

The Formula of Concord

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- 1546 Luther dies
- 1547 First Smalcaldic War, defeat of Lutheran princes
- 1548 "Augsburg Interim" to reintegrate "protestants" into the Church of Rome
- 1552 Second Smalcaldic War, victory for the Lutheran princes
- 1555 Peace of Augsburg, rulers could choose Lutheranism or Romanism (cuius regio, eius religio)
- 1557 Colloquy of Worms
- 1568 Beginning of a possible solution

Two theological parties arise within "Lutheranism"

<u>Flacians or Gnesio-Lutherans</u>	<u>Philippists</u>
Matthias Flacius (1520-1575)	Philip Melancthon (1497-1560)
University of Jena	Universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig
Total corruption of the human nature	Rapprochement with Rome re: Free Will, Works
Stood against so-called 'crypto-Calvinism'	Rapprochement with Swiss re: Lord's Supper
"Real Presence"	"True Presence"

Q: What is the consequence of picking one side or the other?

Will it lead one to say something that is the opposite of what Christ has said?

Will it lead one to acting in a way that is the opposite of how Christ would have us act?

Adiaphoristic Controversy

Melancthon any practices not tied to justification can be tolerated

Flacius all practices imposed by those who hold false doctrine must also be opposed

Majoristic Controversy

Georg Major works contribute in some way to salvation

Matthias Flacius works are detrimental to salvation

Osiandrian Controversy

Andreas Osiander Christ's divinity dwells in us and is our righteousness

Francesco Stancaro Christ's humanity has saved us

Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy

When you say "real presence" but mean something entirely different. Or, on the other side, characterizing your opponents as "bread worshippers."

Article I: Original Sin

Augsburg Confession II

[1] Furthermore, it is taught among us that since the fall of Adam, all human beings who are born in the natural way are conceived and born in sin. This means that from birth they are full of evil lust and inclination and cannot by nature possess true fear of God and true faith in God.

[2] Moreover, this same innate disease and original sin is truly sin and condemns to God's eternal wrath all who are not in turn born anew through baptism and the Holy Spirit.

[3] Rejected, then, are the Pelagians and others who do not regard original sin as sin in order to make human nature righteous through natural powers, thus insulting the suffering and merit of Christ.

Defense of the Augsburg Confession II

[9] For what else is the ability to love God above all things with one's own power and to keep the commandments of God than original righteousness?

[10] What becomes of original sin if human nature by itself has the power to love God above all things, as the scholastics confidently affirm? What need will there be for the grace of Christ if we can become righteous by our own righteousness? What need will there be for the Holy Spirit if by our human power alone we can love God above all things and keep God's commandments?

[14] These were the reasons why in our definition of original sin we mentioned concupiscence and also denied to the natural powers of the human creature fear of and trust in God. We wanted to show that original sin also included these maladies: ignorance of God, contempt for God, the absence of the fear of and trust in God, and the inability to love God. These are the chief defects of human nature—in conflict especially with the first table of the Decalogue

Formula of Concord I: Epitome

The principal question in this controversy is if, strictly and without any distinction, original sin is man's corrupted nature, substance, and essence, or indeed the principal and best part of his being (that is, his rational soul in its highest form and powers). Or if there is a distinction, even after the Fall, between man's substance, nature, essence, body, and soul on the one hand, and original sin on the other hand, so that man's nature is one thing and original sin, which inheres in the corrupted nature and corrupts it, is something else.

Q: Flacius begins calling sin "a substance," what we ARE by nature, not something we HAVE. What are we saying about God? About Satan? Are we saying something Jesus would not say?

[4] For God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the fall but also our body and soul after the fall, even though they are corrupted. God also still recognizes them as his own work, as it is written, Job 10[:8*], "Your hands fashioned and made me, together all around."

[6] Therefore, Christ also redeemed human nature as his creation, sanctifies it as his creation, awakens it from the dead, and adorns it in glorious fashion as his creation. But he did not create, assume, redeem, or sanctify original sin. He will also not bring it to life in his elect. He will neither adorn it with glory nor save it. Instead, it will be utterly destroyed in the resurrection

[8] 3. On the other hand, we believe, teach, and confess that original sin is not a slight corruption of human nature, but rather a corruption so deep that there is nothing sound or uncorrupted left in the human body or soul, in its internal or external powers.

Q: Why did the reformers choose the phrase “we believe, teach and confess?” What is the difference between the three?

Q: What are we saying about God and about Christ and his work if we follow Flacius and say that sin is what we are, and not simply something that has happened – a corruption - to our nature? Why do we think of the statement, “Evil is not a substance in contrast to good, but rather a lack or absence of that which is good?”

[11] Therefore, we reject and condemn the teaching that original sin is only a reatus, that is, guilt, which results from someone else’s fault, without being any kind of corruption of our own nature.

Q: What is the opposite of “believe, teach and confess” in the negative theses?

[13] Likewise, we also reject the Pelagian error, which asserts that even after the fall human nature has remained uncorrupted and especially in spiritual matters remains completely good and pure in its naturalia, that is, in its natural powers.

Q: Who were the Pelagians? What is semi-Pelagianism?

[14] Likewise, that original sin is only a slight, insignificant smudge that has been smeared on top of the human nature, a superficial stain, underneath which human nature retains its good powers, even in spiritual matters.

[16] Likewise, that in the human being, human nature and its essence are not completely corrupted but that people still have something good about them, even in spiritual matters, such as the capability, aptitude, ability, or capacity to initiate or effect something in spiritual matters or to cooperate in such actions.

[17] On the other hand, we also reject the false teaching of the Manichaeans, when it is taught that original sin is something essential and autonomous that Satan infused into human nature and mixed together with it, as when poison and wine are mixed.

Q: Who was Mani and what was Manichaeism? Who was one of its most famous practitioners? Why would it have been appealing? How does it persist in some forms today?

[18] Likewise, that not the natural human being, but something extraneous and alien within the person commits sin, and thus not human nature but only original sin itself, which is in this nature, stands accused.

