Articles of Faith (Theses)

Article	Title	Description
I	God	Lutherans believe in the Triune God and reject other interpretations regarding the nature of God.
II	Original Sin	Lutherans believe that the nature of man is sinful, described as being without fear of God, without trust of God and with concupiscence. The only 'cure' for sin is to be reborn through Baptism and the Holy Spirit. (See Lutheran View of Baptism)
III	The Son of God (Jesus Christ)	Lutherans believe in the incarnation, that is, the union of the fully human with the fully divine in the person of Jesus. Jesus Christ alone brings about the reconciliation of humanity with God.
IV	Justification By Faith	Man cannot be justified before God through our own abilities; we are wholly reliant on Jesus Christ for reconciliation with God. (This is often described as the one article by which the "Lutheran church stands or falls".)
V	The Office of Preaching	Lutherans believe that to see to it that the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed throughout the world, Christ has established his office of the holy ministry.
VI	Of The New Obedience	Lutherans believe that good deeds of Christians are the fruits of faith and salvation, not a price paid for them.
VII	Of The Church	Lutherans believe that there is one holy Christian Church, and it is found wherever the gospel is preached in its truth and purity and the sacraments are

Quenstedt

- Johann Wilhelm Baier
- David Hollaz
- Henry Muhlenberg
- Lars Levi Læstadius
- Charles Porterfield Krauth
- C. F. W. Walther

Lutheranism portal



A stained glass window, *Confessio Augustana*.

		administered according to the gospel.
VIII	What The Church Is	Despite what hypocrisy may exist in the church (and among men), the Word and the Sacraments are always valid because they are instituted by Christ, no matter what the sins may be of the man who administers them.
IX	Of Baptism	Lutherans believe that Baptism is necessary for salvation, and that through Baptism is offered the grace of God. Children are baptized as an offering to them of God's grace.
X	Of the Lord's Supper	Lutherans believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of the sacrament, and reject those that teach otherwise.
XI	Of Confession	Lutherans believe that private absolution should remain in the church, though a believer does not need to enumerate all of his sins as it is impossible for a man to enumerate all of the sins for which he should be forgiven.
XII	Of Repentance	Repentance comes in two parts: in contrition for sins committed according to the Law and through faith offered through the Gospel. A believer can never be free from sin, nor live outside of the grace of God.
XIII	Of the Use of the Sacraments	The Sacraments (Baptism and the Eucharist) are physical manifestations of God's Word and his commitment to us. The sacraments are never just physical elements, but have God's word and promises bound to them.
XIV	Of Ecclesiastical Order	Lutherans only allow those who are "rightly called" to administer the Sacraments.
XV	Of Ecclesiastical Usages	Lutherans believe that church holidays, calendars and festivals are useful for religious observance, but that observance and ritual is not necessary for salvation. Human traditions (such as observances, fasts, distinctions in eating meats) that are taught as a way to "merit" grace work in opposition to the Gospel.
XVI	Of Civil Affairs	Secular governments and vocations are considered to be part of God's natural orders; Christians are free to serve in government, the military and engage in the business and vocations of the world. Laws are to be followed unless they are commandments to sin.
XVII	Of Christ's Return to Judgment	Lutherans believe that Christ will return to judge the world and all men; the 'godly' will be given everlasting joy, the 'ungodly' will be condemned. This article rejects notions of the 'earthly kingdom of the godly', or that Christ's judgment will not be final.
XVIII	Of Free Will	Lutherans believe that we have free will in the realm of "civil righteousness" (or "things subject to reason"), but that we do not have free will in "spiritual righteousness". In other words, we are free to choose and act in every regard <i>except</i> for the choice of salvation. Faith is not the work of men, but of the Holy Spirit.
XIX	Of the Cause of Sin	God does not cause people to sin — sin is instead the work of the 'ungodly and the devil'. (i.e. our selfish concerns of this world)

XX	Of Good Works	The Lutheran notion of justification by faith does not somehow condemn good works; our faith causes us to good works as a sign of our justification (or salvation), not a requirement for salvation.
XXI	Of the Worship of the Saints	Lutherans keep the saints, not as saviors or intercessors to God, but rather as examples and inspirations to our own faith and life.

Abuses Corrected

Article	Title	Description
XXII	Of Both Kinds In The Sacrament (Eucharist)	It is proper to offer communicants the consecrated bread and wine, not just the bread.
XXIII	Of the Marriage of Priests	Lutherans permit their clergy to enter the institution of marriage, for the reasons that the early Church bishops were married, that God blesses marriage as an order of creation, and because marriage and procreation is the natural outlet for human sexual desire.
XXIV	Of the Mass	Lutherans retain the practice of the Mass, but only as a public gathering for the purposes of community worship and the receiving of the Eucharist. Lutherans reject the practice of using the Mass as a "work" for both salvation and worldly (monetary) gain.
XXV	Of Confession	Lutherans uphold the need for confession and absolution, but reject the notion that Confession should induce guilt or anxiety to the Christian. Absolution is offered for all sin, not just sins that can be recounted in a confession, as it is impossible for a man to know all of his transgressions.
XXVI	Of the Distinction of Meats	Human traditions that hold fasting and special observances with dietary restrictions as a means of gaining the favor of God are contrary to the gospel. While fasting and other practices are useful spiritual practices, they do not justify man nor offer salvation.
XXVII	Of Monastic Vows	Man cannot achieve purity in community or isolation from the rest of the world and perfection cannot be attained by any vow taken or actions of man alone.
XXVIII	Of Ecclesiastical Power	The only power given to priests or bishops is the power offered through Scripture to preach, teach and administer the sacraments. The powers given to the clergy in issues of government or the military are granted and respected only through civil means, they are not civil rulers of governments and the military by divine right.

