#### This We Believe

A Statement of Belief of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



Prepared for the Conference of Presidents by the Commission on Inter-Church Relations for the Wisconsin Evangelical Synod, 1999

Bilingual - English and Chinese

Tenth printing, 2001

Revised, January 1999
Ninth printing, April 1988
Revised, September 1980

Sixth printing, May 1978

First printing, January 1967

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Northwestern Publishing House
© 1999 by Northwestern Publishing House
Published 1999
Printed in the United States of America ISBN
0-8100-0983-8

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#### INTRODUCTION

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). With these words Jesus indicates that he wants Christians to confess publicly what they believe in their hearts.

*This We Believe* is one way the members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod have chosen to confess their faith in Christ. This document publicly summarizes the main teachings of our church body.

This We Believe was first published in 1967. A minor revision was undertaken in 1980. In consultation with the Conference of Presidents, the Commission on Inter-Church Relations completed the present revision in 1999. This second revision seeks to simplify the language and to add some important points of doctrine not addressed in the first two editions. The current revision was not undertaken because of doctrinal disagreement with the previous editions.

The current document does not claim to be a full treatment of all the Bible's teachings. For a fuller exposition of the doctrines of Scripture, the reader is referred to other sources, including the pamphlet *Doctrinal Statements of the WELS* (Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

It should also be noted that *This We Believe* was not specifically designed to serve as an outreach tool for unchurched people, but as a basis for doctrinal discussions with other church bodies and informed individuals.

It is our conviction that over the years *This We Believe* has been a great blessing to the church. This revised edition is presented with the fervent prayer that it may continue to serve Christ's church, to the glory of his name and for the extension of his kingdom.

#### **FOREWORD**

"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." (Romans 10:10)

Asia Lutheran Seminary was established in 2005 in Hong Kong. Its purpose is to train pastors for Asia who properly use God's Word to shepherd their congregations. The Translation Working Group was founded in 2006 to make more Lutheran theological materials available to the Chinese-speaking world. Its purpose is to promote translation of Lutheran religious materials into Chinese.

This We Believe is the basic statement of faith of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). It clearly sets out the doctrines of the Bible as faithfully believed and confessed by Lutherans since the Reformation. As this is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM), we hope that our brothers and sisters in SALEM can better understand the foundation of the faith of WELS. Therefore, at the beginning of 2007, we decided to translate *This We Believe* into Chinese.

This CD contains *This We Believe*, together with translations in Simplified and Traditional Chinese. It also contains an audio reading (MP3) of the texts in English, Mandarin and Cantonese.

The English version of *This We Believe* was first published 40 years ago. This year the Chinese edition is being published. We hope this will be helpful in sharing God's gospel with many more Chinese people.

Translation Working Group Asia Lutheran Seminary This We Believe – Chinese version – 2007 First Edition

#### I. GOD AND HIS REVELATION

- 1. We believe that there is only one true God (Isaiah 44:6). He has made himself known as the triune God, one God in three persons. This is evident from Jesus' command to his disciples to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Whoever does not worship this God worships a false god, a god who does not exist. Jesus said, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him" (John 5:23).
- 2. We believe that God has revealed himself in nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:1). "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). So there is no excuse for atheists. Since the requirements of the law are written on people's hearts, the consciences of people also bear witness that there is a God to whom they are accountable (Romans 2:15). However, nature and conscience present only a partial revelation of God and one that is not able to show the way to heaven.
- 3. We believe that God has given the full revelation of himself in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18). In Jesus, God has revealed himself as the Savior-God, who "so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).
- 4. We believe that God has also given a written revelation for all people in the Holy Scriptures. His revelation in the Bible has two main messages, the law and the gospel. The law declares what is right and wrong, and it threatens God's punishment for sin. The gospel presents the love of God, which he has shown especially by providing salvation from sin through Jesus Christ.
- 5. We believe that the entire Bible is Christ-centered. In the Old Testament God repeatedly promised a divine deliverer from sin, death, and hell. The New Testament proclaims that this promised deliverer has come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus himself says of the Old Testament, "These are the Scriptures that testify about me" (John 5:39).
- 6. We believe that God gave the Scriptures through men whom he chose, using

the language they knew and the style of writing they had. He used Moses and the prophets to write the Old Testament in Hebrew (some portions in Aramaic) and the evangelists and apostles to write the New Testament in Greek.

- 7. We believe that in a miraculous way that goes beyond all human investigation, God the Holy Spirit moved these men to write his Word. These men "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). What they said was spoken "not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:13). Every thought they expressed and every word they used were given them by the Holy Spirit. Saint Paul wrote to Timothy, "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). The church has called this miraculous process *inspiration*, which means "breathing into." Since every word of Scripture was inspired, we also call this process verbal inspiration, or word-for-word inspiration. This is not to be equated with mechanical dictation, since the Holy Spirit guided the writers as they used their individual vocabularies and writing styles.
- 8. We believe that Scripture is a unified whole, true and without error in everything it says, for the Savior said, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Therefore it is the infallible authority and guide for everything we believe and do.
- 9. We believe that the Bible is fully sufficient, clearly teaching people all they need to know to get to heaven. It makes them "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15), and it equips them for "every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17). Since God's plan of salvation has been fully revealed in the canonical books of the Bible, we need and expect no other revelations (Hebrews 1:1,2). The church is built on the teachings of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20).
- 10. We believe and accept the Bible on its own terms, accepting as factual history what it presents as history and recognizing as figurative speech what is evident as such. We believe that Scripture must interpret Scripture, clear passages throwing light on those less easily understood. We believe that no authority--whether it is human reason, science, or scholarship--may stand in judgment over Scripture. Sound scholarship will faithfully search out the true meaning of Scripture without presuming to pass judgment on it.
- 11. We believe that the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament are the inspired Word of God. Translations of the Hebrew and Greek that accurately reflect the meaning of the original text convey God's truth

to people and can properly be called the Word of God.

- 12. Although the original documents themselves have been lost, we believe that the Lord in his providential care has accurately preserved the Hebrew and Greek texts through the many hand-copied manuscripts that exist. Although there are minor differences or "variants" between the various hand-copied manuscripts, these variants do not cause any changes in doctrine.
- 13. We believe that the three ecumenical creeds (the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian) as well as the Lutheran Confessions as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 express the true doctrine of Scripture. Since the doctrines they confess are drawn from Scripture alone, we are bound to them in our faith and life. Therefore all preaching and teaching in our churches and schools must be in harmony with these confessions, and we reject all the errors that they reject.
- 14. We reject any worship that is not directed to the triune God as revealed in the Bible. We reject the use of feminine names and pronouns for God because in Scripture God reveals himself as Father and Son. We reject the opinion that all religions lead to the same God.
- 15. We reject any thought that makes only part of Scripture God's Word or that allows for the possibility of factual error in Scripture, even in so-called nonreligious matters such as historical or geographical details. We likewise reject all views that say Scripture is merely a human record of God's revelation as he encounters mankind in history, and so is a record subject to human imperfections.
- 16. We reject any emphasis upon Jesus as the personal Word of God (John 1:1) that minimizes the role of the Scriptures as the written Word of God (Romans 3:2).
- 17. We reject every effort to reduce the confessions contained in the Book of Concord to historical documents that do not have binding confessional significance for the church today. We likewise reject any claim that the church is bound only to those doctrines of Scripture that are specifically addressed in these confessions.

This is what Scripture teaches about God and his revelation. This we believe, teach, and confess.

#### II. CREATION, MAN, AND SIN

- 1. We believe that the universe, the world, and the human race came into existence in the beginning when God created heaven and earth and all creatures (Genesis 1,2). Further testimony to this event is found in other passages of the Old and New Testaments (for example, Exodus 20:11; Hebrews 11:3). The creation happened in the course of six consecutive days of normal length by the power of God's almighty word.
- 2. We believe that the Bible presents a true, factual, and historical account of creation.
- 3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in his own image (Genesis 1:26,27), that is, holy and righteous. Their thoughts, desires, and will were in full harmony with God (Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24). They were furthermore given the capacity to "subdue" God's creation (Genesis 1:28) and the responsibility to care for it (Genesis 2:15).
- 4. We believe that God created a multitude of good angels. Sometime after creation, a number of these angels rebelled against God under the leadership of one of their own who is called Satan or the devil (2 Peter 2:4). Ever since, these evil angels have opposed God and God's people (1 Peter 5:8).
- 5. We believe that Adam and Eve lost their divine image when they yielded to the temptation of Satan and disobeyed God's command. This brought upon them the judgment of God: "You will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Since that time all people are conceived and born in a sinful condition (Psalm 51:5) and are inclined only to evil (Genesis 8:21). "Flesh gives birth to flesh" (John 3:6). Since all people are by nature dead in sin and separated from God (Ephesians 2:1), they are unable to reconcile themselves to God by their own efforts and deeds.
- 6. We believe that God in his gracious providence richly and daily provides for the bodily needs of all people (Psalm 145:15,16). He furthermore protects believers against all danger by keeping evil away from them (Psalm 121:7) or by making it serve their good (Romans 8:28).
- 7. We reject all theories of evolution as an explanation of the origin of the universe and the human race and all attempts to harmonize the scriptural account of

creation with such theories.

- 8. We reject interpretations that reduce the first chapters of Genesis to a narration of myths or parables or poetic accounts that are not factual history.
- 9. We reject all theories that blur the distinction between human beings and animals, since only human beings have immortal souls and are accountable to God.
- 10. We reject all theories that blur the distinction between God and his creation (pantheism).
- 11. We reject all views that look upon people as basically good by nature; that consider their natural tendencies to be mere weaknesses, which are not sinful; or that fail to recognize their total spiritual depravity and their inability to please God (Romans 3:9-18). This is what Scripture teaches about creation, mankind, and sin. This we believe, teach, and confess.

This is what Scripture teaches about creation, mankind, and sin. This we believe, teach, and confess.