[21] For original sin is not a sin that a person commits; rather it is embedded in the human being’s nature, substance, and essence. That means that even if no evil thought ever arose in the heart of the corrupted human being, no idle word were uttered, no evil deed done, nonetheless our nature is corrupted by original sin, which is implanted in us at birth in the sinful seed and which is a source of all other, actual sins, such as evil thoughts, words, and deeds, as it is written, “Out of the heart come evil intentions ...” [Matt. 15:19*], and, “The inclination of the human heart is evil from youth” [Gen. 8:21*].

Formula of Concord Article II: Free Will

...The human will is found in four dissimilar situations (1. before the fall; **2. after the fall**; 3. after new birth; 4. after the resurrection of the flesh), the primary question concerns only the human will and capacity in the second situation: what kind of powers do human beings have after the fall of our first parents, before rebirth, on their own, in spiritual matters? Are they able, with their own powers, before they receive new birth through God's Spirit, to dispose themselves favorably toward God's grace and to prepare themselves to accept the grace offered by the Holy Spirit in the Word and the holy sacraments, or not? ¹

Discuss: Why would it matter if there something within us for which God can give us credit? How would it change our attitude towards ourselves, toward others, and towards Christ if there was? Why is it important to distinguish between these four "states" of the human will? What part of "free will" is this article not addressing, and why does that matter?

Relevant Scripture Passages

1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV): The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Genesis 8:21 (ESV): And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.

Ephesians 2:5 (ESV): even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.

John 15:5 (ESV): I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Discuss: Based on these passages, would you agree or disagree with the following:

- 1) "God helps those who help themselves"
- 2) "God saves those deserving of salvation"
- 3) "God lays choices before the non-Christian, and they must accept or reject those choices"

Affirmative Statements (believe, teach and confess)

1. Human reason and understanding are blind in spiritual matters and understand nothing on the basis of their own powers...

2. The unregenerated human will is not only turned away from God but has also become God's enemy, that it has only the desire and will to do evil and whatever is opposed to God...

¹ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (p. 491). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

3. God the Holy Spirit does not effect conversion without means, but he uses the preaching and the hearing of God's Word to accomplish it... it is God's will that people hear his Word and not plug their ears. In this Word the Holy Spirit is present and opens hearts... [Christ] denies the free will its powers and ascribes everything to God's grace, so that no one has grounds for boasting before God.

Negative Statements (reject and condemn)

1. The **Stoics**, as well as the **Manichaeans**, who taught that everything that happens has to happen just so and could not happen in any other way, and that people do everything that they do, even in external things, under coercion and that they are coerced to do evil works and deeds.

Discuss: How should we govern our societies if this is true?

2. The error of the crass **Pelagians**, who taught that human beings could convert themselves to God, believe the gospel, be obedient to God's law with their whole hearts, and thus merit forgiveness of sins and eternal life out of their own powers apart from the grace of the Holy Spirit.

3. The error of the **Semi-Pelagians**, who teach that human beings can initiate their conversion by means of their own powers, but cannot complete it without the grace of the Holy Spirit

Discuss: What is the difference between "crass" and semi-Pelagians? How are they the same?

4. Likewise, the teaching (**Common Grace**) that, although human beings are too weak to initiate conversion with their free will before rebirth, and thus convert themselves to God on the basis of their own natural powers and be obedient to God's law with their whole hearts, nonetheless, once the Holy Spirit has made a beginning through the preaching of the Word and in it has offered his grace, the human will... even though small and feeble, to do something,

Discuss: Why are so many Protestants tempted by this view? What question does it answer? What new problem does it cause?

5. That the human being, after rebirth, can keep God's law perfectly and fulfill it completely, and that this fulfilling of the law constitutes our righteousness before God

Discuss: Of the three questions asked on the first page, which one does this view support?

6. The error of the **Enthusiasts**, who contrive the idea that God draws people to himself, enlightens them, makes them righteous, and saves them without means, without the hearing of God's Word, even without the use of the holy sacraments

Discuss: Where does the word "enthusiasm" come from? Why was Luther so opposed to "enthusiasts?" What problem does it solve? What new problem does it create?

Conclusion

"On the other hand, it is correct to say that in conversion God changes recalcitrant, unwilling people into willing people through the drawing power of the Holy Spirit, and that after this conversion the reborn human will is not idle in the daily exercise of repentance, but cooperates in all the works of the Holy Spirit which he performs through us."

Formula of Concord Article III: Righteousness of Faith before God

THE EASY PART: Our churches unanimously confess on the basis of God's Word and in accord with the content of the Augsburg Confession that we poor sinners become righteous before God and are saved only through faith in Christ, and that therefore Christ alone is our righteousness.

Discuss: How would you understand the phrase, "We are justified before God by faith in Christ Jesus?" How would you explain that phrase to others?

THE CHALLENGE: He is truly God and human because in him the divine and human natures are personally united with each other (Jer. 23[:6*]; 1 Cor. 1[:30*]; 2 Cor. 5[:21*]). Because of this confession, the question arose: According to which nature is Christ our righteousness? Thus, two mutually contradictory errors emerged in some churches.

1) The one party held that Christ is our righteousness only according to his divinity, when he dwells in us through faith. In comparison to this divinity which dwells in us through faith, the sins of all human creatures are to be regarded as a drop of water compared to a huge sea.

2) On the other side, some have held that Christ is our righteousness before God only according to his human nature.²

Discuss: When a defendant is declared "not guilty" by a judge, what does that *mean*? What does it *not necessarily* mean? How would our system of law need to change to let only those who were absolutely not guilty free, and only those absolutely guilty be punished?

Affirmative Statements

1) ... Christ is our righteousness neither according to his divine nature alone nor according to his human nature alone. On the contrary, the whole Christ, according to both natures, is our righteousness, solely in his obedience that he rendered his Father as both God and a human being, an obedience unto death. Through this obedience he earned the forgiveness of sins and eternal life for us, as it is written, "Just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5[:19*])

Discuss: Why do we emphasize that "the whole Christ" saved us?

2) ...Our righteousness before God consists in this, that God forgives us our sins by sheer grace, without any works, merit, or worthiness of our own, in the past, at present, or in the future, that he gives us and reckons to us the righteousness of Christ's obedience

Discuss: Why did the confessors and "in the future" to the disavowal of any merit in us?

3) ... Faith alone is the means and instrument through which we lay hold of Christ and, thus, in Christ lay hold of this "righteousness which avails before God." Because of him "faith is reckoned to us as righteousness" (Rom. 4[:5*]).

