

# B.A.S.I.C.

*Brothers And Sisters In Christ*

## The Augsburg Confession: New Obedience

By Pastor Nathanael Mayhew

The title for this article is “New Obedience”. While that term does not occur in our article, it is a good summary of what is being presented here.

**Note:** Many of the titles we have for the articles of the Augsburg Confession in our *Book of Concord* were not put there at the time of the reformers, but were added later in history. This is noted in most of our copies by putting those titles which were added later in square brackets.

What does new obedience refer to? The term new obedience is used to describe the child of God’s keeping of the Law and will of God as a result of faith which is created in their heart through the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word. This obedience to the will of God is called “new” obedience because it flows from faith and is a fruit of faith.

The Bible uses the word “sanctification” to describe this new obedience. The Bible uses the term “sanctification” in two ways – in a broad sense and in a narrow sense.

- In the broad sense the Bible uses the term sanctification to refer to everything that the Holy Spirit does for the salvation of sinners. For example Paul writes: **“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not**

**having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25-27). [Compare: 1 Peter 1:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 26:17-18.]**

- The Holy Spirit also uses the word sanctification in a narrow sense, specifically referring to the new life God enables the Christian to lead through faith in Jesus. Again Paul writes: **“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)**

[Compare: 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4-5.]

Generally, when we speak of sanctification, we use it in this narrow sense - the new obedience which the child of God lives as a result of faith.

### The Augsburg Confession

Regarding the new obedience of the child of God the Lutheran confessors stated: *It is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works and that we must do all such good works as God has commanded, but we should do them for God’s sake and not place our trust in them as if thereby to merit favor before God. For we receive forgive-*

*God's love for us is  
the foundation of  
our love for Him  
and for others.*

ness of sin and righteousness through faith in Christ, as Christ Himself says, "So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants'" (Luke 17:10). The Fathers also teach thus, for Ambrose says, "It is ordained of God that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, and he shall have forgiveness of sins, not through works but through faith alone, without merit."

It is important to note the order in which these articles are presented in the Augsburg Confession: [Of God](#) (I), [Of Sin](#) (II), [Of the Son of God](#) (III), [Of Justification](#) (IV), [Of the Means of Grace](#) (V), and now [Of the New Obedience](#) (VI). The person of Christ was spoken of in Article 3, which led to the work of Christ in Article 4, which led to the means by which we receive what He has accomplished for us, which now leads to the earthly result of the Gospel in our lives: New Obedience. This order is important because it points out first things first - justification before God through faith in Christ must precede the new obedience.

#### **Obedience the Result of Faith**

Notice how the confessors point out that this new obedience is the result of justifying faith with the opening words: *It is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works...* The words "such faith" refer back to the faith spoken of in Article 4 on justification: "For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness, as Paul says..." That is reiterated again in this article when they write: *For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness through faith in Christ, as Christ Himself says....* Justification through faith is the cause of new obedience.

There are many passages in Scripture which speak of new obedience, that is, the new lives we live (or should live) in Christ. It can be easy when reading such sections to focus on what we should do for God and lose sight of what God has done (and continues to do) for us. But Scripture continually reminds us of the proper relationship between faith in Christ (justification) and new obedience

(sanctification):

Paul said: **"For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).**

John wrote: **"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.... We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:7-11,19).**

God's love for us is the foundation of our love for Him and for our neighbor. But Scripture goes one step further. The Holy Spirit makes it very clear that true obedience to God and His will can only come as a result of saving faith in the heart of an individual. In the great faith chapter of Hebrews 11, we are told:

**"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, 'and was not found, because God had taken him'; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:5-6).**

New obedience can only come as a result of justification through faith. Without justification through faith, new obedience cannot exist. At the same time, justification through faith does not exist without new obedience.

**"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so**

***faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).***

Jesus said, ***“every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matthew 7:17-19).***

While justification and new obedience are closely connected, the following chart outlines several key differences.

New obedience is the work of God in the child of God. It flows from God’s act of declaring us “not guilty” through faith in Christ, and it can in no way merit forgiveness or anything from God.

**Conclusion**

<b>Contrasts</b>	
<b>Justification</b>	<b>Sanctification</b>
Involves change in people’s status before God	Involves change in people’s hearts and lives
Excludes all human works	Consists in good works
Is complete and perfect in Christ	Is imperfect and incomplete in this world
Embraces all people	Takes place only in believers
Gives us complete certainty of salvation	Produces evidence of faith but doesn’t give us complete certainty of salvation

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# Out of Africa

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By Pastor Emeritus David Koenig

From the Field August 24, '15

While our sister church in Etago, Kenya has seven congregations with over 500 members, that is not the total picture.

What follows are my notes as we visited congregations on one trip. Many of these were not in fellowship with us, but gave us the opportunity to teach them what we believe. Although we have faced fraud and thieves in Kenya over the years, it is this being out among the people that is so rewarding – preaching, teaching and giving Bibles and catechisms.

“Notes on Congregation Visitation

Setelite Att. 28 – We gave 40 catechisms. They use rented quarters. This was started by the late Bishop John from Muranga last year with eight in a house.

Giurthurai Att. 18 – They have moved to a smaller hall due to the lower cost. We gave 40 catechisms.

Ngong Att. 17 – Land was donated. We gave out 40 cat. There are maybe 120 in church on a Sunday.

Karega Att. 58 – Pastor Isaac is here of the Muranga fellowship. There were also many friends in church. We gave 30 cat. They have a building and it was full.

Kangari Att. 120 – The land had been donated and they built a 30x80 building. This was the center of the late Bishop John's work. Pastor Samuel is here now.

Mariira Att. 78 – There were more people than could fit in the building. Land has been given.

Nyahururu Att. 21 – They need Bibles.

Kalawa Att. 37 – This is where Steve worships. They are trying to show them what we teach and encourage them to join with us. We will supply our teachings to them to study.

Samburu Att. 22. This is among the six stations which were started a year and a half ago by the late Bishop John. The others are: Mariakani, Taru, Magongo and two Masai – Merikubwa, Maji ya Chumri. These last two are interesting in that they are “dormant’ while the Masai trail their cattle elsewhere and then return here.”

We had contacts in Kenya before the start at Etago reported in ‘From the Field’ June 18, 2014. In 1984 there was correspondence with a Mrs. E. Kemunto. In 1985 there was correspondence with Pastor and Mrs. Osaka. On one visitation to Kenya I met with Pastor Maweu who had written us. We found that he was affiliated with a Lutheran church already and was not about to leave them. And then in April of 2000 we hit pay dirt in the tea laden hill country of Kisii. Through correspondence with a group inquiring after us we made preparations for a big meeting. But then there was a burial in the area which cut down on attendance. We met in a cow pasture on the side of a hill. My wife and I were pleased to be able to be there and meet with the 125 people present. The presentation covered a wide range of topics and questions. A letter of formal request was sent to the CLC and the work in Kenya began. Now Pastor Mike Gurath visits Kenya each year. Besides the previous areas of work, beginning in 2009 work began at Moi's Bridge with Pastor Gurath.

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