

Concordia Theological Monthly



F E B R U A R Y • 1 9 5 9

Confession of Faith of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestant

[EDITORIAL NOTE: This confession, adopted by the Great Synod, Nov. 28 to 30, 1951, was translated into German by Pastor K. Sitompul, general secretary of the H. K. B. P., and into English by Dagny Ohlekopf, secretary to Dr. F. A. Schiotz. We are making it available to our readers because of the great interest which it has aroused. Cf. the article by J. P. Ellwanger in the previous issue of this journal.]

PREAMBLE

1. This Confession of Faith of the H. K. B. P. is the continuation of the confessions (creeds) already existing, namely, the three confessions of faith (creeds) which were already known to our Christian forefathers and are called:

1. The Apostles' Creed
2. The Nicene Creed
3. The Athanasian Creed

2. This Confession of Faith is the summary of what we believe and hope in this life and the life to come.

3. This Confession of Faith is the basis of the H. K. B. P. in preaching, in teaching, and in public life. (Matt. 16:16)

4. This Confession of Faith is the basis of the H. K. B. P. on which to reject every false doctrine and heresy that is contrary to God's Word.

ARTICLE 1 — GOD

We believe and confess:

There is a God — eternal, almighty, unchangeable, omniscient, inscrutable, righteous, gracious, all-bountiful. The earth and all that is on it, is His; He is true, all holy, full of love.

In adopting this doctrine we reject the custom of calling God grandfather ("Ompung"), and the idea that God is a gracious God only, as well as the idea that blessing may be expected from the spirits of our ancestors. We also give up striving for a good time, and reject all those who listen to fortunetellers and read their fate in the lines of their hands.

In adopting this doctrine we also reject the heresy of considering God's power to be greater than His holiness and love.

ARTICLE 2 — THE TRINITY OF GOD

We believe and confess:

There is one God, and at the same time He is a Trinity, namely, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (John 5:19; 14:11; 1:1; 15:6; 2 Cor. 13:13; Matt. 28:19)

The Father has begotten His Son of His own being, forever and ever, that is: Just as the Father is eternal, the Son also is eternal. Likewise the Holy Spirit — proceeding from the Father and the Son — is eternal. (John 15:26)

In adopting this doctrine we reject any interpretation of the Trinity of God (Maha Esa) to the effect that the Son and the Spirit are subordinated to the Father.

We also reject the false doctrine interpreting the Trinity as God the Father, His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Mother: the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 3 — THE SPECIAL ACTS OF THE TRIUNE GOD

We believe and confess:

A. God the Father is the Maker, the Provider, and the Lord of all things visible and invisible.

According to this doctrine we reject any fatalism (Takdir and the like).

B. God the Son, who was incarnate, born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit, who is called Jesus. Two natures are found in Him, namely, God and man at the same time in one person, which cannot be separated. Jesus Christ was very God, and at the same time He is very man. He has suffered under the judgment of Pontius Pilate, was crucified on the cross in order to deliver us from sin, from death, and from the rule of the devil. He is the abundance of all expiatory sacrifices to God because of all man's sin. He descended into hell after being buried; the third day He rose again, He ascended into heaven, sitting on the right hand of God the Father, who is glorious forever. He is our intercessor in heaven and Lord of all, until He will come again to judge the quick and the dead. (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-22; Eph. 1:7; John 3:16; Phil. 2:9-11)

According to this doctrine we reject the Roman Catholic doctrines, such as

1. the doctrine teaching that Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, or, as they call her, the Glorified, may intercede for us with God;
2. the doctrine teaching that any pastor (priest) may sacrifice Christ in the Mass;
3. the false doctrine that the Roman pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth. (Matt. 23:8-10)

Fourth, we reject the human conception teaching that the Lord Jesus is comparable to the prophets of the world.

C. God the Holy Spirit has called the church and has taught it and preserved it in true faith and holiness in the Gospel, to the honor of God. (Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 3:16)

According to this doctrine we reject the doctrine teaching that the Holy Spirit can descend upon somebody through his own preparations, beyond the Gospel.