Discuss: How is faith "an instrument"?

² Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (pp. 494–495). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

4) ... Faith is not a mere knowledge of the stories about Christ. It is instead a gift of God, through which in the Word of the gospel we recognize Christ truly as our redeemer and trust in him

Discuss: What do you think when you hear the word “faith”?

6) ... In spite of the fact that until death a great deal of weakness and frailty still cling to those who believe in Christ and are truly reborn, they should not doubt their righteousness.

Discuss: What is this meant to safeguard against? What is the alternative?

Negative Theses

4) [We reject and condemn the notion] that faith should look not only to the obedience of Christ but also to his divine nature, as it dwells in us and produces results, and that through this indwelling our sins are covered.

Discuss: If it was Christ in us that gave salvation, where would we always be focused?

5) [We reject and condemn the notion] that faith is the kind of trust in Christ’s obedience that can exist and remain in a person who does not truly repent, demonstrates no love resulting from this faith, and perseveres in sin against the conscience.

8) [We reject and condemn the notion] that faith has the primary role in justification, but at the same time renewal and love also constitute a part of our righteousness before God in this way, that although they are not the most important cause of our righteousness, nevertheless, our righteousness before God cannot be complete or perfect without such love and renewal.

9). [We reject and condemn the notion] that believers are both justified before God and receive salvation through the righteousness of Christ reckoned to them and through the new obedience which has begun in them, or partly through the reckoning of Christ’s righteousness to them and partly through this new obedience which has begun in them.

10). [We reject and condemn the notion] that the promise of grace is made our own through faith in the heart and through the confession of the mouth and through other virtues.

11. [We reject and condemn the notion] that faith does not justify without good works, that is, that good works are necessarily required for righteousness, and without their presence a person cannot be justified.

Discuss: Why, again, did the confessors want to distinguish, without separating, faith from works (Jesus’ humanity as an example) or inner renewal (Jesus’ divinity indwelling and working in us)?

Formula of Concord Article IV: Good Works

THE ISSUE: Regarding the teaching on good works two controversies arose in some churches: First some theologians split over the following expressions.

A) The first party wrote: good works are necessary for salvation; **it is impossible to be saved without good works**; and no one has ever been saved without good works.

B) Against this position the other party wrote: **good works are harmful to salvation**.

Later a split occurred among some theologians over the two words “necessary” and “free.” One party argued that **the word “necessary” should not be used** in regard to new obedience, which does not flow from necessity and compulsion but rather from a spontaneous spirit. The other party **retained the word “necessary”** because such obedience is not subject to our discretion, but rather reborn human beings are **bound to render such obedience**.³

WHY DO WE CARE?: From this semantic argument a further controversy developed over the substance of the matter, when one party argued that the law should not be preached at all among Christians but people should be admonished to do good works only on the basis of the holy gospel. The other party contradicted this position.

Discuss: Summarize what the practical implications of one position or another might be.

Affirmative Theses

1. That good works follow from true faith (when it is not a dead faith but a living faith), as certainly and without doubt as fruit from a good tree.

2... Good works must be completely excluded from any questions of salvation as well as from the article on our justification before God, as the apostle testifies in clear terms, “So also David declares that salvation pertains to that person alone to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works, saying, ‘Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered’ ” (Rom. 4[:6–8*]), and also, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2[:8–9*]).

Discuss: We often call this the “logical distinction” between sanctification and justification. It is not apples that make a tree an apple tree. It is apple trees that grow apples. Why is this distinction important?

3. We also believe, teach, and confess that all people, particularly those who have been reborn and renewed through the Holy Spirit, are obligated to do good works.

Discuss: How might we apply the “apple tree” analogy here? How does it also make sense out of Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount: “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)

³ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (p. 498). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

7. This is, of course, not to be understood in any other way than as the Lord Christ and his apostles themselves explain it, that is, regarding the liberated spirit, which acts not out of fear of punishment, like a slave, but out of the love of righteousness, as children (Rom. 8[:15*]).

8. However, in the elect children of God this spontaneity is not perfect but is encumbered with great weakness, as St. Paul complains about himself in Romans 7[:14–25*] and Galatians 5[:17*].

9. Of course, because of Christ, the Lord does not reckon this weakness against his elect, as it is written, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8[:1*]).

10. We also believe, teach, and confess that not our works, but only God’s Spirit, working through faith, preserves faith and salvation in us. Good works are a testimony of his presence and indwelling.

Discuss: Compare these words to what you have just read: “Faith clings to Jesus’ cross alone / And rests in Him unceasing; / And by its fruits true faith is known, / With love and hope increasing. / Yet faith alone doth justify, / Works serve thy neighbor and supply / The proof that faith is living.”

Negative Theses

1. Accordingly, we reject and condemn the following manner of speaking: when it is taught and written that good works are necessary for salvation; or that no one has ever been saved without good works; or that it is impossible to be saved without good works.

Discuss: A Lutheran proverb: “Good works are necessary, but good works are not necessary for salvation.” What does that mean?

2. We also reject and condemn the bald expression that “good works are harmful to salvation” as offensive and harmful to Christian discipline. For particularly in these last times it is no less necessary to admonish the people to Christian discipline and good works and to remind them how necessary it is that they practice good works as a demonstration of their faith and their gratitude to God than it is to admonish them that works not be mingled with the article on justification. For people can be damned by an Epicurean delusion about faith just as much as by the papistic, Pharisaic trust in their own works and merit.

Discuss: What do the confessors mean by “Epicurean delusion?”

3. We also reject and condemn the teaching that faith and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are not lost through intentional sin, but that the saints and elect retain the Holy Spirit even when they fall into adultery and other sins and persist in them.

Discuss: Which of these are appropriate or inappropriate ways of speaking?

- “Do good works so that you may remain in your heavenly calling, so that you do not fall back into sin and lose the Spirit and his gifts.”
- “Our good works preserve salvation.”
- “Those whom the Son of God has freed do true good works freely from a free and willing spirit.”
- “Christians do not learn good works from the Law, from which they’ve been freed, but rather from the Gospel.”

