

# Article V of the Augsburg Confession

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## Article V: Of the Ministry.

1 ] That we may obtain this faith, *the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted*. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, 2] the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear 3] the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. 4] They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.

## Der V. Artikel. Vom Predigtamt.

1 ] Solchen Glauben zu erlangen, hat Gott das *Predigtamt eingesetzt, Evangelium and Sakramente* gegeben, 2] dadurch er, als durch Mittel, den Heiligen Geist gibt, welcher den Glauben, wo and wann er will, in denen, so das Evangelium hören, wirkt, 3] welches da lehrt, das wir durch Christus Verdienst, nicht durch unser Verdienst, einen gnädigen Gott haben, so wir solches glauben. 4] Und werden verdammt die Wiedertäufer und andere, so lehren da wir ohne das leibliche Wort des Evangelii den Heiligen Geist durch eigene Bereitung, Gedanken und Werke erlangen.

## Art. V. De Ministerio Ecclesiastico.

1 ] Ut hanc fidem consequamur, *institutum est ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta*. Nam per Verbum et sacramenta tamquam per instrumenta 2] donator Spiritus Sanctus, qui fidem efficit, ubi et quando visum est Deo, in iis, qui audiunt 3] evangelium, scilicet quod Deus non propter nostra merita, sed propter Christum iustificet hos, qui credunt se propter Christum in gratiam recipi. 4] Damnant Anabaptistas et alios, qui sentient Spiritum Sanctum contingere sine Verbo externo hominibus per ipsorum praeparationes et opera.

## Introduction Thoughts

Current worship attendance statistics reveal the challenge.

Some tell us they reveal a skill level problem on the part of the called worker.

Some tell us that the problem the statistics reveal points to a lack of leadership and management ability.

But the Reformers of 150 offer a different view in Article V.

God had a plan to reach sinful hearts right from the start.

The active faith-creating agent in God's plan is the Gospel, not skilled pastors.

## The Gospel is the focus issue of Article V.

### Therefore we will study this concept under four thoughts.

- a. God instituted the means of grace and entrusted it to the office of the ministry.
- b. The means of grace are the Gospel in Word and Sacraments and they are the only way in which God creates and strengthens hearts.
- c. The Holy Spirit uses these means to create faith and he alone controls the results.
- d. This Article, beginning with the Anabaptists, condemns all who say that the Holy Spirit works immediately.

## I. God instituted the means of grace and entrusted it to the office of the ministry.

A. The Augsburg Confession presents God's teachings in an orderly format

- a. Article I speaks of God and his creation
- b. Article II speaks of man and his Fall

- c. Article III points to Christ as the one who mediates between God and man and reconciles the world to God
  - d. Article IV clearly states that only through faith can we gain what Christ has won for all
- B. The next problem: How does sinful man who is born blind and an enemy of God gain faith in this God?
- C. The Roman Catholics in Luther's day and now provide a solution. They say man accomplishes his own salvation with the help of "grace."
- D. John Calvin under the heading of the determinate will of God provided another approach to the problem.
  - a. Calvin spoke of a "common grace" available to all and a "particular grace" available to those whom God elected
  - b. In Calvin's approach, there are no real "means of grace"
    - 1. Hodge: *"all second causes being excluded and the inclusion of the new life into the soul being the immediate work of the Spirit, the means merely attend the work of regeneration"*
    - 2. Hodge: *"Man sees by the light. Without light, vision is impossible. Yet the eyes of the blind are not opened by means of the light."*
- E. The Synergists saw man as a "free moral agent" able to chose God or to reject him. Here, too, there was no room for "means." For the Synergist, the contact with the Holy Spirit was always immediate.
- F. Then there were the Lutheran Reformers of 1530
  - a. They were men of deep understanding of the Scriptures and long experience in the ways of a loving God.
  - b. They knew that God accomplished the full and complete salvation of all mankind through the Christ. Nothing more needed to be done. 2 Cor. 5:19
  - c. They knew that God made faith the connecting agent through which he connects sinful man with the victory Jesus won. John 3:16
  - d. They knew that faith itself was a gift of God, not the product of the work man did. Eph. 2:8,9
  - e. And in regard to the "means of grace," these reformers knew that God had decided to use the "foolishness of preaching" as the tool to reach the heart of sinful man. 1 Cor. 1:21
- G. So in Article V the Lutheran Reformers state that God instituted the Gospel as the means of grace and entrusted that means to the Office of the Public Ministry.
  - a. This is God's answer to the problem of how sinful man who hates God comes to faith in the God he hates and gains the salvation Jesus won.
  - b. The two sections of the answer are the Gospel and the Office that carries that Gospel to man.
  - c. The Gospel must be preached and this is the task God assigned to the Office of the Public Ministry. All who hold the Office are involved in the administration of the means of grace.
  - d. However, it is through the Gospel that God creates faith. The one who preaches adds nothing to the Gospel's effectiveness.
- H. Related topic: the Call
  - a. Only those entrusted with the administration of the means of grace may be "called."
  - b. The "call" can be extended to people who are full time such as the pastor or limited time such as VBS or Sunday School teachers.
  - c. The "call" can be issued to people whose primary task is something other than administration of the means of grace, as long as the administration of the means of grace is part of their function. (cf. Acts 6 – the 7 laymen were "called" to the task by the "laying on of hands" and Stephen among them surely spent some time preaching the Word.)
  - d. Those who have no involvement in the administration of the means of grace have no part in the office of the public ministry.