Conclusion

"That in doctrine and ceremonies nothing has been received on our part against Scripture or the Church Catholic." Signatures of several secular leaders in Saxony.

Impact of the Augsburg Confession

The Augsburg Confession became the primary confessional document for the Lutheran movement, even without the contribution of Martin Luther. Following the public reading of the Augsburg Confession in June of 1530, the expected response by Charles V and the Vatican representatives at the Diet of Augsburg was not immediately forthcoming. Following debate between the court of Charles V and the Vatican representatives, the official response known as the Pontifical Confutation of the Augsburg Confession was produced to the Diet, though the document was so poorly prepared that the document was never published for widespread distribution, nor presented to the Lutherans at the Diet.

However, in September Charles V declared the response to be sufficient and gave the Lutheran princes until April 15 of 1531 to respond to the demands of the Confutation. In response, Phillip Melancthon wrote a lengthy and sustained argument both supporting the Augsburg Confession as well as refuting the arguments made in the Confutation. This document became known as the Apology of the Augsburg Confession and was soon translated into German and was widely distributed and read throughout Germany.



Illustration of each of the 28 articles by Wenceslas Hollar.

The Lutheran princes at the diet concurrently agreed to a military alliance in the event of action by Charles V known as the Schmalkaldic League. By 1535, the League admitted any city or state to the alliance that gave official assent to the Augsburg Confession and the Apology. Significantly, the Confession was translated into English in 1536 and King Henry VIII was given opportunity to sign the confession and join the league, but theological and political disputes would prevent the English church from joining. The English translation of the Augsburg Confession and German Lutheran theologians would influence the composition of the first of the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles in the latter 1530s.

In 1540, Melancthon produced a revised edition, the *Variata*, which was signed by John Calvin. Many Lutheran churches specify in their official documents that they subscribe to the "Unaltered Augsburg Confession", as opposed to the *Variata*.

The political tensions between the Schmalkaldic League and the forces of Charles V and the Vatican eventually lead to the Schmalkaldic War in 1546-1547 which was won convincingly by Charles V. The war, however, did not resolve the religious and political situation. Eight years later the Lutheran princes and Charles V agreed to the Peace of Augsburg which granted Lutheranism legal status within the Holy Roman Empire.

Theological disputes within the expanding sphere of Lutheranism to other territories in the latter half of the 16th Century lead to the compilation of a definitive set of Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord in 1580. The Book of Concord includes the Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession as the foundational confessions of the Lutheran faith.

In Music

Felix Mendelssohn's 5th Symphony (actually his 2nd Symphony in order of composition) was composed to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession and thus bears the title *The Reformation Symphony*. The Symphony, however, was not commissioned for the celebrations, because of either the

composer's Jewish origins, or because of the inappropriateness of a symphony for the celebrations. Instead, Eduard Grell's work for four men's voices a capella was commissioned.

See also

- Augsburg Confession Variata
- Confessio Catholica

References

- *This article includes content derived from the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 1914, which is in the public domain.*

- [^] F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Triglot Concordia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 15

External links

- The Augsburg Confession (1530) (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds3.iii.ii.html>) in Latin with a parallel English translation and with notes on the differences in the 1540 edition (Articles I — VII); from Philip Schaff's *Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches* at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library
- Augsburg Confession (1530) (<http://bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php>) , including articles XXII — XXVIII
- The Roman Confutation (1530) (<http://www.ctsfw.edu/etext/boc/ap/confut/>) , in an English translation, compares each articles of the confession to Catholic beliefs.
- Audio recording of the first part of the Augsburg Confession (<http://retinenda.com/2009/05/confessio-augustana-pars-prima/>) in Latin with text
- A Chronicle of the Augsburg Confession (http://books.google.com/books?id=QXoXAAAAYAAJ&printsec=titlepage&source=gbs_summary_r&cad=0) by Charles Porterfield Krauth, Philadepgia: J. Fredrick Smith, 1878.
- Augsburg Confession (<http://books.google.com/books?id=93ErAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA29&dq=%22Augsburg+Confession%22#PPA29>) in The Lutheran Cyclopedia (1899) edited by Henry Eyster Jacobs
- Augsburg Confession in the Concordia Cyclopedia (<http://www.archive.org/details/concordiacyclope009499mbp>) (page 1 (http://ia311502.us.archive.org/zipview.php?zip=/2/items/concordiacyclope009499mbp/concordiacyclope009499mbp_flippy.zip&file=0062.jpg))(page 2 (http://ia311502.us.archive.org/zipview.php?zip=/2/items/concordiacyclope009499mbp/concordiacyclope009499mbp_flippy.zip&file=0063.jpg))
- Augsburg Confession (<http://www.lcms.org/ca/www/cyclopedia/02/display.asp?t1=1&word=LUTHERANCONFESSIONS>) in the Christian Cyclopedia
- An Orthodox Response (http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/inquirers/tca_luther.aspx) - Summary of Orthodox Patriarch Jeremias II's letter of 15 May 1576, in which he compares each article of the confession to Orthodox Christian beliefs.
- The Roman Catholic Reception of the Augsburg Confession (<http://www.jstor.org/pss/2540159>) by Robert Kress (JSTOR)

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