#### III. CHRIST AND REDEMPTION

- 1. We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, one with the Father from all eternity (John 1:1,2). In the course of time, he took a true and complete, yet sinless, human nature to himself (Galatians 4:4) when he was conceived as a holy child in the virgin Mary through a miracle of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). God's angel testified, "What is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20). Jesus Christ is unique, for in him the true God and a true human nature are inseparably united in one person, the holy God-man. He is called Immanuel, which means "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).
- 2. We believe that Jesus at all times possessed the fullness of the Deity with all divine power, wisdom, and glory (Colossians 2:9). His divinity was evident when he performed miracles (John 2:11). But while he lived on earth, he took on the form of a servant, humbling himself by laying aside the continuous and full display and use of his divine characteristics. During this time he lived as a man among mankind, endured suffering, and humbled himself to the shameful death on the cross (Philippians 2:7,8). We believe that Christ descended into hell to proclaim his victory over Satan (1 Peter 3:18,19). We believe that he rose again from the grave with a glorified body, ascended, and is exalted on high to rule with power over the world, with grace in his church, and with glory in eternity (Philippians 2:9-11).
- 3. We believe that Jesus Christ, the God-man, was sent by the Father to redeem all people, that is, to buy them back from the guilt and punishment of sin. Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17) so that on the basis of his perfect obedience all people would be declared holy (Romans 5:18,19). He came to bear "the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6), ransoming all people by his sacrifice for sin on the altar of the cross (Matthew 20:28). We believe that he is the God-appointed substitute for all people. His righteousness, or perfect obedience, is accepted by the Father as our righteousness, his death for sin as our death for sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). We believe that his resurrection gives full assurance that God has accepted the payment he made for all (Romans 4:25).
- 4. We believe that God reconciled "the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19). We believe that Jesus is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The mercy and grace of God are all-embracing; the reconciliation through Christ is universal; the forgiveness of sins has been gained as an accomplished fact for all people. Because of the

substitutionary work of Christ, God has justified all people, that is, God has declared them to be not guilty. This forms the firm, objective basis for the sinner's assurance of salvation.

- 5. We reject any teaching that in any way limits Christ's work of atonement. We reject any teaching that says Christ paid the penalty only for the sins of some people. We reject any teaching that says Christ made only a partial payment for sins.
- 6. We reject the views that consider the Gospel accounts to be pious fiction developed by early Christians to express their ideas about Jesus Christ rather than a true account of what actually happened in history. We reject all attempts to make the historical accuracy of events in Christ's life--such as his virgin birth, his miracles, or his bodily resurrection--appear unimportant or even doubtful. We reject the attempts to stress a "present encounter with the living Christ" in such a way that Jesus' redemptive work recorded in Scripture loses its importance.

This is what Scripture teaches about Christ and redemption. This we believe, teach and confess.

## IV. JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

- 1. We believe that God has justified all sinners, that is, he has declared them righteous for the sake of Christ. This is the central message of Scripture upon which the very existence of the church depends. It is a message relevant to people of all times and places, of all races and social levels, for "the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men" (Romans 5:18). All need forgiveness of sins before God, and Scripture proclaims that all have been justified, for "the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men" (Romans 5:18).
- 2. We believe that individuals receive this free gift of forgiveness not on the basis of their own works, but only through faith (Ephesians 2:8,9). Justifying faith is trust in Christ and his redemptive work. This faith justifies not because of any power it has in itself, but only because of the salvation prepared by God in Christ, which it embraces (Romans 3:28; 4:5). On the other hand, although Jesus died for all, Scripture says that "whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Unbelievers forfeit the forgiveness won for them by Christ (John 8:24).
- 3. We believe that people cannot produce this justifying faith, or trust, in their own hearts, because "the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him" (1 Corinthians 2:14). In fact, "the sinful mind is hostile to God" (Romans 8:7). It is the Holy Spirit who gives people faith to recognize that "Jesus is Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:3). The Holy Spirit works this faith by means of the gospel (Romans 10:17). We believe, therefore, that a person's conversion is entirely the work of God's grace. Rejection of the gospel is, however, entirely the unbeliever's own fault (Matthew 23:37).
- 4. We believe that sinners are saved by grace alone. Grace is the undeserved love of God for sinners. This love led God to give sinners everything they need for their salvation. It is all a gift of God. People do nothing to earn any of it (Ephesians 2:8,9).
- 5. We believe that already before the world was created, God chose those individuals whom he would in time convert through the gospel of Christ and preserve in faith to eternal life (Ephesians 1:4-6; Romans 8:29,30). This election to faith and salvation in no way was caused by anything in people but shows how completely salvation is by grace alone (Romans 11:5,6).

- 6. We believe that at the moment of death, the souls of those who believe in Christ go immediately to be with the Lord in the joy of heaven because of the atoning work of Christ (Luke 23:43). The souls of those who do not believe in Christ go to an eternity of misery in hell (Luke 16:22-24).
- 7. We reject every teaching that people in any way contribute to their salvation. We reject the belief that people with their own power can cooperate in their conversion or make a decision for Christ (John 15:16). We reject the belief that those who are converted were less resistant to God's grace than those who remain unconverted. We reject all efforts to present faith as a condition people must fulfill to complete their justification. We reject all attempts of sinners to justify themselves before God.
- 8. We reject any suggestion that the doctrine of justification by faith is no longer meaningful today.
- 9. We reject the teaching that believers can never fall from faith ("once saved, always saved"), because the Bible says it is possible for believers to fall from faith (1 Corinthians 10:12).
- 10. We reject the false and blasphemous conclusion that those who are lost were predestined, or elected, by God to damnation, for God wants all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).
- 11. We reject universalism, the belief that all people are saved, even those without faith in Christ (John 3:36). We reject pluralism, the belief that there are other ways to salvation besides faith in Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). We reject any teaching that says it does not matter what one believes so long as one has faith in God.

This is what Scripture teaches about justification by grace through faith. This we believe, teach and confess.

#### V. GOOD WORKS AND PRAYER

- 1. We believe that faith in Jesus Christ always leads a believer to produce works that are pleasing to God. "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17). As a branch in Christ the vine, a Christian produces good fruit (John 15:5).
- 2. We believe that works pleasing to God are works of love, for "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10). Faith, however, does not set up its own standards to determine what is loving (Matthew 15:9). True faith delights to do only what agrees with God's holy will. That will of God is revealed in the Bible, particularly in the Ten Commandments as their content is repeated in the New Testament. In wrestling with current moral problems, the Christian will therefore seek answers from God's law.
- 3. We believe, for example, that the Fifth Commandment teaches that all human life is a gift from God. This commandment speaks against abortion, suicide, and euthanasia ("mercy killing").
- 4. We believe that the Sixth Commandment regulates marriage and the family. God instituted marriage as a lifelong union of one man and one woman (Matthew 19:4-6). It is the only proper context for sexual intimacy and the procreation of children. A marriage can be ended without sin only when God ends the marriage through the death of one of the spouses. Nevertheless, a Christian may obtain a divorce if his or her spouse has broken the marriage through adultery (Matthew 19:9) or malicious desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15). The Sixth Commandment forbids all sexual intimacy apart from marriage, including homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9,10).
- 5. We believe that individuals are free to make their own decisions concerning matters that are neither forbidden nor commanded by God's Word (adiaphora). People must be careful, however, that their use of this freedom does not cause others to sin.
- 6. We believe that good works, which are fruits of faith, must be distinguished from works of civic righteousness performed by unbelievers. Although unbelievers may do much that appears to be good and upright, these works are not good in God's sight, for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). While we

recognize the value of such works for human society, we know that unbelievers cannot do their duty to God through works of civic righteousness.

- 7. We believe that in this world even the best works of Christians are tainted with sin. A sinful nature still afflicts every Christian. Therefore Christians often fail to do the good they want to do but keep on doing the evil they do not want to do (Romans 7:18-21). They must confess that all their righteous acts are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Because of Christ's redemption, however, these imperfect efforts of Christians are considered holy and acceptable by their heavenly Father.
- 8. We believe that the Holy Spirit enables every believer to produce good works as fruits of faith (Galatians 5:22-25). The Holy Spirit gives every believer a new nature, or "new man," that cooperates with the Holy Spirit in doing good works. The Holy Spirit uses the gospel to motivate believers to do good works.
- 9. The Holy Spirit also equips the church with all the spiritual gifts it needs for its well-being (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). During the beginning of the New Testament era, special charismatic gifts were given to the church, such as signs, miracles, and speaking in tongues. These gifts were connected with the ministry of the apostles (2 Corinthians 12:12). There is no evidence in Scripture that we today should expect the continuation of such charismatic gifts.
- 10. We believe that a life of prayer is a fruit of faith. Confidently, through faith in their Savior, Christians address their heavenly Father with petitions and praise. They present their needs and the needs of others, and they give thanks (1 Timothy 2:1). Such prayers are a delight to God, and he grants their requests according to his wisdom (Matthew 7:7,8; 1 John 5:14).
- 11. We reject every thought that the good works of Christians in any way earn or contribute toward establishing a right relationship with God and gaining salvation in heaven.
- 12. We reject every attempt to abolish the unchanging moral law of God as revealed in the Bible as the absolute standard of what is right and wrong.
- 13. We reject the view that people may decide for themselves what is right and wrong apart from God's Word. We reject any misuse of the term love to condone behavior contrary to God's Word. We recognize these arguments as schemes of Satan to obscure the knowledge of God's holy will and to undermine the consciousness of sin.

- 14. We reject any view that considers the act of praying a means of grace. Although God certainly gives good gifts to believers in answer to their prayers, he conveys his forgiving grace and strengthens faith only through the Word and sacraments. Furthermore, we reject any view that looks upon prayer as beneficial only because it helps the one who prays feel better.
- 15. We reject the view that all prayers are acceptable to God, and we hold that the prayers of all who do not have faith in Christ are vain babbling addressed to false gods (Matthew 6:7).

This is what Scripture teaches about good works and prayer. This we believe, teach, and confess.

#### VI. THE MEANS OF GRACE

- 1. We believe that God bestows all spiritual blessings upon sinners by special means established by him. These are the means of grace, the gospel in Word and sacraments. We define a sacrament as a sacred act established by Christ in which the Word connected with an earthly element gives the forgiveness of sins.
- 2. We believe that through the gospel, the good news of Christ's atoning sacrifice for sinners, the Holy Spirit works faith in people, whose hearts are by nature hostile to God (1 Peter 1:23). Scripture teaches that "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). This Spirit-worked faith brings about a renewal in sinners and makes them heirs of eternal life in heaven.
- 3. We believe that also through the Sacrament of Baptism the Holy Spirit applies the gospel to sinners, giving them new life (Titus 3:5) and cleansing them from all sin (Acts 2:38). The Lord points to the blessing of Baptism when he promises, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). We believe that the blessing of Baptism is meant for all people (Matthew 28:19), including infants. Infants are born sinful (John 3:6) and therefore need to be born again, that is, to be brought to faith, through Baptism (John 3:5).
- 4. We believe that all who join in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper receive the true body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine (1 Corinthians 10:16). This is true because, when the Lord instituted this sacrament, he said, "This is my body. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:26,28). We believe that Christ's words of institution cause the real presence--not any human action. As believers receive his body and blood, they also receive the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28) and the comfort and assurance that they are truly his own. Unbelievers also receive Christ's body and blood, but to their judgment (1 Corinthians 11:29).
- 5. We believe that the Lord gave his Word and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper for a purpose. He commanded his followers, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20). Through God's Word and sacraments he preserves and extends the holy Christian church throughout the world. Believers should therefore be

diligent and faithful in the use of these divinely established means of grace for themselves and in their mission outreach to others. These are the only means through which immortal souls are brought to faith and to life in heaven.