Formula of Concord Article V: Law and Gospel

THE ISSUE: Whether the preaching of the holy gospel is really not only a preaching of grace, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins, but also a preaching of repentance and rebuke, which condemns unbelief (something condemned not in the law but only by the gospel).⁴

Discuss: What do we mean when we say “The Gospel”? The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon godspell, or “good story” or “good telling.” It translates the Latin evangelium which is a transliteration of the Greek euangellion. Euangellion comes from the same family of words as “angel” (angelos - messenger). “Eu” is the Greek preface for “good” (euthanasia, eulogy).

Relevant Scripture Passages

2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling (orthotomeo) the word of truth.” (Luther translated as “dividing”)

Mark 1:15: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

Matthew 5:17–18: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

John 7:19: “Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law.”

Affirmative Theses

1. We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between law and gospel is to be preserved with great diligence in the church as an especially glorious light, through which the Word of God, in accord with Paul’s admonition, is properly divided.

Discuss: Our main textbook for preaching is Walther’s lectures on Law and Gospel. Why?

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the law is, strictly speaking, a divine teaching which gives instruction regarding what is right and God-pleasing and condemns everything that is sin and contrary to God’s will. 3. Therefore, everything that condemns sin is and belongs to the proclamation of the law.

Discuss: What is the definition of the Law given here? What would be examples from Scripture?

4. However, the gospel is, strictly speaking, the kind of teaching that reveals what the human being, who has not kept the law and has been condemned by it, should believe: that Christ has atoned and paid for all sins and apart from any human merit has obtained and won for people the forgiveness of sins, “the righteousness which avails before God,” and eternal life.

Discuss: What is the definition of the Gospel here? What does it exclude?

5. However, because the word “gospel” is not used in just one sense in the Holy Scripture—the reason this dispute arose in the first place—we believe, teach, and confess that when the word “gospel” is used for the entire teaching of Christ, which he presented in his teaching ministry, as did his apostles in theirs

⁴ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (p. 500). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

(it is used in this sense in Mark 1[:15*], Acts 20[:24*]), then it is correct to say or to write that the gospel is a proclamation of both repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

Discuss: What do we mean by the Gospel and the Law “widely understood”?

7. In regard to the disclosure of sin: the veil of Moses [2 Cor. 3:13–16*] hangs in front of the eyes of all people as long as they only hear the preaching of the law and nothing of Christ, and thus they never learn to recognize the true nature of their sin from the law. Instead, they either become presumptuous hypocrites, like the Pharisees, or they despair, like Judas. Therefore Christ takes the law in his hands and interprets it spiritually (Matt. 5[:21–48*]; Rom. 7[:14*]). Thus, God’s wrath, in all its enormity [Rom. 1:18*], is revealed from heaven upon all sinners; through this revelation they are directed to the law, and only then do they learn properly to recognize their sin through the law. Moses would never have been able to wring this acknowledgment out of them.

Discuss: How is it possible that only the Gospel can reveal the true nature of sin, and not the law? What does that say for our witness and our preaching?

Discuss: Is the cross Law or Gospel?

Ye who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly
Here its guilt may estimate
Mark the sacrifice appointed
See who bears the awful load
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed
Son of Man and Son of God (*LSB 451*)

8. Nonetheless, as long as all of this (that is, Christ’s suffering and death) proclaims God’s wrath and terrifies people, it is still not, strictly speaking, the preaching of the gospel, but the preaching of Moses and the law and is thus an alien work of Christ, through which he comes to his proper function, which is the preaching of grace, comforting, and making alive. This, strictly speaking, is the preaching of the gospel.

Discuss: Few people in our world are terrified of God’s wrath anymore. Based on what you have read so far, what is the solution? What might not be the solution?

Negative Theses

1. Accordingly, we reject and regard it as incorrect and harmful when it is taught that the gospel is, strictly speaking, a proclamation of repentance or retribution and not exclusively a proclamation of grace. For in this way the gospel is again made into a teaching of the law, the merit of Christ and the Holy Scriptures are obscured, Christians are robbed of true comfort, and the door is opened again to the papacy.

Discuss: How might confusing Law and Gospel open the door “again to the papacy”? What was the Reformers biggest concern with Romanist teaching? How have those concerns played themselves out in Quebec’s history? How can we avoid making the same mistakes ourselves?

Formula of Concord Article VI: The Third Use of the Law

THE ISSUE: The law has been given to people for three reasons: first, that through it external discipline may be maintained against the unruly and the disobedient; second, that people may be led through it to a recognition of their sins; third, after they have been reborn—since nevertheless the flesh still clings to them—that precisely because of the flesh they may have a sure guide, according to which they can orient and conduct their entire life. In this connection a dispute occurred among a few theologians over the third use of the law. It concerned whether the law is to be urged upon the reborn Christians or not. The one party said yes, the other no.⁵

Discuss: What do you remember about the uses of the law from the Catechism? Does this match what you learned? What do we call these three uses?

Relevant Scripture Passages

Romans 7:8–10: “But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. 10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.”

Romans 13:10 (ESV): “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Psalms 119:34–35 (ESV): “Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.”

Affirmative Theses

1. We believe, teach, and confess that, although people who truly believe in Christ and are genuinely converted to God have been liberated and set free from the curse and compulsion of the law through Christ, they indeed are not for that reason without the law. Instead, they have been redeemed by the Son of God so that they may practice the law day and night (Ps. 119[:1*]). For our first parents did not live without the law even before the fall. This law of God was written into the heart, for they were created in the image of God.

Discuss: What law did Adam and Eve have before the fall? How did it exist?

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the proclamation of the law is to be diligently impressed not only upon unbelievers and the unrepentant but also upon those who believe in Christ and are truly converted, reborn, and justified through faith. 3. For even if they are reborn and “renewed in the spirit of their minds” [Eph. 4:23*], this rebirth and renewal is not perfect in this world. Instead, it has only begun. Believers are engaged with the spirit of their minds in continual battle against the flesh, that is, against the perverted nature and character which clings to us until death and which because of the old creature is still lodged in the human understanding, will, and all human powers. In order that people do not resolve to perform service to God on the basis of their pious imagination in an arbitrary way of their own choosing, it is necessary for the law of God constantly to light their way. Likewise, it is necessary so that the old creature not act according to its own will but instead be compelled against its own will.

⁵ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (p. 502). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Discuss: How might you explain this statement: “The Christian, in the narrow sense, does not need the law. But the Christian, in the wide sense, absolutely does.”