Furthermore we reject the doctrine teaching that the Holy Spirit can descend only in times of ecstasy and speaking in tongues.

We also reject the doctrine teaching that all medicines are unnecessary because physical illnesses may be properly cured only by prayer to the Holy Spirit, as well as the false prophecies made in the name of the Holy Spirit, and the dissolute life of people who say that they are established in the name of the Holy Spirit.

All these false doctrines we reject because they are a misuse of the name of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 4 — THE WORD OF GOD (THE HOLY SCRIPTURES)

We believe and confess:

The words written in the Bible, in the Old and New Testaments, are certainly words of God, "for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man" (2 Peter 1:21). "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)

According to this doctrine we emphasize: The Holy Scripture is completely sufficient to reveal God's being and His will, and the Holy Scripture is also completely sufficient to instruct what to

believe in order to gain eternal life (Rev. 22:18,19). The Holy Scripture is the beginning and the end of all thoughts, wisdom, and activity of the church and the believers.

According to this doctrine we reject any science and wisdom of man differing from the Holy Scriptures. (Prov. 3:5; Ps. 111:10)

ARTICLE 5 — THE FALL

The originator of sin is the devil. It is his will that all men become sinners and turn away from God. (John 8:44; Gen. 3:1-7; Rev. 20:10)

Thus, although the first men (Adam and Eve) were perfect and able to act in conformity with God's will, they nevertheless infringed the commandment God had given them and turned away from God because of the seduction by the devil. Consequently, sin is the infringement of God's commandment. (1 John 3:4; James 1:15)

ARTICLE 6 — ORIGINAL SIN

We believe and confess:

Since Adam and Eve had fallen into sin, sin has been passed on to all their descendants. Therefore all men are conceived in sin and are enslaved by the sin of trespassing against God's commandments. Punishment and eternal death are the result of sin. (Ps. 51:7; 58:4; Gen. 8:21; Rom. 3:12; 3:23; Titus 3:5; John 3:5; 6:63)

According to this doctrine we reject the false thought that newborn children are without sin, as well as the false thought teaching that sin can only be the result of poverty, penury, or distress, and that, consequently, such sin cannot be taken for sin.

We also reject the doctrine teaching that the heart of man at the time of his birth is pure like blank paper.

ARTICLE 7 — REDEMPTION FROM SIN

We believe and confess:

No man gains redemption from sin by means of good works, or through his own power. Only the grace of God through the redemption of Jesus Christ brings us salvation. The only way to gain salvation is by faith and the working of the Holy Spirit, by

which the believer receives remission of sin which is won by Jesus Christ through His death.

Such faith is also taken by God for true righteousness. (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 8:9; Acts 4:12)

ARTICLE 8 — THE CHURCH

A. We believe and confess:

The church is the communion of believers in Jesus Christ, who are called, gathered, sanctified, and preserved by God through the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Peter 2:9; Eph. 1:22; 1 Cor. 3)

According to this doctrine we reject the doctrine teaching the following:

1. That the church (communion) is established by men through their own will, and the followers of that doctrine for that reason separate from our church, not because in our church there is any false doctrine that does not harmonize with God's Word.

2. Likewise we reject the false thought that only the leaders and only the assemblies or the members can exert full authority over the church; for Christ only is the Lord of the church, and the church has to follow only such orders that harmonize with His Word. In the church there is no democracy, but Christocracy.

3. Likewise we oppose the idea that the church should become a state church, since the task of the state is different from the service of the church.

4. We also oppose the idea that the church should be based upon the Adat [nationalities?] and bound to it, as well as the false thought that expects organization to impart life to the church.

B. We believe and confess:

The church is holy. The church is holy not because its members as such are holy, but because its head, Jesus Christ, is holy.

Thus, Christ has sanctified the church, and therefore the members, too, are considered holy by God. Because of the holiness of the church they are also considered a holy people, a temple of the Holy Spirit and habitation of God. (1 Peter 2:9; Eph. 2:22; Rev. 1:6; Eph. 3:21; 1 Cor. 3:16)

According to this doctrine we reject the doctrine teaching that man can gain his holiness through his work, as well as pessimism

and separation on the basis of the perception that there is still sin among the church members.