- 6. We reject any views that look for the revelation of the grace of God and salvation apart from the gospel as found in the Scriptures. We reject any views that look for the Holy Spirit to work faith apart from the means of grace. We likewise reject the view that the law is a means of grace.
- 7. We reject the view that babies should not be baptized and that they cannot believe in Christ (Luke 18:15-17). We reject the view that baptism must be by immersion.
- 8. We reject all teachings that the Sacrament of the Altar offers nothing more than signs and symbols of Jesus' sacrifice, thereby denying that Christ's true body and blood are received in the Lord's Supper. We reject the view that those who eat the body of Christ in the sacrament merely receive Christ spiritually by faith. We reject the claim that unbelievers and hypocrites do not receive the true body and blood of Jesus in the Sacrament.
- 9. We reject the doctrine of transubstantiation, which teaches that the substance of the bread and wine are changed entirely into the body and blood of Christ. Scripture teaches that all communicants receive both the bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16).
- 10. We reject any attempt to set the precise moment within the celebration of the Lord's Supper when the body and blood of Christ become present. We therefore reject the view that one must believe that Christ's body and blood are present as soon as the words of consecration have been spoken and the view that one must believe that Christ's body and blood become present only at the moment of eating and drinking.

This is what Scripture teaches about the means of grace. This we believe, teach and confess.

#### VII. CHURCH AND MINISTRY

- 1. We believe that there is one holy Christian church, which is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16) and the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23; 4:12). The members of this one church are all those who are the "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). The church, then, consists only of believers, or saints, whom God accepts as holy for the sake of Jesus' righteousness, which has been credited to them (2 Corinthians 5:21). These saints are scattered throughout the world. All people who believe that Jesus is their Savior from sin are members of the holy Christian church, regardless of the nation, race, or church body to which they belong.
- 2. We believe that this holy Christian church is a reality, although it is not an external, visible organization. Because "man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7), only the Lord knows "those who are his" (2 Timothy 2:19). The members of the holy Christian church are known only to God; we cannot distinguish between true believers and hypocrites. The holy Christian church is therefore invisible and cannot be identified with any one church body or with the total membership of all church bodies.
- 3. We believe that the presence of the holy Christian church nevertheless can be recognized. Wherever the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered, the holy Christian church is present, for through the means of grace true faith is produced and preserved (Isaiah 55:10,11). The means of grace, therefore, are called the marks of the church.
- 4. We believe that it is the Lord's will that Christians meet regularly to build one another up by using the means of grace together (Hebrews 10:24,25) and to work for the spread of the gospel into all the world (Mark 16:15). Since these visible gatherings (for example, congregations and synods) use the means of grace, they are called churches. They bear this name, however, only because of the true believers present in them (1 Corinthians 1:2).
- 5. We believe that God directs believers to acknowledge oneness in faith with Christians whose confession of faith submits to all the teachings of Scripture (John 8:31; 1 Thessalonians 5:21,22). We believe, furthermore, that individuals through their membership in a church body commit themselves to the doctrine and practice of that church. To assert that unity exists where there is no agreement in confession is to presume to look into people's hearts. Only God can look into people's hearts. It

is not necessary that all Christians agree on matters of church ritual or organization. About these the New Testament gives no commands (Romans 14:17).

- 6. We believe that those whose confession of faith reveals that they are united in the doctrines of Scripture will express their fellowship in Christ as occasion permits (Ephesians 4:3). They may express their fellowship by joint worship, by joint proclamation of the gospel, by joining in Holy Communion, by joint prayer, and by joint church work. God directs believers not to practice religious fellowship with those whose confession and actions reveal that they teach, tolerate, support, or defend error (2 John 10,11). When error appears in the church, Christians will try to preserve their fellowship by patiently admonishing the offenders, in the hope that they will turn from their error (2 Timothy 2:25,26; Titus 3:10). But the Lord commands believers not to practice church fellowship with people who persist in teaching or adhering to beliefs that are false (Romans 16:17,18).
- 7. We believe that every Christian is a priest before God (1 Peter 2:9). All believers have direct and equal access to the throne of grace through Christ, the mediator (Ephesians 2:17,18). God has given the means of grace to all believers. All Christians are to declare the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9). In this sense all Christians are ministers, or servants, of the gospel. God wants all Christians to share the message of salvation with other people (Matthew 28:19,20; 10:32).
- 8. We believe that God has also established the public ministry of the Word (Ephesians 4:11), and it is the will of God that the church, in accordance with good order (1 Corinthians 14:40), call qualified individuals into this public ministry (1 Timothy 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 9:14). Such individuals minister publicly, that is, not because as individuals they possess the universal priesthood but because they are asked to do this in the name of fellow Christians (Romans 10:15). These individuals are the called servants of Christ and ministers of the gospel. They are not to be lords over God's church (1 Peter 5:3). We believe that when the church calls individuals into this public ministry, the Lord himself is acting through the church (Acts 20:28). We believe that the church has the freedom to establish various forms within the one ministry of the Word, such as pastors, Christian teachers, and staff ministers. Through its call, the church in Christian liberty designates the place and scope of service.
- 9. We believe that the church's mission is to serve people with the Word and sacraments. This service is usually done in local congregations. We look upon the pastoral office as the most comprehensive form of the public ministry of the Word.

Pastors are trained and called to provide such comprehensive spiritual oversight for the gathering and nurturing of souls in congregations (1 Peter 5:2).

- 10. We believe that women may participate in offices and activities of the public ministry except where that work involves authority over men (1 Timothy 2:11,12). This means that women may not serve as pastors nor participate in assemblies of the church in ways that exercise authority over men (1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:33-35).
- 11. We reject any attempt to identify the holy Christian church with an outward organization. We reject any claim that the church must function in the world through specific organizational forms.
- 12. We reject as false ecumenicity any views that look for the true unity of the church in some form of external or organizational union, and we oppose all movements toward such union made at the expense of a clear confession of all the teachings of Scripture. We reject the contention that religious fellowship may be practiced without agreement in doctrine and practice. There must be agreement in the confession of scriptural doctrines, and also one's actions or practice must show that error is not tolerated.
- 13. We reject participation or membership in organizations that have religious features in conflict with the Christian faith, such as most lodges.

This is what Scripture teaches about church and ministry. This we believe, teach, and confess.

#### VIII. CHURCH AND STATE

- 1. We believe that not only the church but also the state, that is, all governmental authority, has been instituted by God. "The authorities that exist have been established by God" (Romans 13:1). Christians will, therefore, for conscience' sake obey the government that rules over them (Romans 13:5) unless that government commands them to disobey God (Acts 5:29).
- 2. We believe that God has given the church and the state their own distinct responsibilities. To the church the Lord has assigned the responsibility of calling sinners to repentance, of proclaiming forgiveness through the cross of Christ, and of encouraging believers in their Christian living. The purpose is to lead the elect of God to eternal salvation through faith in Christ. To the state the Lord has assigned the duty of keeping good order and peace, of punishing the wrongdoer, and of arranging all civil matters in society (Romans 13:3,4). The purpose is "that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:2).
- 3. We believe that the only means God has given to the church to carry out its assigned purpose are the Word and sacraments (Matthew 28:19,20). People are converted by the Holy Spirit only through the message of law and gospel, sin and grace, the wrath of God against sin and the mercy of God in Christ. We believe that the means given to the state to fulfill its assignment is civil law with its punishments and rewards, set up and used according to the light of reason (Romans 13:4). The light of reason includes the natural knowledge of God, the natural knowledge of the law, and conscience.
- 4. We believe the proper relation is preserved between the church and the state only when each remains within its divinely assigned sphere and uses its divinely entrusted means. The church should not exercise civil authority nor interfere with the state as the state carries out its responsibilities. The state should not become a messenger of the gospel nor interfere with the church in its preaching mission. The church should not attempt to use the civil law and force to lead people to Christ. The state should not seek to govern by means of the gospel. On the other hand, the church and the state may cooperate in an endeavor as long as each remains within its assigned place and uses its entrusted means.
- 5. We believe that Christians are citizens of both realms and serve God by faithfully fulfilling their duties in both (Romans 13:6,7).

- 6. We reject any attempt by the state to restrict the free exercise of religion.
- 7. We reject any views that look to the church to guide and influence the state directly in the conduct of its affairs.
- 8. We reject any attempt on the part of the church to seek the financial assistance of the state in carrying out its saving purpose.
- 9. We reject any views that hold that citizens are free to disobey such laws of the state with which they disagree on the basis of personal judgment.

This is what Scripture teaches about church and state. This we believe, teach, and confess.

## IX. JESUS' RETURN AND THE JUDGMENT

- 1. We believe that Jesus, true God and true man, who rose from death and ascended to the right hand of the Father, will come again. He will return visibly, in the same way as his disciples saw him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).
- 2. We believe that no one can know the exact time of Jesus' return. This knowledge is hidden even from the angels in heaven (Matthew 24:36). Nevertheless, our Lord has given signs to his believers to keep them in constant expectation of his return (Matthew 24:4-14). He has told them to be alert and to watch so that day will not come upon them unexpectedly (Luke 21:34).
- 3. We believe that at Jesus' return this present world will come to an end. "In keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).
- 4. We believe that when Jesus returns and his voice is heard throughout the earth, all the dead will rise, that is, their souls will be reunited with their bodies (John 5:28,29). Together with those still living, the resurrected will appear before his throne of judgment. The unbelievers will be condemned to an eternity in hell. Those who by faith have been cleansed in the blood of Christ will be glorified and will live with Jesus forever in the blessed presence of God in heaven (Philippians 3:21).
- 5. We reject the teaching that Christ will reign on earth for a thousand years in a physical, earthly kingdom. This teaching (millennialism) has no valid scriptural basis and falsely leads Christians to set their hopes upon an earthly kingdom of Christ (John 18:36). We reject as unscriptural any claim that Christians will be physically removed, or "raptured," from the earth prior to judgment day. We likewise reject as unscriptural any claim that all the Jews will be converted in the final days.
- 6. We reject the teaching that Christians should look for one individual to arise in the end times as the great Antichrist. The characteristics of the Antichrist as presented in Scripture have been and are being fulfilled in the institution of the papacy (2 Thessalonians 2:4-10). We reject the opinion that the identification of the papacy with the Antichrist was merely a historical judgment valid only at the time of

the Reformation.

- 7. We reject any denial of a bodily resurrection and of the reality and eternity of hell. We reject the teaching that the souls of people who have died return to earth in other bodies (reincarnation) (Hebrews 9:27).
- 8. We reject all attempts to interpret the New Testament descriptions of Jesus' second coming, of the end of the world, and of the judgment as mere figures of speech for events that take place not at the end of time but within the ongoing history of the world.

This is what Scripture teaches about Jesus' return and the judgment. This we believe, teach and confess.