Discuss: Why are the Reformers concerned that people not “resolve to perform service to God on the basis of their pious imagination in an arbitrary way of their own choosing.” Can you think of examples of this? How does learning the law guard against this?

4. Concerning the difference between the works of the law and the fruits of the Spirit, we believe, teach, and confess that the works performed according to the law remain works of the law and should be so called, as long as they are coerced out of people only through the pressure of punishment and the threat of God’s wrath. 5. The fruits of the Spirit, however, are the works that the Spirit of God, who dwells in believers, effects through the reborn; they are done by believers (insofar as they are reborn) as if they knew of no command, threat, or reward. In this manner the children of God live in the law and walk according to the law of God.

Galatians 5:18–23: 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

6. ...In terms of obedience to it there is a difference only in that those people who are not yet reborn do what the law demands unwillingly, because they are coerced (as is also the case with the reborn with respect to the flesh). Believers, however, do without coercion, with a willing spirit, insofar as they are born anew, what no threat of the law could ever force from them.

Discuss: How does this thesis explain the difference between the 1st and 3rd uses of the law?

Negative Theses

1. Therefore, we reject as contrary teaching and error, which harm Christian discipline and true piety, the teaching that the law should be preached in the way and extent described above only among unbelievers, non-Christians, and the unrepentant, not among Christians and those who truly believe in Christ.

Discuss: Drawing on everything we’ve read, what might be the practical implications of ignoring the instruction in the law amongst Christians?

Formula of Concord Article VII: The Holy Supper of Christ

REALLY? AGAIN? “Although those who teach Zwinglian doctrine are not to be counted among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession—since they separated themselves from this confession immediately, at the time it was presented—we, nonetheless, want to report on this controversy because they are insinuating themselves and spreading their error under the name of this Christian confession.”⁶

Note: This is one of the lengthiest articles in the Formula, and we’ll only scratch the surface.

In the Holy Supper are the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ truly and essentially present, distributed with the bread and wine, and received by mouth by all those who avail themselves of the sacrament—whether they are worthy or unworthy, godly or ungodly, believers or unbelievers—to bring believers comfort and life and to bring judgment upon unbelievers? The sacramentarians say no; we say yes.

To explain this controversy, it must first of all be noted that there are two kinds of sacramentarians. There are the crude sacramentarians, who state in plain language what they believe in their hearts: that in the Holy Supper there is nothing more than bread and wine present, nothing more distributed and received with the mouth.

Discuss: Baptist words of institution. Why are these called the “crude” sacramentarians?

Then there are the cunning sacramentarians, the most dangerous kind, who in part appear to use our language and who pretend that they also believe in a true presence of the true, essential, living body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that this takes place spiritually, through faith

Discuss: Reformed words of institution. What is an example of a religion that tries to disguise itself as Christian by using the same words but changing many of their meanings?

Affirmative Theses

2. ... The words of the testament of Christ are not to be understood in any other way than the way they literally sound, that is, not that the bread symbolizes the absent body and the wine the absent blood of Christ, but that they are truly the true body and blood of Christ because of the sacramental union.

3... neither human effort nor the recitation of the minister effect this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that it is to be attributed solely and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4... in the use of the Holy Supper the words of Christ’s institution may under no circumstances be omitted but must be spoken publicly...

Aside: Luther is quoted on the reason for these positions. 1) Jesus Christ is true, essential, natural, complete God and human being in one person, undivided and inseparable, 2) the right hand of God is everywhere, 3) the Word of God is not false or deceitful, and 4) God has and knows various ways to be present at a certain place.

⁶ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (pp. 503–504). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

6. We believe, teach, and confess that the body and blood of Christ are received not only spiritually through faith but also orally with the bread and wine, though not in Capernaïtic fashion but rather in a supernatural, heavenly way because of the sacramental union of the elements. The words of Christ clearly demonstrate this, when Christ said, “take, eat, and drink,” and the apostles did this. For it is written, “and they all drank from it” (Mark 14[:23*]). Likewise, Saint Paul says, “The bread, which we break, is a Communion with the body of Christ” [1 Cor. 10:16*], that is, who eats this bread eats the body of Christ. The leading teachers of the ancient church—Chrysostom, Cyprian, Leo I, Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, and others—unanimously testify to this.⁵¹

Discuss: What is a “Capernaïtic eating”? What does this refer to?

7. We believe, teach, and confess that not only those who truly believe and are worthy, but also the unworthy and unbelievers receive the true body and blood of Christ, though they do not receive life and comfort, but rather judgment and damnation, if they do not turn and repent. 8. We believe, teach, and confess that there is only one kind of unworthy guest, those who do not believe

Discuss: How does this make the Supper different from Baptism? How does this look in practice?

9. We believe, teach, and confess that no genuine believers—no matter how weak—as long as they retain a living faith, receive the Holy Supper as condemnation. For Christ instituted this supper particularly for Christians who are weak in faith but repentant, to comfort them and to strengthen their weak faith.

Discuss: Where do the Reformers urge us to look for “worthiness” and “belief”?

Negative Theses- We reject and condemn:

1. The papal transubstantiation, when it is taught in the papacy that bread and wine in the Holy Supper lose their substance and natural essence and thus cease to exist, in such a way that the bread is transformed into the body of Christ and only its outward form remains.

2. That the laity are given only one of the sacramental elements and that against the clear words of the testament of Christ the chalice is kept from them and they are robbed of the blood of Christ.

8. That the bread and wine are no more than a reminder, a seal, or a guarantee, through which we are assured that when faith soars into heaven, it will participate there in the body and blood of Christ as truly as we eat and drink bread and wine in the Supper.

13. That God, even on the basis of his total omnipotence (a dreadful statement!), cannot possibly make his body to be essentially present in more than one place at one particular time.

16. That unbelieving, unrepentant Christians do not receive the true body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper but only the bread and wine.

18. That those who truly believe, who have and retain a true, living, pure faith in Christ, can receive this sacrament to their judgment, simply because they are still imperfect in their outward way of life.