C. We believe and confess:

The church is a congregation. The congregation is the assembly of all saints who have a share in Jesus Christ and all His gifts, namely, the Gospel, the Holy Spirit, love, and hope. They are of every country and people, every tribe and race and every language in their various ceremonies and orders.

According to this doctrine we reject the interpretation considering the church a national church (intended for one people), and the idea of isolating one church from another one.

D. We believe and confess:

There is one church. The basis is Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:20. There is one body, that is the church, and even though there are many members, there is but one body.

This unity of the church is different from the secular unity, because it is a spiritual unity. (John 17:20, 21)

According to this doctrine we reject any separations of churches that are not based on differences of faith, but only on external reasons.

Features of the True Church

We believe and confess:

1. The pure preaching of the Gospel;
2. The proper administering of the sacraments ordered by the Lord Jesus;
3. The proper exercise of discipline in order to combat sin are the features of the true church.

ARTICLE 9 — THE SERVANTS OF THE CHURCH

We believe and confess:

Every Christian is called to be a witness for Christ and a worker in the church. God has called the servants through the church according to the services of the church and to the three offices of Christ, namely, prophet, priest, and king.

These offices the church has to fulfill. (1 Cor. 12:28)

The service of the church comprehends:

1. The preaching of the Gospel to the church members and outside of the church.
2. The administering of the two sacraments, namely, the Holy Baptism and the Holy Communion.
3. The pastoral care of souls.
4. The preserving of the pure doctrine, the exercise of proper discipline, and the opposing of false doctrines.
5. The doing of diaconal work.

To these services God has called in the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. (Eph. 4:11; Acts 6)

According to this doctrine we reject the idea of denying and refusing the service of the servants on the basis of one's own opinion, unless on the basis of machinations which don't harmonize with their service.

According to this doctrine we also oppose anyone in the congregation rising to preach and to teach and to administer the sacraments without being called to these services by the church.

ARTICLE 10 — THE HOLY SACRAMENTS

We believe and confess:

There are two sacraments ordered by the Lord Jesus, namely, the Holy Baptism and the Holy Communion. The Lord Jesus Christ has ordered them for His congregation in order to grant His invisible grace, namely, remission of sin, redemption, life and glory, which are to be won by faith, through visible signs. (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; 14; Luke 22; 2 Cor. 11)

According to this doctrine we reject the Roman Catholic doctrine teaching that there are seven sacraments.

A. Holy Baptism

We believe and confess:

The Holy Baptism is a means of God's grace toward men, for by means of Baptism the believer is granted remission of sin, regeneration, redemption from death and devil, and also life everlasting.

According to this doctrine we confess that also children should be baptized, since through Baptism they will be received into the

communion of those who are saved by Christ. The Lord Jesus also accepted children. (Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16)

It is not necessary that the person to be baptized be immersed (Acts 2:41; 10:48; 16:33; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 10; 1:4; Titus 3:5; Heb. 2:29; 1 Peter 3:21)

B. *Holy Communion*

We believe and confess:

The Holy Communion is the eating of the bread by means of which we are given the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the drinking of the wine by means of which we are given the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby we receive redemption from sin, and life, and glory. (Mark 14; Luke 22; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Matt. 26)

According to this doctrine we reject the false doctrine teaching that only the bread without the wine should be given to the members of the church. For the Lord Jesus Himself, when He instituted the Lord's Supper, has spoken the words: "Drink ye all of it." And the first church has acted in accordance with this. (1 Cor. 11:24, 25)

Also the Mass is not in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, when one says that our Lord is sacrificed again each time in the Mass. Consequently, we are against this heresy.

ARTICLE 11 — THE CHURCH ORDER

We confess:

In the church there shall be a church order which is based upon the Holy Scriptures. For the church order is something to give order and peace to the church (1 Cor. 14:33). Also in the church the church festivals are celebrated, namely, the Birth of Jesus Christ, Good Friday, the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless everyone should remember that no one can win remission of sins by observation of all these festivals.