# 我们所信

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#### 前言

「因为人心里相信,就可以称义;口里承认,就可以得救。」(罗马书10:10)

亚洲路德宗神学院于 2005 年立根香港,志力于培训亚洲的教会牧者,让他们可以按上帝的道来牧养自己地方的教会。同时,我们亦有志将更多路德宗的文章和资料带给华人社会,于是我们于 2006 年成立了翻译事务社,以推动中文的翻译事工。

《我们所信》是威斯康辛州路德会(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)的信仰基础,它清楚地表明自宗教改革以来,路德宗忠于圣经的认信立场。适逢今年是香港南亚路德会的 30 周年会庆,我们希望能让各弟兄姊妹明白母会的信仰基础,所以我们在 2007 年初决定将它翻译成中文。

本光盘包含了《我们所信》的英文、简体中文和繁体中文的文字档案;同时包含英文、普通话和广东话的 MP3 朗读音讯档案。

《我们所信》的英文初版发表至今刚好 40 年,今年中文版本亦出版 了。但愿能将上帝的福音,与更多的华人分享。

翻译事务社 亚洲路德宗神学院 我们所信 中文版 2007 年初版

#### I 上帝及其启示

- 1. 我们相信只有一位真神(以赛亚书 44:6)。祂显明自己是三位一体的上帝,拥有三个位格。耶稣指示祂的门徒「奉父、子、圣灵的名」施洗(马太福音 28:19)正好证明这一点。任何人不敬拜这上帝就是敬拜虚无的假神。耶稣说「不尊敬子的,就是不尊敬差子来的父。」(约翰福音 5:23)。
- 2. 我们相信上帝在大自然中显明自己。「诸天述说上帝的荣耀;穹苍传扬祂的手段」(诗篇 19:1),「自从造天地以来,上帝的永能和神性是明明可知的,虽是眼不能见,但借着所造之物就可以晓得,叫人无可推诿」(罗马书1:20),所以无神论者并无借口支持他们的立场。因为律法的要求已写在人心中,他们的良心也见证要他们向上帝负责(罗马书2:15)。但是大自然和人的良心对有关上帝的启示并不完整,也不能指示到天堂的道路。
- 3. 我们相信上帝已在祂儿子主耶稣基督身上完全显明自己。「从来没有人看见上帝;只有在父怀里的独生子将祂表明出来」(约翰福音 1:18)。在耶稣身上,上帝显明自己是救主真神。祂「爱世人,甚至将祂的独生子赐给他们,叫一切信祂的,不致灭亡,反得永生」(约翰福音 3:16)。
- 4. 我们相信圣经是上帝给所有人的文字启示。祂在圣经中揭示两个信息,就是律法和福音。律法宣告什么是对、什么是错,律法警告上帝因为罪要施行惩罚。福音彰显上帝的爱;是耶稣把人从罪恶中拯救出来的救恩,表明了这爱。
- 5. 我们相信整本圣经是以基督为中心。在旧约中,上帝屡次应许一位把人从罪恶死亡及阴间拯救出来的神圣的救赎者。新约中宣告这位应许的救赎者道成肉身,成为拿撒勒耶稣。耶稣曾这样说旧约圣经:「给我作见证的就是这经」(约翰福音 5:39)。
- 6. 我们相信上帝借祂拣选的人,用他们懂得的语言及他们的写作技巧,赐下圣经。祂借摩西及先知用希伯来文写成旧约圣经(其中某部份用亚兰文写成),借传道者和使徒用希腊文写成新约圣经。
- 7. 我们相信圣灵借人不能知悉的奇妙方法,感动人写下祂的话语。 这些人「被圣灵感动说出上帝的话来」(彼得后书1:21)。他们所

说的「不是由人智慧所指教的言语,乃是用圣灵所指教的言语」 (哥林多前书 2:13)。他们表达的每个思想和每一个用字都是由圣 灵来的。圣保罗写信给提摩太道出「圣经都是上帝所默示的」(提 摩太后书 3:16)。教会称这个奇妙的过程为「默示」,意思是「吹 气进入其中」。因为圣灵的每一个字都是默示出来的,我们称这 过程为完全默示或逐字的默示。这过程跟机械化的默写不一样, 因为圣灵在当中引导执笔人运用其个人的词汇及写作风格书写。

- 8. 我们相信圣经所说的是整体一致的,真实及没有谬误的。因为救主说:「经上的话是不能废的」(约翰福音 10:35)。所以圣经是我们所信所行无误的权威及指导。
- 9. 我们相信圣经的教导是完全足够及清晰的,让人可以知道所有使他们得救的事。圣经使他们「因信基督耶稣有得救的智慧」(提摩太后书3:15) 他装备他们行「各样的善事」(提摩太后书3:17)。因为上帝救赎的计划已完全在圣经的各卷书中显明出来,我们不需要也不期望上帝有其它的晓谕(希伯来书1:1,2)。教会是被建造在使徒和先知的根基上(以弗所书2:20)。
- 10. 我们相信及接纳圣经所表达的方式。圣经表达为历史的,我们便接纳所述的为真确的历史;圣经明显表明为比喻的,我们亦接纳为比喻。我们相信以经解经,意思清楚的章节给予亮光解说较难明白的章节。我们相信无论是人的思考、科学或学术研究,都没有任何权威在圣经之上,可批判圣经。严谨的学术研究不会假定批判圣经为其目的,而是通过忠实的研究探求,得知圣经的真义。
- 11. 我们相信旧约的希伯来原文及新约圣经的希腊原文均为上帝所默示的话语。这些希伯来原文及希腊原文的翻译本,若能准确地反映原文的意思,传达上帝的真理给人们,它们也可称为上帝的话语。
- 12. 虽然圣经的原来文件已不能寻回,我们相信在上帝的保守下,希伯来原文及希腊原文均在现存的众多手抄本中准确地保存下来。虽然手抄本之间出现微细的分别或「变动」,这些变动丝毫没有改变圣经中的教义。
- 13. 我们相信在 1580 年协同书中的三个大公信经(即使徒信经、尼西亚信经、亚他那修信经)及路德宗信条,均表达真确的圣经教义。这是因为它们认信的教义唯独根据圣经,它们规范了我们所

信及我们生命的各项。所以我们教会及学校所传讲和教导的,定要跟这些信经和谐一致。它们所拒绝的,我们也同样拒绝。

- 14. 我们拒绝接受任何敬拜的对象不是圣经所显明三位一体的上帝。 我们拒绝接受以女性的名字及代词称呼上帝,因为圣经以父及子 把祂显明出来。我们拒绝接纳认为所有宗教均把人引领到同一个 神的观点。
- 15. 我们拒绝接受任何认为圣经中只有部份是上帝的话语的观点。我们也拒绝接受任何认为圣经有错误的可能性,即使是那些所谓非宗教的事情,如历史或地理的细节的任何观点。同样,我们拒绝接受任何认为圣经只是人为的记录,记载上帝在历史中彰显自己及与人相遇的事情,所以这些人为的记录均不是完全无瑕的任何观点。
- 16. 我们拒绝接受任何过份强调耶稣为上帝的道的说法(约翰福音 1:1),以致把圣经本来是上帝的话语(罗马书 3:2)这地位变得可有可无。
- 17. 我们拒绝接受任何把协同书中的信经弱化为历史文件,对现今教会所信的没有规范的意义的观点。同样,我们拒绝接受任何认为只有在这些信经中特别提到的圣经教义才能规范教会的观点。

以上是圣经就上帝及祂的默示的教导。这是我们所信、教导及承认的。

#### II 创造、人及罪

- 1. 我们相信起初上帝创造天、地及一切生物的时候,这个宇宙、世界及人类也即时存在(创世记1及2章)。其它旧约及新约圣经中的章节均见证这事实(例如出埃及记20:11;希伯来书11:3)。上帝借祂全能的话语完成创造;整个创造的过程历时连续六天,每天的长短跟现在的没有两样。
- 2. 我们相信圣经叙述的创造过程是准确、合符事实及历史的。
- 3. 我们相信上帝照着祂圣洁及公义的形象创造亚当及夏娃(创世记 1:26,27)。他们所想所求均与上帝完全和谐融合(歌罗西书 3:10; 以弗所书 4:24),他们更获授予治理上帝所创造的万物的能力(创世记 1:28)及看守的责任(创世记 2:15)。
- 4. 我们相信上帝创造了众多好的天使。在创造之后,有一些天使跟随了那个称为撒旦(又称为魔鬼)的,背叛上帝(彼得后书2:4)。从此之后,这些邪恶的天使一直与上帝及属上帝的人为敌(彼得前书5:8)。
- 5. 我们相信当亚当及夏娃不服从上帝的命令,屈服于撒旦引诱之后,他们便失去了原有圣洁的形象。上帝的审判临到他们:「你们必定死」(创世记2:17)。由那时起,所有的人都在罪中受孕、出生(诗篇51:5),他们心里只有恶念(创世记8:21),「从肉身生的,就是肉身」(约翰福音3:6)。因为所有人均死在罪中与上帝隔绝(以弗所书2:1),他们不能借自己的努力及行为与上帝和好。
- 6. 我们相信上帝施恩丰富地供应人类每日生活所需(诗篇145:15,16)。上帝更使邪恶不能接近及危害相信祂的人,令他们免受一切的危险(诗篇121:7),或使用这些危险,让人得益处(罗马书8:28)。
- 7. 我们拒绝接受一切基于进化论来解释宇宙和人类起源的理论,并 拒绝接受任何尝试把圣经中创造叙述与进化论相互协调的论说。
- 8. 我们拒绝接受把创世记首数章的史实理解为神话、比喻或诗歌叙事体裁的诠释。

- 9. 我们拒绝接受任何把人类和动物之间的分别变得模糊不清的理论,因为只有人类才有不死的灵魂,也只有人类须要就自己的行为向上帝负责。
- 10. 我们拒绝接受任何把上帝和其受造物之间的分别变得模糊不清的理论(泛神论)。
- 11. 我们拒绝接受任何提倡人性本善的见解;这些见解认为人类犯罪的倾向只源于一时软弱,与罪性无关。这些见解未能认识到人类在灵性上彻底的堕落,及他们无法取悦上帝的事实(罗马书3:9 18)。