19. That the outward, visible elements of bread and wine in the holy sacrament should be adored.

Formula of Concord Article VIII: The Person of Christ

Out of the controversy regarding the Holy Supper there arose a disagreement between the theologians of the Augsburg Confession who teach purely and the Calvinists (who also led some other theologians astray) over the person of Christ, the two natures in Christ, and their characteristics.⁷

Discuss: What are the “two natures” of Christ? What do we mean when we say “nature”?

The chief question was whether on the basis of the personal union the divine and human natures—and likewise the characteristics of each—are intimately linked with each other within the person of Christ, in reality (that is, in fact and in truth), and to what extent they are intimately linked?

The sacramentarians contended that the divine and human natures are united in the one person in such a way that neither nature in reality (that is, in fact and in truth) shares with the other what is unique to that nature. Instead, they have only the name in common. For they say that unio simply “causes the names to be held in common,” that is, the personal union results in nothing more than the sharing of their names. That is to say, God is called a human being and the human being God. In other words, they claim that God has nothing to do with humanity, and humanity has nothing to do with the divinity or with its majesty and characteristics in reality (that is, in fact and in truth). Dr. Luther and those who supported him defended the opposite position against the sacramentarians.

Discuss: “Nestorianism” and “Monophysitism,” what is at stake if we get it wrong.

Affirmative Theses – We believe, teach and confess:

1. ...that the divine and human natures in Christ are personally united, and therefore, that there are not two Christs (one the Son of God and the other the Son of Man), but one single Son of God and Son of Man (Luke 1[:31–35*]; Rom. 9[:5*]).

Luke 1:31-32: “31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David.”

Romans 9:5: “To them [the Jewish people] belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.”

2. ...that the divine and human natures are not blended together into one essence. Neither is one transformed into the other. Rather, each retains its own essential characteristics, which never become the characteristics of the other nature.

Discuss: What is a characteristic of humanity? What is a characteristic of divinity?

5. ... this union is not a connection or association of the sort that neither nature shares things with the other personally (that is, because of the personal union), as if two boards were glued together, with neither giving the other anything or receiving anything from the other. Instead, here is the most complete Communion, which God truly has with this human being; out of this personal union and out of

⁷ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (pp. 508–509). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

the most complete and most indescribable communion that results from it flows everything human that can be ascribed to and believed about God and everything divine that can be ascribed to and believed about the human Christ. The ancient teachers of the church have explained this union and communion of the natures using similes of a glowing iron and of the union of body and soul in the human being.

[According to the Formula, we are able to say things like...]

- "Mary gave birth to the true Son of God." "She is rightly called and truly is the Mother of God."
- "the Son of God truly suffered for us." "God is a human being." "A human being is God."

11... According to the personal union [Jesus] always possessed this majesty, and yet dispensed with it in the state of his humiliation. For this reason he grew in stature, wisdom, and grace before God and other people [Luke 2:52*]. Therefore, he did not reveal his majesty at all times but only when it pleased him, until he completely laid aside the form of a servant [Phil. 2:7*] (but not his human nature) after his resurrection.

Negative Theses- We reject and condemn:

1. That God and the human being in Christ are not one person, but there is one person, the Son of God, and another person, the Son of Man, as Nestorius foolishly asserted.
2. That the divine and human natures are mixed together with each other into one essence and that the human nature is transformed into divinity, as Eutyches fantasized.
3. That Christ is not true, natural, and eternal God, as Arius held.
4. That Christ did not have a true human nature, with body and soul, as Marcion contrived.
5. That the personal union creates only common titles or names.

Discuss: Marcionism, Arianism, Eutychianism and Nestorianism appeared in this order. Discuss how believing any of these things might affect our view of who God is for us.

10. That the human nature of Christ is spatially extended into all parts of heaven and earth (an idea that should not be applied to the divine nature either).

11. That it is impossible for Christ, because of the characteristics of the human nature, to be in more than one place at the same time—much less to be bodily present in all places.

12. That only the mere humanity suffered for us and redeemed us, and that the Son of God in fact had no communion with the humanity in the suffering, as if it had not affected him at all.

13. That Christ is present with us on earth in Word, in the sacraments, and in all times of need only according to his deity, and that such presence has absolutely nothing to do with his human nature...

14. That the Son of God, who assumed the human nature, after he laid aside the form of a servant does not perform all the works of his omnipotence in, through, and with his human nature, but only a few and exclusively in the place in which his human nature is spatially present.

Discuss: Are any of these statements bothersome to you? What would their opposite look like?

Formula of Concord Article IX: The Descent into Hell

[1] Among some theologians committed to the Augsburg Confession there has been some dispute regarding this article: when and in what manner the Lord Christ descended into hell, according to our simple Christian creed, and whether it took place before or after his death. Also, whether he descended only in his soul, or only in his deity, or with body and soul, bodily and spiritually. Also, whether this article of faith belongs to the suffering of Christ or to his glorious victory and triumph.

[2] Since this article, as is true of the previous article, cannot be comprehended by reason or understanding, but must be grasped alone by faith: It is our unanimous counsel that there should be no dispute over this issue [3] but it should be believed and taught on the simplest level as Dr. Luther of blessed memory explained this article in a most Christian manner in his sermon at Torgau in 1533. There he cut off all unprofitable, unnecessary questions and admonished all godly Christians to a simple Christian faith.

[4] For it is enough that we know that Christ descended into hell and destroyed hell for all believers and that he redeemed them from the power of death, the devil, and the eternal damnation of hellish retribution. How that happened we should save for the next world, where not only this matter but many others, which here we have simply believed and cannot comprehend with our blind reason, will be revealed.⁸

Luther's Sermon at Torgau (1533)

Therefore, whoever would not go wrong or stumble had best adhere to the words and understand them in a simple way, as well as he can. Accordingly, it is customary to represent Christ in paintings on walls, as He descends, appears before hell, clad in a priestly robe, and with a banner in His hand, with which He beats the devil and puts him to flight, takes hell by storm, and rescues those who are His. Thus it was also acted the night before Easter as a play for children.