ARTICLE 12 — THE SECULAR GOVERNMENT

We confess:

That the authority who has power is ordained by God. That means an authority who opposes the evil and does right in order to bring peace and certainty to the believers, as it is written in

Romans 13 and 1 Timothy 2:2. Nevertheless one should also remember what is written in Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

According to this doctrine we confess: We ought to pray for the authority, that it may do right, and the church shall also raise its voice toward the authority.

According to this doctrine we also reject the idea that the church should become a state church, for the state is a state, and the church is a church. (Matt. 22:21 b)

Whenever it is necessary before the judge, a Christian is permitted to take an oath for truthfulness. The same may be done at the time of induction into an office or a responsibility.

ARTICLE 13 — SUNDAY

We consider Sunday holy. It is the Day of the Lord, which is the first day of creation, the day of the Resurrection of the Lord, and which has been celebrated by the church from the very beginning.

We refuse to return to the Jewish Sabbath, for we are Christians.

According to this doctrine we reject the false doctrine which declares Saturday to be the holy Sabbath day.

ARTICLE 14 — FOOD

We believe and confess:

Every creature of God is good, and one should not make any difference between various kinds of food, if it is received with thanksgiving and is sanctified by God's Word and by prayer.

No man can gain holiness by abstaining from certain foods, for holiness is received from God by faith. For this reason the apostles opposed the Jewish food laws. For the Gospel should not be perverted by abstaining from certain foods and by any habit or tradition. (Matt. 15; Rom. 14; Col. 2; Acts 15; 1 Tim. 4:4, 5)

According to this doctrine we reject any heresy teaching something different.

ARTICLE 15 — FAITH AND GOOD WORKS

We believe and confess:

Good works are the fruits of faith. Whosoever hopes to gain righteousness, life, comfort, or glory by doing good works is

mistaken. The Lord Jesus Christ alone can grant remission of sins and can bring man back to God.

We have to follow the Ten Commandments. However, we live only by faith, not by doing good works.

The Holy Spirit moves man to do good works (if not urged by the Spirit, good works will become sin). (John 5:15, 16; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:1)

ARTICLE 16 — THE FUNERAL

We believe and confess:

Men are destined to die, but after that there will be the Judgment (Heb. 9:27). Then they rest from their work (Rev. 14:13). Jesus Christ is the Lord of the quick and the dead. So when conducting a funeral, we think of the end of our lives, for the strengthening of our hope for the communion of the believers with God. This we do in order that we may be strengthened in our struggles in this life. (Rev. 7:9-17)

According to this doctrine we reject:

The heathenish concept that the souls of the dead have influence on the living; as well as the false doctrine teaching that the soul of a dead person remains in the grave with the body. We also reject the Roman Catholic doctrine teaching that there is a purgatory which the dead must experience in order to purify their souls and to win eternal life; furthermore, that one may conduct a Mass of prayers for the dead, in order that they may be saved sooner from the purgatory. We also reject the praying to the souls of the saints and the hope that the power or the holiness of the dead may enter into their graves, their shrouds, or any things, or even into their bones and may be passed on in this way (relics).

ARTICLE 17 — THE ANGELS

We believe and confess:

The angels are created by God to serve Him, they are ministering spirits sent by God to protect the heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14)

ARTICLE 18 — THE LAST JUDGMENT

We believe and confess:

Our Lord Jesus Christ will come again on Judgment Day to awake the dead (John 5:28; 1 Thess. 4:16; Matt. 24:3; Rev. 20:

11-15; Luke 21:28) and to judge men (Matt. 25; 1 Cor. 15:52; 2 Cor. 5:10). Then He will lead the believers to everlasting life (Matt. 25:34). The unbelievers, however, will go to everlasting torment. (Matt. 25)

The inheritance of the believers with God will last throughout eternity.

According to this doctrine we reject the heresy teaching that:

- a. the time of Christ's coming again may be computed;
- b. after death there is still a period of grace.

We confirm that the coming again of our Lord will be unexpected (1 Thess. 5:2; Matt. 24:42, 44, 50; Luke 12:35, 36). Consequently, we should be ready at any time, as He has warned us (Luke 12:35, 36).

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