以上是圣经就创造、人及罪所作出的教导。这是我们所信、教导及承认的。

#### III 基督与救赎

- 1. 我们相信耶稣基督就是上帝永恒的儿子,自太初与上帝同在(约翰福音1:1,2)。及至适当的时间,借着圣灵施行的神迹使童贞女马利亚受孕(路加福音1:35),祂成为真实、完全却又无罪的人(加拉太书4:4)。上帝的天使见证说:「因她所怀的孕是从圣灵来的」(马太福音1:20)。耶稣基督是独一无二的,因为真实的神性和真实的人性在祂身上不可分割地共存;祂是神圣的神人。祂被称为以马内利,意思是「上帝与我们同在」(马太福音1:23)。
- 2. 我们相信耶稣在每时每刻,都拥有完全的神性,包括一切神性的 权能、智慧和荣耀(歌罗西书 2:9)。当祂施行神迹的时候,祂的 神性得以证明(约翰福音 2:11)。但当祂活在世上时,谦卑地取 了奴仆的形象,不彰显或使用自己那常存的、完全的神性。在人 世间,祂不折不扣地过着人的生活,祂承受痛苦,卑微自己,以 至羞辱地死在十字架上(腓立比书 2:7,8)。我们相信基督曾降到 阴间去宣扬祂已胜过撒旦(彼得前书 3:18 19)。我们相信祂从坟 墓带着荣耀的身体复活、升天,被高举;祂有权柄管辖全世界, 以恩典管治教会,并满有荣耀地掌管永恒(腓立比书 2:9 11)。
- 3. 我们相信神人耶稣基督是父上帝差来,为要把人类从罪恶与惩罚中买回来。耶稣来是要成全律法(马太福音 5:17),在祂完全顺从这基础上,所有人得以被称为圣洁(罗马书 5:18,19)。祂来是要承担「我们众人的罪孽」(以赛亚书 53:6),祂在十字架上把自己献上作赎罪的祭,成为众人的赎价(马太福音 20:28)。我们相信祂是上帝选定作众人的代替者。父上帝接纳祂的义,就是祂完全的顺服,成为我们的义;祂因我们的罪的缘故而死,替代我们在罪中死亡(哥林多后书 5:21)。我们相信祂的复活,完全肯定了上帝已接纳祂为众人的罪所付出代价的确据(罗马书 4:25)。
- 4. 我们相信上帝「叫世人与自己和好,不将他们的过犯归到他们身上」(哥林多后书5:19)。我们相信耶稣是「上帝的羔羊,除去世人罪孽的」(约翰福音1:29)。上帝的仁爱和恩典拥抱一切;祂借基督与普世复和;赦罪之功已达成,这是为每一个人成就的事实,因为基督替代我们所作的,上帝称所有人为义,意思是,上帝已宣布他们为无罪。这构成一个稳固的、客观的基础,让罪人肯定救恩已临到他们。

- 5. 我们拒绝接受以任何形式限制基督赎罪之工的观点。我们拒绝接受任何指称基督只为部份人付上因罪带来的惩罚代价的观点。我们拒绝接受任何指称基督只付上部份因罪带来的惩罚代价的观点。
- 6. 我们拒绝接受认为福音是早期基督徒为表达他们对耶稣基督看法而虚构的虔敬故事而非真确历史的一类假设。我们拒绝接受任何令基督生平正确的史实 诸如祂由童贞女所生,祂的神迹,或祂的肉身复活,显得不甚重要或可置疑的企图。我们拒绝接受强调「此刻接触活着的基督」,以至圣经上记载的基督救赎的工作失去其重要性的一切观点。

以上是圣经就基督及救赎的教导。这是我们所信、教导及承认的。

### IV 因信称义的恩典

- 1. 我们相信上帝已把所有罪人称为义;意思是说,祂已宣告所有罪人因着基督的缘故得称为义。这是圣经的核心信息,教会的存在也是建基于此。这个信息跟所有不同时代、不同地方、不同种族及不同社会阶层的人同样适切,因为「因一人的过犯,众人都被定罪」(罗马书5:18)。所有人都需要上帝赦罪,而圣经就在这事上宣布所有人都已被称义,因为「因一次的义行,众人也就被称义得生命了」(罗马书5:18)。
- 2. 我们相信每个人借着信领受这份礼物(以弗所书 2:8,9),而非借着他们的行为。使我们称义的信心就是信赖基督及祂救赎之工。这使人称义的信并不是因为它本身有任何能力,而是因为它紧守上帝在基督里预备的救赎(罗马书 3:28;4:5)。另一方面,虽然基督为所有人死,圣经说「不信的,必被定罪」(马可福音 16:16),不信的人将失去基督为他们赢取的赦罪(约翰福音 8:24)。
- 3. 我们相信人心不能产生这使人称义的信心/信赖,因为「属血气的人不领会上帝圣灵的事,反倒以为愚拙」(哥林多前书2:14)。事实上,「体贴肉体的,就是与上帝为仇」(罗马书8:7)。是圣灵赐人信心,使他们认识「耶稣是主」(哥林多前书12:3),圣灵借福音成就这信心(罗马书10:17),所以,我们相信一个人悔改完全是上帝恩典的作为。而拒绝福音,则完全是基于不信的人自决的错误(马太福音23:37)。
- 4. 我们相信罪人只能借恩典得救。恩典就是上帝对罪人的爱。这爱是他们不配得到的。这爱使上帝给予罪人一切能使他们获得救恩的所需。这一切都是上帝的礼物。人们不能借着任何行为赚得这救恩(以弗所书2:8,9)。
- 5. 我们相信在创世之先,上帝已拣选谁人可在合适的时候借基督的福音得救,并保守他们在信里直至得到永生(以弗所书1:46;罗马书8:29,30)。这拣选并不是由于人的任何因素,却显明救恩是唯独借恩典所成就的(罗马书11:5,6)。
- 6. 我们相信就在信主的人死亡的一刻,因为基督赎罪之工,他们的 灵魂便立刻与主同在,享受天堂的福乐(路加福音 23:43)。不信 的人,他们的灵魂将要在阴间受永恒的苦难(路加福音

16:22 24) •

- 7. 我们拒绝接受那些认为人可以以任何形式帮助自己得救的观点。我们拒绝接受那些认为人有能力造就他们悔改的见解,或替基督作决定的观点(约翰福音 15:16)。我们拒绝接受那些认为悔改的人比不悔改的人,较少抗拒上帝的恩典的观点。我们拒绝接受任何认为人在称义之前,要先有信心的观点\*。我们拒绝接受任何凭罪人己力能在上帝面前称义的观点。
  - \*人不是要先有信心,然后才会得称义。我们相信当人有信心的那刻,便得 称义。所以信心不是称义的先决条件。
- 8. 我们拒绝接受任何指因信称义这教义在今天已无意义的观点。
- 9. 我们拒绝接受那些指信徒永不会离开信心的说法(即"一次得救, 永远得救"之说),因为圣经说信徒是有可能跌倒离开信心的(哥 林多前书10:12)。
- 10. 我们拒绝接受那些虚假及亵渎上帝的言论,就是那些指称上帝预定或拣选谁人受永远的惩罚之说。因为上帝愿意所有人得救(提摩太前书2:4;彼得后书3:9)。
- 11. 我们拒绝接受普救主义(universalism),该主义相信所有人都可得救,包括那些不信基督的人(约翰福音 3:36);我们拒绝接受多元主义(pluralism),该主义相信除了借相信基督之外,还有其它的方法可使人得救(约翰福音 14:6;使徒行传 4:12)。我们拒绝接受那些认为人只要对上帝有信心、相信什么也不相干的说法。

以上是圣经就因信称义的恩典的教导。这是我们所信义教导及承认的。

# Ⅴ 善工与祈祷

- 1. 我们相信在耶稣基督里的信心,会引领信徒作上帝喜悦的善工, 「信心若没有行为就是死的」(雅各书2:17)。作为基督葡萄树上 的枝子,基督徒会常结出好的果子(约翰福音15:5)。
- 2. 我们相信蒙上帝喜悦之工作乃是爱的工作,因为「爱完全了律法」 (罗马书 13:10)。可是有信心并不表示人可以自行决定什么是爱 的工作(马太福音 15:9),真正的信心只喜欢做合乎上帝旨意的 事。圣经启示了上帝的旨意,特别是在十诚中,而新约圣经把十 诚的内容再次表达出来。在面对今天的道德问题,基督徒定要从 上帝的律法中寻找答案。
- 3. 例如,我们相信十诫中的第五诫教导我们,所有人的生命均是上帝的礼物。这诫命反对堕胎、自杀及安乐死。
- 4. 我们相信第六诫管理婚姻及家庭。上帝设立婚姻为一男及一女的终身结合(马太福音 19:4 6)。只有在婚姻里的性行为及生育才是恰当的。婚姻只有在一个情况下终结才算是无罪,那就是上帝让配偶其中一员死亡。但是,若一个基督徒的配偶因通奸或恶意遗弃对方,他/她是可以离婚的(马太福音 19:9 及哥林多前书7:15)。第六诫禁止一切在婚姻以外的性行为,包括同性间的性行为(哥林多前书6:9 10)。
- 5. 我们相信在圣经没有禁止或命令的事情上(中立物),个人是可以自由作决定。可是要注意个人行使自由时,不可绊倒别人或令人犯罪。
- 6. 我们相信善工是信心的果实,必须与非信徒行使社会公义的行为分别出来。虽然非信徒的行事为人可以显得美好及正直,但在上帝眼中并非这样,因为「人非有信,就不能得上帝的喜悦」(希伯来书 11:6)。我们认同非信徒在社会上的义行的价值,但这些行为并不算他们已履行对上帝的责任。
- 7. 我们相信在世上,即使是基督徒最好的工作也受到罪的污染。每个基督徒仍然受罪性的困扰。所以基督徒很多时候没有做他们期望的善工,却继续做他们不想做的恶事(罗马书7:18 21)。他们不得不承认他们所有的义都像污秽的破衣服(以赛亚书64:6)。

然而,因为基督救赎的缘故,天父接纳并把这些不完全的工作看 为圣洁。

- 8. 我们相信圣灵使每个信徒结出信心的果子,就是作善工(加拉太书 5:22 25)。圣灵给每个信徒新的属性,使他们成为「新人」,与圣灵伙伴作善工。圣灵借福音激励信徒作善工。
- 9. 圣灵亦装备教会,给予教会一切所需的属灵恩赐(哥林多前书12:411)。在新约时代的初期,教会获赐特殊灵恩,例如异能、神迹、说方言;这些恩赐与使徒的圣工有密切关系(哥林多后书12:12)。从圣经中,我们找不到证据,指出今天我们还应该期望这类灵恩继续临到教会。
- 10. 我们相信一个祷告的生命是信心的果子。基督徒借着在救主里的信心可以毫不疑惑地在天父跟前祈求及赞美。他们呈上自己及别人的需要和感谢(提摩太前书2:1)。上帝喜悦这些祷告,并按自己丰盛的智慧回应他们的诉求(马太7:7,8;约翰一书5:14)。
- 11. 我们拒绝接受任何认为借基督徒的善工可使他们取得或帮助他们建立与上帝的关系和获得永恒救恩的言论。
- 12. 我们拒绝接受任何指上帝在圣经所启示的道德律例不再是对与错的绝对标准的言论。
- 13. 我们拒绝接受那些认为人可以在上帝的话语之外,自行决定甚么是对,甚么是错的观点。我们拒绝接受任何把「爱」这个字误用,以至纵容跟上帝话语相违的行为。我们认为这些论点是撒旦的计谋,旨在模糊人对上帝旨意的认知及削弱我们对罪的良知。
- 14. 我们拒绝接受任何认为祈祷这行为是上帝施恩具的观点。纵然上帝在回答祷告时的确会给予他们美好的恩赐,但上帝只会通过祂的话语及圣礼给予赦罪的恩典及坚固信心。而且,我们拒绝接受任何认为祷告的益处只在于帮助祷告者感觉好一点的观点。
- 15. 我们拒绝接受上帝会接纳所有祷告的观点。我们坚持没有在基督 里的信心的祷告是徒然的,与在假神面前喋喋不休没有两样(马 太福音 6:7)。