And I am well pleased with the fact that it is painted, played, sung, and said in this manner for the benefit of simple people. We, too, should let it go at that, and not troubles ourselves with profound and subtle thoughts about how it may have happened... "However, since we cannot but conceive thoughts and images of what is presented to us in words, and are unable to think of it or understand anything without such images, it is appropriate and right that we view it literally, just as it is painted, that He descended with the banner, shattering and destroying the gates of hell; and we should put aside thoughts that are too deep and incomprehensible for us... But we ought... simply to fix and fasten our hearts and thoughts on the words of the Creed, which says, 'I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dead, buried, and descended into hell', that is, in the entire person, God and man, with body and soul, undivided, 'born of the Virgin, suffered, died, and buried.' In like manner I must not divide His person here either, but believe and say that the same Christ, God and man in one person, descended into hell.

Discuss: How is the ascent into heaven similarly tied to the descent into hell? How does Jesus' two natures play a role in both?

⁸ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (pp. 514–515). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Formula of Concord Article X: Ecclesiastical Practices

“Which Are Called Adiaphora or Indifferent Matters”

A dispute also occurred among theologians of the Augsburg Confession over ceremonies or ecclesiastical practices that are neither commanded nor forbidden in God’s Word but that were introduced in the churches for the sake of good order and decorum. The chief question concerned a situation of persecution, in a case in which confession is necessary, when the enemies of the gospel refuse to come to terms with us: the question was whether, in that situation, in good conscience, certain ceremonies that had been abolished (as in themselves indifferent matters neither commanded nor forbidden by God) could be revived under the pressure and demand of the opponents, and whether compromise with them in such ceremonies and indifferent matters would be proper? The one party said yes, the other said no to this question.⁹

Discuss: What is this article *not* discussing? What would be an example of a pressure to do something? What would be a bad example?

Affirmative Theses

1. To settle this dispute, we unanimously believe, teach, and confess that ceremonies or ecclesiastical practices that are neither commanded nor forbidden in God’s Word, but have been established only for good order and decorum, are in and of themselves neither worship ordained by God nor a part of such worship. “In vain do they worship me” with human precepts (Matt. 15[:9*]).

Discuss: What are examples of things we do in worship that are neither commanded nor forbidden in God’s Word, but are established for “good order and decorum”?

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the community of God in every place and at every time has the authority to alter such ceremonies according to its own situation, as may be most useful and edifying for the community of God.

Discuss: What “alterations” are in place at Ascension that might be different in other LCMS congregations?

3. Of course, all frivolity and offense must be avoided, and special consideration must be given particularly to those who are weak in faith.

Discuss: Why is the admonition about “those who are weak in faith” so important?

4. We believe, teach, and confess that in a time of persecution, when an unequivocal confession of the faith is demanded of us, we dare not yield to the opponents in such indifferent matters. As the Apostle wrote, “Stand firm in the freedom for which Christ has set us free, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” [Gal. 5:1*]. And: “Do not put on the yoke of the others; what partnership is there between light and darkness?” [2 Cor. 6:14*]. “So that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you, we did not submit to them even for a moment” [Gal. 2:5*]. For in such a situation it is no longer indifferent matters that are at stake. The truth of the gospel and Christian freedom are at stake. The confirmation of open

⁹ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (pp. 514–515). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

idolatry, as well as the protection of the weak in faith from offense, is at stake. In such matters we can make no concessions but must offer an unequivocal confession and suffer whatever God sends and permits the enemies of his Word to inflict on us.

Discuss: The Prussian Union and the wine controversy. What might be another example of something in our time being imposed on us that is not forbidden or commanded?

5. We also believe, teach, and confess that no church should condemn another because the one has fewer or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other has, when otherwise there is unity with the other in teaching and all the articles of faith and in the proper use of the holy sacraments, according to the well-known saying, “Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei,” “Dissimilarity in fasting is not to disrupt unity in faith.”

Discuss: How do we balance unity in faith with unity in practice? How does “lex orandi, lex credendi” get balanced in our life?

Negative Theses

Therefore, we reject and condemn as incorrect and contrary to God’s Word:

1. When anyone teaches that human commands and prescriptions in the church are to be regarded in and of themselves as worship ordained by God or a part of it.

2. When anyone imposes such ceremonies, commands, and prescriptions upon the community of God with coercive force as if they were necessary, against its Christian freedom, which it has in external matters.

Discuss: When does something cross the line into being “imposed” or “necessary?”

3. Likewise, when anyone teaches that in a situation of persecution, when public confession is necessary, one may comply or come to terms with the enemies of the holy gospel in these indifferent matters and ceremonies. (Such actions serve to damage God’s truth.)

Discuss: “statu confessionis” – state of confession.

4. Likewise, when such external ceremonies and indifferent matters are abolished in a way that suggests that the community of God is not free at all times, according to its specific situation, to use one or more of these ceremonies in Christian freedom, as is most beneficial to the church.

Formula of Concord Article XI: Predestination

On this article there has been no public conflict among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession. However, because it is an article of comfort when properly treated, it is also explained in this document so that no offensive dispute may arise in the future.

Discuss: Why might the confessors have been worried about this, even though there didn't seem to be a conflict over this yet? How is this tied to the issue of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism? How can predestination be a hurt and not a help to the faith?

Affirmative Theses

1. First of all, the difference between *praescientia* and *praedestinatio*, that is, between God's foreknowledge and his eternal election, must be carefully noted. 2. God's foreknowledge is nothing else than that God knows all things before they happen, as it is written, "God in heaven reveals mysteries. He has disclosed to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in future times" (Dan. 2[:28*]). 3. This foreknowledge extends equally over godly people and evil people, but it is not a cause of evil. It is not the cause of sins, when people act wrongly (sin proceeds originally from the devil and the wicked, perverted human will), nor of human corruption, for which people are responsible themselves. Instead, God's foreknowledge provides order in the midst of evil and sets limits to it. It determines how long evil can continue and determines also that everything, even if it is evil in itself, serves the welfare of God's elect.

Discuss: Is it possible for people or demons to will something opposed to God's will? Is it possible to surprise God with these choices?

4. *Praedestinatio*, however, or God's eternal election, extends only to the righteous, God-pleasing children of God. It is a cause of their salvation, which God brings about. He has arranged everything that belongs to it. Our salvation is so firmly grounded on it [cf. John 10:26–29*] that "the gates of hell will not prevail against it" [Matt. 16:18*]. 5. This election is not to be probed in the secret counsel of God but rather is to be sought in the Word, where it has also been revealed.

Discuss: What happens if we prove this election in the "secret counsel of God?"

