

ABOUT THE FUTURE

#4 The Augsburg Confession

This is intense. October 31, 1517 Martin Luther nails his 95 Theses to the church door. “*Can we talk?*” Apparently not. So, Luther continues to agitate.

In October of 1518 and January of 1519 Luther debates with leading Roman Catholic Theologians. In 1521 Luther is ex-communicated. He is also declared an outlaw by Emperor Charles V. (It is during this time of banishment that Luther translates the New Testament into German.) By 1525 some 100,000 German peasants lay dead in the streets. The Reformation had become open revolt. In 1530 Emperor Charles V said “*Enough!*” Spiritual unrest had erupted into political dysfunction. Yes, that’s how it works.

The Augsburg Confession was written for a meeting called by Charles V. In it, Luther clarified the teachings of the now 13-year-old Lutheran movement. He articulated what it was Reformers and Roman Catholics agreed on, what they didn’t, and what in their disagreements were central and peripheral. Common ground was still not found.



*Catholic scholars as
beasts and boars.
(Not very nice!)*

In times of social, political and religious discord, defining oneself is essential. “*Iron sharpens iron.*” As the scriptures say. Mush sharpens nothing!

As the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation comes to us Lutherans continue to define, refine and contextualize our faith and witness.

- American Lutheranism has a 78-year history of refugee resettlement and relocation work through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS). Over these years, we have helped settle over 500,000 refugees. We will continue this work.
- In 1945 American Lutherans formed a government advocacy effort which today is known as the *Lutheran Office of Governmental Affairs*. Through *LOGA* we have under our belt 72 years of advocating for individual and family rights and benefits. Our voice will stay in the debate.
- And, for over 150 years, Lutheran hospitals have served the sick, counseling centers have worked with families, and adoption agencies have striven for the wellbeing and safety of children. Lutheran Services of America now touches one in every 50 American lives. There is still work to do!

We know who we are, doctrinally, functionally and spiritually. The coming 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation finds us once again in the midst of spiritual unrest and political dysfunction. You know what to do. Do it! (You’ll find more at www.oregonsynod.org/500)

With you on the journey,

Bp. Dave Brauer-Rieke