## II. The Means of Grace are the Only Way God Creates and Strengthens Faith

- A. The Means of Grace are the Gospel as it is found in Word and in the Sacraments (John 20:31, Acts 2:38, Matt. 26:28)
- B. These means are the way God has chosen to create and strengthen faith (1 Cor. 1:21)
  - a. Luther: LW, 40, 146: “Outwardly he (God) deals with us through the oral word of the gospel and through material signs, that is, baptism and the sacrament of the altar. Inwardly he deals with us through the Holy Spirit, faith, and other gifts. But whatever their measure or order the outward factors should and must precede. The inward experience follows and is effected by the outward. God has determined to give the inward to no one except through the outward. For he wants to give no one the Spirit or faith outside of the outward Word and sign instituted by him, as he says in Luke 16:29, “Let them hear Moses and the prophets.”
  - b. No human being can add to its faith producing power or to its effectiveness.
  - c. God creates faith through the Gospel. (John 17:20, 1 Pet. 1:23, James 1:21, Rom. 10:14,17)
  - d. The same is true for Baptism. (Tit.3:4ff)
- C. Problems in church growth are often ascribed to the Office holder noting his lack of skill or ability and suggesting that more training or organization are the keys to good growth.
- D. In reality, it is the Gospel alone that works faith, not the actions of the man. The answer today is still the answer God gave the foolish rich man, “they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.”

## III. The Holy Spirit works through the means to create and strengthen faith.

- A. Here we should note a slight difference of emphasis between the German and the Latin rendition of Article V.
  - a. The Latin emphasizes the means by which the Office holder is going to accomplish the task. (Nam per Verbum et sacramenta tamquam per instrumenta donatur Spiritus Sanctus, qui fidem efficit)
  - b. The German emphasizes the Office as coming from the Lord. (Solchen Glauben zu erlangen, hat Gott das *Predigtamt eingesetzt, Evangelium and Sakramente* gegeben, dadurch er, als durch Mittel, den Heiligen Geist gibt)
  - c. The end result is the same: The Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith through the Gospel. (1 Cor. 2:4,5)
  - d. We have one Spirit who builds his church through the Means of Grace. (1 Cor. 12:3ff)
- B. Note the emphasis on the fact that God causes growth.
  - a. Article V: For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, 2] the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear 3]the Gospel
  - b. Faith does not depend on man or his desires. It is solely in the hands of our gracious and merciful God.
- C. But this means the process runs on heaven’s time, not human time.
  - a. 1 Cor. 3:6,7 God gives the increase
  - b. Often people see lack and place blame on workers for lack of growth
  - c. The Holy Spirit alone can do such a thing. It is always God who decides, not us. We can do nothing to speed up the process.
- D. And our weaknesses in this picture become strengths as God uses them.
  - a. So it was for Paul’s thorn in the flesh. 2 Cor. 12:9
  - b. We too are little more than “jars of clay” carrying the treasure of God. God uses our flaws in his growth plan.
- E. Beware the double edged sword
  - a. We must rely fully on the power of the Lord in the Gospel. He causes the growth.
  - b. But we must also work while it is day.
    - 1. We must strive to grow in the Word.

2. We must “tend the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made us overseers.” “Home going pastors make church going people.”

#### **IV. All like the Anabaptists who teach God works apart from “means” must be condemned.**

##### A. The Anabaptist History

- a. Conrad Gabel and Felix Mann rejecting infant baptism and government interference formed the Anabaptists.
- b. “Anabaptist” which means “baptize again” was a term of derision.
- c. Later called “Mennonites” after Meno Simms who left the Catholic Priesthood to join with the group.

##### B. Anabaptist Teachings

- a. Limited Atonement: Salvation is a free gift bestowed on those who repent.
- b. Immediate Work of the Holy Spirit
- c. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are outward symbols that should be practiced.
- d. *The way of salvation is clear. The plan is simple: All have sinned, and therefore every one of us needs salvation. Jesus Christ has died, and His death was for the purpose of paying the price that stood against us. A response is required on our part. Each individual is expected to exercise faith in Jesus Christ as the Sin-bearer, to turn from his life of sin, and to receive water baptism.*

##### C. We still live in a world that longs for an “immediate God” and an “empowered human being.”

- a. Some call for “decision theology” saying man has the strength to make his decision for Christ.
- b. Some work to create an emotional worship atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit can touch the heart.
- c. Still others set in place man-made plans that will produce growth in our churches.

##### D. Our Treasure remains the Gospel and our method is to preach the Gospel and trust the Holy Spirit to work through it.

Conclusion – We follow the method of the water and the sun and the soil mentioned in Isaiah 55. We trust the rain and the sun to work together to produce the germination and the growth of the seed. We do nothing to affect that process. So it is with the Word. We preach the Word and God causes the growth.