以上是圣经就善工和祈祷的教导。这是我们所信、教导及承认的。

#### VI 施恩具

- 1. 我们相信上帝借祂设立的特别方法来赐与罪人一切的属灵福分。 这些方法就是施恩具,即是在上帝话语中的福音及圣礼。我们介 定施恩具为基督设立的神圣圣礼,在当中,上帝的话语与外在媒 介联系起来,借此使罪得赦免。
- 2. 我们相信福音是基督成为罪人的赎罪祭的好消息,借这福音圣灵在人的心灵中动工建立信心,否则按着其人心本质是会抗拒上帝的(彼得前书1:23)。圣经教导我们「信道是从听道来的,听道是从基督的话来的」(罗马书10:17)。这个圣灵建立的信心使罪人更新,令他们成为承受天上永生的后嗣。
- 3. 我们也相信圣灵借洗礼这圣礼,向罪人施予福音,给他们新生命 (提多书 3:5) 及洗净他们一切的罪 (使徒行传 2:38)。当主耶稣应许「信而受洗的必然得救」(马可福音 16:16) 的时候,祂清楚地指出这是洗礼带来的福分。我们相信洗礼的福分是为所有人设立的(马太福音 28:19),当中包括婴儿。婴儿生而有罪(约翰福音 3:6),所以需要重生,也就是借着洗礼得到信心(约翰福音 3:5)。
- 4. 我们相信所有参与圣餐的人在领受饼和酒时,同时领受主的身体及宝血 基督在没有改变的饼与酒之内,与饼和酒同在,在饼和酒之下(哥林多前书10:16)。这是真理,因为主设立这圣礼时,他说:「这是我的身体。这是我立约的血,为多人流出来,使罪得赦」(马太福音26:26,28)。我们相信是基督设立这圣礼的话让基督临在,而不是人的作为。当信徒领受主的真身体和宝血时,他们也同时领受罪的赦免(马太福音26:28),并受安慰及被肯定他们是属于主的。非信徒若领受基督的身体和宝血,只会令他们被定罪(哥林多前书11:29)。
- 5. 我们相信主赐予祂的话语、洗礼及圣餐的圣礼是有祂的目的。祂这样命令跟随祂的人:「所以你们要去使万民作我的门徒,奉父子圣灵的名,给他们施洗;凡我所吩咐你们的,都教训他们遵守」(马太福音 28:19 20)。主借着上帝的话语及圣礼,保守教会并把教会广传世界。所以信徒应该殷勤顺服并使用这些上帝设立的施恩具,使他们得益,并使他们的使命能影响别人。只有借着这些施恩具,朽坏的灵魂才会得到信心及属天的生命。

- 6. 我们拒绝接受任何认为人可以从圣经中的福音之外,找到上帝的 恩典和救恩的观点。我们拒绝接受任何认为在施恩具之外可以找 到圣灵对信心作工的观点。同样,我们拒绝接受认为律法是施恩 具的观点。
- 7. 我们拒绝接受那些认为婴儿不应受洗及他们不能相信基督的观点(路加福音 18:15 17)。我们拒绝接受那些认为洗礼一定要以 浸礼形式进行的观点。
- 8. 我们拒绝接受任何认为在圣坛举行圣礼只是耶稣牺牲的表征及标记的说法,这样的说法不接纳领圣餐同时领受基督的真身体和宝血这真理。我们拒绝接受那些认为在领圣餐时,只是在属灵的层面上凭信心领受基督身体的观点。我们拒绝接受那些认为不信者和虚伪者在领圣餐时,耶稣的身体和宝血没有临在圣餐的观点。
- 9. 我们拒绝接受变质说,这学说认为饼和酒在圣餐中完全变成基督的身体和宝血。圣经教导在我们领受饼和酒的同时;也领受基督的身体和宝血(哥林多前书10:16)。
- 10. 我们拒绝接受任何指出可以在圣餐进行时,定出基督的身体和宝血在什么时刻临到的企图。因此,我们拒绝接受那些认为在献圣礼的话语完毕时,基督的身体和宝血已经临到的观点。我们也拒绝接受那些认为人在圣餐中吃喝时那一刻,基督的身体和宝血已经临到的观点。

以上是圣经就施恩具的教导。这是我们所信、教导及承认的。

### VII 教会与圣工

- 1. 我们相信只有一个圣洁的基督教会,就是上帝的殿(哥林多前书3:16)和基督的身体(以弗所书1:23;4:12)。这独一教会的成员就是那些「因信基督耶稣,都是上帝的儿子」的人(加拉太书3:26)。所以,教会只包括信徒(或圣徒),因为上帝将耶稣的义算作他们的义,使他们被上帝接纳为圣洁的人(哥林多后书5:21)。这些圣徒遍布世界各地;所有信耶稣是把他们从罪中拯救出来的救主的人,不论他们属何国藉、种族或教会组织,都是这教会的成员。
- 2. 我们相信这个圣洁的基督教会不是一个外在可看见的组织,但她确实存在。因为「人是看外貌,耶和华是看内心」(撒母耳记上16:7),只有主「认识谁是祂的人」(提摩太后书 2:19)。只有上帝知道谁是圣洁的基督教会的成员;我们并不能分辨真信徒及假冒的。所以圣洁的基督教会并不能看见,也不等同任何单一教会组织或是所有教会组织会众的总和。
- 3. 然而我们相信圣洁的基督教会是可以辨认的。那里有福音传扬、那里有圣礼,那里就有圣洁的基督教会,因为真正的信心是透过施恩具产生并得到保守(以赛亚书 55:10,11)。所以,施恩具被称为教会的印记。
- 4. 我们相信主的旨意是要基督徒定期聚会,借施恩具互相勉励(希伯来书 10:24,25)和一同把福音传遍世界(马可福音 16:15)。因为在这些可见的聚会中(例如:会众及总会)使用施恩具,它们被称为教会;它们之所以被称为教会是因为有真正的信徒在其中(哥林多前书1:2)。
- 5. 我们相信上帝的旨意是要基督徒的信是一致的,一同承认圣经一切的教导(约翰福音 8:31;帖撒罗尼迦前书 5:21,22)。再者,我们相信信徒参与个别的教会组织时,都是服从该教会组织的教义及行为。要确立信仰的合一而没有争论,必须要洞察人心,但只有上帝才能看见人的心。基督徒并不需要在教会礼仪或组织的认知上一致,新约在这方面没有命令(罗马书 14:17)。
- 6. 我们相信那些在圣经的教义上合一并承认信仰一致的信徒,在情况许可下(以弗所书4:3),他们可借着联合崇拜、传扬福音、参

与圣餐、祈祷及教会工作,显示他们之间的团契。上帝指示信徒不要参与那些容许、支持或维护错误教导的团契(约翰二书10:11)。当谬误在教会中出现,基督徒应耐心地劝戒那些犯错的人,尝试保存团契,希望他们能从谬误中改正过来(提摩太后书2:25,26;提多书3:10)。但上帝命令信徒不要和那些坚持及持守错误观点或信念的人一同参与教会的团契(罗马书16:17,18)。

- 7. 我们相信每一个基督徒在上帝面前都是祭司(彼得前书2:9)。所有信徒都可透过我们的中保 耶稣基督,直接地、没有等级地到施恩宝座前(以弗所书2:17,18)。上帝把施恩具赐给所有信徒。所有的基督徒都要称颂那把他们从黑暗中呼召出来,进入奇妙光明中的上帝(彼得前书2:9)。这样看来,所有基督徒都是福音的使者或仆人。上帝的旨意是要所有基督徒跟别人分享救恩的信息(马太福音28:19,20;10:32)。
- 8. 我们相信上帝也设立传扬祂话语的圣工(以弗所书 4:11),上帝的旨意是教会应按着好的规则(哥林多前书 14:40),呼召合资格的个别信徒担任圣工(提摩太前书 3:1 10;哥林多前书 9:14)。这些个别的信徒担任圣工,不是因为他们拥有普世祭司职\*,乃是因为他们是奉上帝之名,而担当这职分的基督徒(罗马书 10:15)。这些信徒被称为基督的仆人及福音的使者,他们不是要管辖上帝的教会(彼得前书 5:3)。我们相信当教会呼召这些信徒担任圣工,是上帝亲自借教会作这事(使徒行传 20:28)。我们相信教会可以在这传扬上帝话语的圣工之下,自行选择设立不同方式的圣工,如牧师、基督徒教师及圣工的职员;教会可自行呼召教牧同工和设定事奉的地点及范围。

\*信徒皆祭司,是指所有信徒,都有祭司的职分,传上帝的福音。

- 9. 我们相信教会的使命是用上帝的话语和圣礼来服事人们,通常是服事本地的信众。我们把牧师看作是传扬上帝话语最全面的职分。牧师被召和受训,使他们可以在属灵的事上作带领、召集及牧养会众(彼得前书5:2)。
- 10. 我们相信女性可以参与公职及其中的活动,除了那些涉及辖管男性的工作(提摩太前书2:11,12)。这意思是女性不可担任牧师之职,也不能担任那些可行使权力辖管男性的教会聚会/活动的公职(哥林多前书11:3;14:33 35)。
- 11. 我们拒绝接受任何把圣洁的基督教会等同某些外在可看见的组

织的企图。我们拒绝接受任何指教会一定要通过特定的组织形式 才能在世上工作的宣称。

- 12. 我们拒绝接受那些错误的普世教会运动与看法,其认为教会真正的合一,是基于某些外在或组织性的联合,而把承认圣经一切教导之事搁下不理。我们拒绝接受那些认为可以在教义和行事模式,未有取得共识的情况下所进行的宗教团契。这等团契一定要在圣经的教义取得共识的情况下进行,并且一定不能容忍任何谬误的行为或行事模式。
- 13. 我们拒绝参与任何在宗教方面跟基督信仰有冲突的组织,例如某些会社。