6. However, the Word of God leads us to Christ, who is the "Book of Life" [Phil. 4:3*; Rev. 3:5*], in whom are inscribed and chosen all who shall be eternally saved, as it is written, "He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world" [Eph. 1:4*]. 7. This Christ calls all sinners to himself and promises them refreshment. He is utterly serious in his desire that all people should come to him and seek help for themselves [cf. Matt. 11:28*]... Therefore we are to make judgments regarding our election to eternal life neither on the basis of reason nor on the basis of God's law. Such a course of action would lead us either into a wild, irresponsible, Epicurean life, or into despair—and would awaken harmful thoughts in human hearts. Whenever people follow their reason, they can hardly escape such reflections as these: "As long as God has chosen me for salvation, I cannot be condemned no matter what I do!" or, "I have not been chosen for eternal life, so it does not help when I do good; everything is really in vain."

Discuss: How do the confessors tie this doctrine to the need to avoid despair and hypocrisy?

11. That "many are called and few are chosen" [Matt. 20:16*] does not mean that God does not want to save everyone. Instead, the reason for condemnation lies in their not hearing God's Word at all or arrogantly despising it, plugging their ears and their hearts, and thus blocking the Holy Spirit's ordinary

path, so that he cannot carry out his work in them; or if they have given it a hearing, they cast it to the wind and pay no attention to it. Then the fault lies not with God and his election but with their own wickedness [cf. 2 Peter 2:9–15*; Luke 11:47–52*; Heb. 12:15–17*, 25*].

Discuss: What do you think of the statement, “Salvation is God’s work, but condemnation is your own fault.”

Negative Theses

Accordingly, we believe and maintain that those who present the teaching of God’s gracious election to eternal life either in such a way that troubled Christians cannot find comfort in it but are driven to faintheartedness or despair, or in such a way that the impenitent are strengthened in their arrogance, are not preaching this teaching according to the Word and will of God but rather according to their own reason and at the instigation of the accursed devil, because (as the Apostle testifies) “whatever was written was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope” [Rom. 15:4*].

Discuss: Objective vs Subjective Justification, or Universal vs Personal Salvation.

Therefore, we reject the following errors:

1. When it is taught that God does not want all people to repent and believe the gospel.
2. Likewise, that when God calls us to himself, he does not seriously intend that all people should come to him.
3. Likewise, that God does not desire that everyone should be saved, but rather that without regard to their sins—only because of God’s naked decision, intention, and will—some are designated for damnation, so that there is no way that they could be saved.
4. Likewise, that the cause of God’s election does not lie exclusively in God’s mercy and the most holy merit of Christ but that there is also a cause in us, because of which God has chosen us for eternal life.

Discuss: How did a false understanding of election lead to the “Protestant Work Ethic?” How did it warp Puritan life in New England? How might a right understanding have helped Romanists?

Formula of Concord Article XII: Other Factions

So that such heretical groups and sects may not tacitly be associated with us because we have not taken notice of them in the previous explanation of our teaching, we wish here at the end to list only the simple statements of doctrine in which they err and teach contrary to our Christian faith and confession, as we have presented it in detail.

The Anabaptists are divided among themselves into many different factions, and some advocate many errors, others few. In general, however, they proclaim the kind of teaching that cannot be tolerated or permitted either in the church, in public affairs and temporal government, or in domestic life.

Intolerable Teachings in the Church

1. That Christ did not receive his body and blood from the Virgin Mary but brought them with him from heaven.
2. That Christ is not true God but merely has more gifts of the Holy Spirit than any other holy person.
3. That our righteousness before God rests not only upon the merit of Christ but also in our renewal and thus in the godliness of our own way of life. This rests for the most part upon our own special, self-selected spirituality [Col. 2:23*] and is fundamentally nothing else than a new monasticism.
4. That children who are not baptized are not sinners in God's sight but instead are righteous and innocent. In their innocence, because they have not yet come into full exercise of their reason, they are saved without baptism (which in their opinion children do not need). They reject therefore the entire teaching of original sin and everything connected with it.
5. That children should not be baptized until they attain the use of reason and can confess their faith themselves.
6. That the children of Christians, because they are born to Christian and believing parents, are holy without and before baptism and are God's children. This is also the reason why the Anabaptists do not regard infant baptism as important, nor do they encourage it, against the express words of God's promise, which only extends to those who keep his covenant and do not despise it (Gen. 17[:4–8*, 19–21*]).
7. That a congregation in which sinners are still found is not a true Christian congregation.
8. That no one should attend worship or hear a sermon in the houses of worship in which papal Masses were previously held and recited.

Intolerable Articles in Public Affairs

1. That service in government is not a God-pleasing walk of life in the New Testament.
2. That a Christian cannot fill or carry out functions in the government with a good, clear conscience.
3. That a Christian may not make use of the functions of government against the wicked in appropriate situations, nor may the subjects of the government call upon it to use the power it possesses and has been given by God for protection and defense.
4. That Christians may neither swear an oath with good conscience nor pay homage with an oath to their prince or lord.
5. That in the period of the New Testament, governmental authority may not execute criminals without harming its conscience.

Discuss: Do the confessors have in view a specific kind of government?

Intolerable Articles in Domestic Life

1. That a Christian may not own or possess private property with a good conscience, but rather is bound to surrender all to the community.
2. That a Christian may not be an innkeeper, merchant, or arms-maker with good conscience.
3. That married people may divorce for the sake of faith and abandon the other marriage partner, and then marry another who shares the same faith.

Discuss: Who still holds to these beliefs? How might they be “semi-held”?

Errors of the New Arians

That Christ is not true, essential God by nature, of one eternal divine essence with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, but that he is merely adorned with divine majesty under and alongside God the Father.

Discuss: Who are the “new Arians” in our day?

Errors of the Antitrinitarians

This is a completely new sect, never before heard of in Christendom. It believes, teaches, and confesses that there is not a single, eternal, divine essence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but as God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three different persons, so each individual person also has its own distinct essence, separated from the other persons of the Godhead. Either all three—like three different human beings who in all other ways are completely separate from each other in their essences—would have equal power, wisdom, majesty, and glory; or, they are in essence and characteristics not equal, so that only the Father is the real, true God.

Discuss: Are there issues that have arisen in our day that were not anticipated in the Book of Concord?