以上是圣经就教会及圣工的教导。这是我们所信、教导及承认的。

### VIII 教会与国家

- 1. 我们相信不仅教会,国家,也就是所有政府掌权的,都是上帝所设的。「凡掌权的都是上帝所命的」(罗马书 13:1)。所以,基督徒因为良心的原故,要顺服管辖他们的政府(罗马书 13:5),除非政府命令他们不顺从上帝(使徒行传 5:29)。
- 2. 我们相信上帝给予教会及国家不同的责任。上帝委派教会的责任 是:呼召罪人悔改,宣布透过基督在十字架上而得的赦罪恩典, 和鼓励信徒能过基督样式的生活。其目的是引领上帝的选民借信 基督得到永生的救赎。上帝委派国家的责任是:维持良好的秩序 及和平,惩罚犯错的人和安排一切社会事务(罗马书 13:3,4); 目的是「使我们可以敬虔端正,平安无事的度日」(提摩太前书 2:2)。
- 3. 我们相信上帝只给予教会祂的话语和圣礼,来执行她被委派的目的(马太福音 28:19,20)。圣灵借着律法与福音、罪与恩典,及上帝对罪的忿怒和上帝在基督里的怜悯等信息,令人回转。我们相信国家是借着法律及赏罚去达致她被委派的责任。这些律法及其中的赏罚是在理性思维的亮光下设立及执行的(罗马书 13:4)。理性思维的亮光包括对上帝、律法的明明可知的知识和良心。
- 4. 我们相信只有教会及国家各自在上帝给予的特定范围中运作,及使用上帝交托的工具的情况下,教会与国家合宜的关系才得以保持。当国家执行其责任时,教会不应行使其公民权利或加以阻碍。国家不应成为福音的使者,或阻碍教会传福音的使命。教会不应企图使用社会的公民法及武力去引领人归信基督。国家不应寻求以福音作为治理的工具。另一方面,只要教会及国家保留在其特定的范围内和使用交托给她们的工具,她们可以互相合作。
- 5. 我们相信基督徒是教会和国家的公民,应当在两个领域里忠心地履行他们的责任以事奉上帝(罗马书13:6,7)。
- 6. 我们拒绝接受国家一切限制宗教自由的企图。
- 7. 我们拒绝接受任何认为教会应直接指导及影响国家怎样去执行 其责任的做法。

- 8. 我们拒绝接受任何教会向国家寻求财政援助,借此达到其拯救的 目的的企图。
- 9. 我们拒绝接受任何认为公民可根据个人判断去随意不遵守国家 法律的观点。

以上是圣经就教会及国家的教导。这是我们所信、教导及承认的。

### IX 耶稣再临和审判

- 1. 我们相信耶稣 真神及真人 由死里复活并升到父上帝的 右边,定会再临。肉眼可看到祂的再临,情况就如祂的门徒看见 祂升天一样(使徒行传1:11)。
- 2. 我们相信没有人可以知道耶稣再临的确实时间。再临的时间,连天上的天使也不知道(马太福音 24:36)。可是,我们的主给我们兆头叫信徒时常期望祂的再临(马太福音 24:4 14)。祂叫信徒警醒及谨慎,以至那日临到的时候他们不致于全没预备(路加福音 21:34)。
- 3. 我们相信耶稣再临的时候,这现今的世界将会完结。「但我们照 他的应许,盼望新天新地,有义居在其中」(彼得后书3:13)。
- 4. 我们相信耶稣再临的时候,全世界皆会听到祂的声音,所有已死的都要复活,就是说他们的灵魂会跟他们的身体再次联合起来(约翰福音 5:28,29)。与那时活着的,那些复活的将要到这审判的宝座前。所有不信的人会被定罪到永恒的阴间。那些借信心得到基督宝血洁净的人,将会得荣耀并与耶稣在天上得享上帝的福乐(腓立比书 3:21)。
- 5. 我们拒绝接受那些说基督会在地上统治一个有形的国度,历时一千年的观点。这个说法(千禧年论)并没有充分的圣经根据,这论说错误地引导基督徒把他们的期望建立在一个地上的基督国度之上(约翰福音 18:36)。我们拒绝那些非圣经的宣称,认为在审判日之前,基督徒的身体将由地上被移走(或称为「被提」)。同样,我们拒绝接受那些非圣经的宣称,认为所有的犹太人在末后的日子将会悔改归正。
- 6. 我们拒绝接受那些认为等待一个敌基督的出现,就是末世开始的教导。在圣经中所提到有关敌基督的特征已经在教皇权这建制中实现(帖撒罗尼迦后书 2:4 10)。我们拒绝接受那些把教皇权视为敌基督,是一个只应用在宗教改革时期的意见。
- 7. 我们拒绝接受那些不承认身体复活和永恒的阴间为事实的看法。 我们拒绝接受那些指死去的人的灵魂会以其它的身体,回到地上 (投胎说 reincarnation)的说法(希伯来书9:27)。

8. 我们拒绝接受任何把新约圣经对耶稣第二次来临、末世及审判的 描述,解释为比喻,并指耶稣再临,不是末世,而只是历史进程 的看法。

以上是圣经就耶稣再临和审判的教导,这是我们所信,教导及承认的。

# 我們所信

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# 前言

「因為人心裏相信,就可以稱義;口裏承認,就可以得救。」(羅馬書 10:10)

亞洲路德宗神學院於 2005 年立根香港,志力於培訓亞洲的教會牧者,讓他們可以按上帝的道來牧養自己地方的教會。同時,我們亦有志將更多路德宗的文章和資料帶給華人社會,於是我們於 2006 年成立了翻譯事務社,以推動中文的翻譯事工。

《我們所信》是威斯康辛州路德會(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)的信仰基礎,它清楚地表明自宗教改革以來,路德宗忠於聖經的認信立場。適逢今年是香港南亞路德會的 30 週年會慶,我們希望能讓各弟兄姊妹明白母會的信仰基礎,所以我們在 2007 年初決定將它翻譯成中文。

本光碟包含了《我們所信》的英文、簡體中文和繁體中文的文字檔;同時包含英文、普通話和廣東話的 MP3 朗讀音訊檔案。

《我們所信》的英文初版發表至今剛好 40 年,今年中文版本亦出版 了。但願能將上帝的福音,與更多的華人分享。

翻譯事務社 亞洲路德宗神學院 我們所信 中文版 2007 年初版

# I 上帝及其啟示

- 1. 我們相信只有一位真神(以賽亞書 44:6)。祂顯明自己是三位一體的上帝,擁有三個位格。耶穌指示祂的門徒「奉父、子、聖靈的名」施洗(馬太福音 28:19)正好證明這一點。任何人不敬拜這上帝就是敬拜虛無的假神。耶穌說「不尊敬子的,就是不尊敬差子來的父。」(約翰福音 5:23)。
- 2. 我們相信上帝在大自然中顯明自己。「諸天述說上帝的榮耀;穹蒼傳揚祂的手段」(詩篇 19:1),「自從造天地以來,上帝的永能和神性是明明可知的,雖是眼不能見,但藉著所造之物就可以曉得,叫人無可推諉」(羅馬書1:20),所以無神論者並無藉口支持他們的立場。因為律法的要求已寫在人心中,他們的良心也見證要他們向上帝負責(羅馬書 2:15)。但是大自然和人的良心並不完整地啟示上帝,也不能指示到天堂的道路。
- 3. 我們相信上帝已在祂兒子主耶穌基督身上完全顯明自己。「從來沒有人看見上帝;只有在父懷裏的獨生子將祂表明出來」(約翰福音 1:18)。在耶穌身上,上帝顯明自己是救主真神。祂「愛世人,甚至將祂的獨生子賜給他們,叫一切信祂的,不致滅亡,反得永生」(約翰福音 3:16)。
- 4. 我們相信聖經是上帝給所有人的文字啟示。祂在聖經中揭示兩個信息,就是律法和福音。律法宣告什麼是對、什麼是錯,律法警告上帝因為罪要施行懲罰。福音彰顯上帝的愛;是耶穌把人從罪惡中拯救出來的救恩,表明了這愛。
- 5. 我們相信整本聖經是以基督為中心。在舊約中,上帝屢次應許一位把人從罪惡死亡及陰間拯救出來的神聖的救贖者。新約中宣告這位應許的救贖者道成內身,成為拿撒勒耶穌。耶穌曾這樣說舊約聖經:「給我作見證的就是這經」(約翰福音 5:39)。
- 6. 我們相信上帝藉祂揀選的人,用他們懂得的語言及他們的寫作技巧,賜下聖經。祂藉摩西及先知用希伯來文寫成舊約聖經(其中某部份用亞蘭文寫成),藉傳道者和使徒用希臘文寫成新約聖經。
- 我們相信聖靈藉人不能知悉的奇妙方法,感動人寫下祂的話語。
   這些人「被聖靈感動說出上帝的話來」(彼得後書 1:21)。他們所

說的「不是由人智慧所指教的言語,乃是用聖靈所指教的言語」 (哥林多前書 2:13)。他們表達的每個思想和每一個用字都是由聖靈來的。聖保羅寫信給提摩太道出「聖經都是上帝所默示的」(提摩太後書 3:16)。教會稱這個奇妙的過程為「默示」,意思是「吹氣進入其中」。因為聖靈的每一個字都是默示出來的,我們稱這過程為完全默示或逐字的默示。這過程跟機械化的默寫不一樣,因為聖靈在當中引導執筆人運用其個人的辭彙及寫作風格書寫。

- 8. 我們相信聖經所說的是整體一致的,真實及沒有謬誤的。因為救主說:「經上的話是不能廢的」(約翰福音 10:35)。所以聖經是我們所信所行無誤的權威及指導。
- 9. 我們相信聖經的教導是完全足夠及清晰的,讓人可以知道所有使他們得救的事。聖經使他們「因信基督耶穌有得救的智慧」(提摩太後書 3:15),也裝備他們行「各樣的善事」(提摩太後書 3:17)。因為上帝救贖的計劃已完全在聖經的各卷書中顯明出來,我們不需要也不期望上帝有其他的曉諭(希伯來書 1:1,2)。教會是被建造在使徒和先知的根基上(以弗所書 2:20)。
- 10. 我們相信及接納聖經所表達的方式。聖經表達為歷史的,我們便接納所述的為真確的歷史;聖經明顯表明為比喻的,我們亦接納為比喻。我們相信以經解經,意思清楚的章節給予亮光解說較難明白的章節。我們相信無論是人的思考、科學或學術研究,都沒有任何權威在聖經之上,可批判聖經。嚴謹的學術研究不會假定批判聖經為其目的,而是通過忠實的研究探求,得知聖經的真義。
- 11. 我們相信舊約的希伯來原文及新約聖經的希臘原文均為上帝所 默示的話語。這些希伯來原文及希臘原文的翻譯本,若能準確地 反映原文的意思,傳達上帝的真理給人們,它們也可稱為上帝的 話語。
- 12. 雖然聖經的原來文件已不能尋回,我們相信在上帝的保守下,希伯來原文及希臘原文均在現存的眾多手抄本中準確地保存下來。雖然手抄本之間出現微細的分別或「變動」,這些變動絲毫沒有改變聖經中的教義。
- 13. 我們相信在 1580 年協同書中的三個大公信經(即使徒信經、尼西亞信經、亞他那修信經)及路德宗信條,均表達真確的聖經教義。這是因為它們認信的教義唯獨根據聖經,它們規範了我們所

信及我們生命的各項。所以我們教會及學校所傳講和教導的,定 要跟這些信經和諧一致。它們所拒絕的,我們也同樣拒絕。

- 14. 我們拒絕接受任何敬拜的對象不是聖經所顯明三位一體的上帝。我們拒絕接受以女性的名字及代詞稱呼上帝,因為聖經以父及子把祂顯明出來。我們拒絕接納認為所有宗教均把人引領到同一個神的觀點。
- 15. 我們拒絕接受任何認為聖經中只有部份是上帝的話語的觀點。我們也拒絕接受任何認為聖經有錯誤的可能性,即使是那些所謂非宗教的事情,如歷史或地理的細節的任何觀點。同樣,我們拒絕接受任何認為聖經只是人為的記錄,記載上帝在歷史中彰顯自己及與人相遇的事情,所以這些人為的記錄均不是完全無瑕的任何觀點。
- 16. 我們拒絕接受任何過份強調耶穌為上帝的道的說法(約翰福音 1:1),以致把聖經本來是上帝的話語(羅馬書 3:2)這地位變得可有可無。
- 17. 我們拒絕接受任何把協同書中的信經弱化為歷史文件,對現今教會所信的沒有規範的意義的觀點。同樣,我們拒絕接受任何認為只有在這些信經中特別提到的聖經教義才能規範教會的觀點。

以上是聖經就上帝及祂的默示的教導。這是我們所信、教導及承認的。

# II 創造、人及罪

- 1. 我們相信起初上帝創造天、地及一切生物的時候,這個宇宙、世界及人類也即時存在(創世記1及2章)。其他舊約及新約聖經中的章節均見證這事實(例如出埃及記20:11;希伯來書11:3)。上帝藉祂全能的話語完成創造;整個創造的過程歷時連續六天,每天的長短跟現在的沒有兩樣。
- 2. 我們相信聖經敘述的創造過程是準確、合符事實及歷史的。
- 3. 我們相信上帝照着祂聖潔及公義的形象創造亞當及夏娃(創世記 1:26,27)。他們所想所求均與上帝完全和諧融合(歌羅西書 3:10;以弗所書 4:24),他們更獲授予治理上帝所創造的萬物的 能力(創世記1:28)及看守的責任(創世記2:15)。
- 4. 我們相信上帝創造了眾多好的天使。在創造之後,有一些天使跟 隨了那個稱為撒旦(又稱為魔鬼)的,背叛上帝(彼得後書2:4)。 從此之後,這些邪惡的天使一直與上帝及屬上帝的人為敵(彼得 前書5:8)。
- 5. 我們相信當亞當及夏娃不服從上帝的命令,屈服於撒旦引誘之後,他們便失去了原有聖潔的形象。上帝的審判臨到他們:「你們必定死」(創世記 2:17)。由那時起,所有的人都在罪中受孕、出生(詩篇 51:5),他們心裡只有惡念(創世記 8:21),「從肉身生的,就是肉身」(約翰福音 3:6)。因為所有人均死在罪中與上帝隔絕(以弗所書 2:1),他們不能藉自己的努力及行為與上帝和好。
- 6. 我們相信上帝施恩豐富地供應人類每日生活所需(詩篇 145:15,16)。上帝更使邪惡不能接近及危害相信祂的人,令他們免受一切的危險(詩篇 121:7),或使用這些危險,讓人得益處(羅馬書 8:28)。
- 7. 我們拒絕接受一切基於進化論來解釋宇宙和人類起源的理論,並 拒絕接受任何嘗試把聖經中創造敘述與進化論相互協調的論說。
- 8. 我們拒絕接受把創世記首數章的史實理解為神話、比喻或詩歌敘事體裁的詮釋。

- 9. 我們拒絕接受任何把人類和動物之間的分別變得模糊不清的理論,因為只有人類才有不死的靈魂,也只有人類須要就自己的行為向上帝負責。
- 10. 我們拒絕接受任何把上帝和其受造物之間的分別變得模糊不清的理論(泛神論)。
- 11. 我們拒絕接受任何提倡人性本善的見解;這些見解認為人類犯罪的傾向只源於一時軟弱,與罪性無關。這些見解未能認識到人類在靈性上徹底的墮落,及他們無法取悅上帝的事實(羅馬書3:9 18)。

以上是聖經就創造、**人及罪所作**出的教導。這是我們所信、教導及承認的。

# III 基督與救贖

- 1. 我們相信耶穌基督就是上帝永恆的兒子,自太初與上帝同在(約翰福音1:1,2)。及至適當的時間,藉着聖靈施行的神蹟使童貞女馬利亞受孕(路加福音1:35),祂成為真實、完全卻又無罪的人(加拉太書4:4)。上帝的天使見證說:「因她所懷的孕是從聖靈來的」(馬太福音1:20)耶穌基督是獨一無二的,因為真實的神性和真實的人性在祂身上不可分割地共存;祂是神聖的神人。祂被稱為以馬內利,意思是「上帝與我們同在」(馬太福音1:23)。
- 2. 我們相信耶穌在每時每刻,都擁有完全的神性,包括一切神性的權能、智慧和榮耀(歌羅西書 2:9)。當祂施行神蹟的時候,祂的神性得以證明(約翰福音 2:11)。但當祂活在世上時,謙卑地取了奴僕的形象,不彰顯或使用自己那常存的、完全的神性。在人世間,祂不折不扣地過着人的生活,祂承受痛苦,卑微自己,以至羞辱地死在十字架上(腓立比書 2:7,8)。我們相信基督曾降到陰間去宣揚祂已勝過撒旦(彼得前書 3:18 19)。我們相信祂從墳墓帶着榮耀的身體復活、升天,被高舉;祂有權柄管轄全世界,以恩典管治教會,並滿有榮耀地掌管永恆(腓立比書 2:9 11)。
- 3. 我們相信神人耶穌基督是父上帝差來,為要把人類從罪惡與懲罰中買回來。耶穌來是要成全律法(馬太福音 5:17),在祂完全順從這基礎上,所有人得以被稱為聖潔(羅馬書 5:18,19)。祂來是要承擔「我們眾人的罪孽」(以賽亞書 53:6),祂在十字架上把自己獻上作贖罪的祭,成為眾人的贖價(馬太福音 20:28)。我們相信祂是上帝選定作眾人的代替者。父上帝接納祂的義,就是祂完全的順服,成為我們的義;祂因我們的罪的緣故而死,替代我們在罪中死亡(哥林多後書 5:21)。我們相信祂的復活,完全肯定了上帝已接納祂為眾人的罪所付出代價的確據(羅馬書 4:25)。
- 4. 我們相信上帝「叫世人與自己和好,不將他們的過犯歸到他們身上」(哥林多後書 5:19)。我們相信耶穌是「上帝的羔羊,除去世人罪孽的」(約翰福音 1:29)。上帝的仁愛和恩典擁抱一切;祂藉基督與普世復和;赦罪之功已達成,這是為每一個人成就的事實,因為基督替代我們所作的,上帝稱所有人為義,意思是,上帝已宣佈他們為無罪。這構成一個穩固的、客觀的基礎,讓罪人肯定救恩已臨到他們。

- 5. 我們拒絕接受以任何形式限制基督贖罪之工的觀點。我們拒絕接受任何指稱基督只為部份人付上因罪帶來的懲罰代價的觀點。我們拒絕接受任何指稱基督只付上部份因罪帶來的懲罰代價的觀點。
- 6. 我們拒絕接受認為福音是早期基督徒為表達他們對耶穌基督看 法而虛構的虔敬故事而非真確歷史的一類假設。我們拒絕接受任 何令基督生平正確的史實 諸如祂由童貞女所生,祂的神蹟, 或祂的內身復活,顯得不甚重要或可置疑的企圖。我們拒絕接受 強調「此刻接觸活着的基督」,以至聖經上記載的基督救贖的工 作失去其重要性的一切觀點。

以上是聖經就基督及救贖的教導。這是我們所信、教導及承認的。

# IV 因信稱義的恩典

- 1. 我們相信上帝已把所有罪人稱為義;意思是說,祂已宣告所有罪人因着基督的緣故得稱為義。這是聖經的核心信息,教會的存在也是建基於此。這個信息跟所有不同時代、不同地方、不同種族及不同社會階層的人同樣適切,因為「因一人的過犯,眾人都被定罪」(羅馬書 5:18)。所有人都需要上帝赦罪,而聖經就在這事上宣佈所有人都已被稱義,因為「因一次的義行,眾人也就被稱義得生命了」(羅馬書 5:18)。
- 2. 我們相信每個人藉着信領受這份禮物(以弗所書 2:8,9),而非藉着他們的行為。使我們稱義的信心就是信賴基督及祂救贖之工。這使人稱義的信並不是因為它本身有任何能力,而是因為它緊守上帝在基督裏預備的救贖(羅馬書 3:28;4:5)。另一方面,雖然基督為所有人死,聖經說:「不信的,必被定罪」(馬可福音16:16),不信的人將失去基督為他們贏取的赦罪(約翰福音8:24)。
- 3. 我們相信人心不能產生使人稱義的信心/信賴,因為「屬血氣的人不領會上帝聖靈的事,反倒以為愚拙」(哥林多前書 2:14)。事實上,「體貼肉體的,就是與上帝為仇」(羅馬書 8:7)。是聖靈賜人信心,使他們認識「耶穌是主」(哥林多前書 12:3),聖靈藉福音成就這信心(羅馬書 10:17),所以,我們相信一個人悔改完全是上帝恩典的作為。而拒絕福音,則完全是基於不信的人自決的錯誤(馬太福音 23:37)。
- 4. 我們相信罪人只能藉恩典得救。恩典就是上帝對罪人的愛。這愛是他們不配得到的。這愛使上帝給予罪人一切能使他們獲得救恩的所需。這一切都是上帝的禮物。人們不能藉着任何行為賺得這救恩(以弗所書 2:8,9)。
- 5. 我們相信在創世之先,上帝已揀選誰人可在合適的時候藉基督的福音得救,並保守他們在信裏直至得到永生(以弗所書 1:4 6;羅馬書 8:29,30)。這揀選並不是由於人的任何因素,但卻顯明救恩是唯獨藉恩典所成就的(羅馬書 11:5,6)。
- 6. 我們相信就在信主的人死亡的一刻,因為基督贖罪之工,他們的 靈魂便立刻與主同在,享受天堂的福樂(路加福音 23:43)。不信

的人,他們的靈魂將要在陰間受永恆的苦難(路加福音16:22 24)。

7. 我們拒絕接受那些認為人可以以任何形式幫助自己得救的觀點。我們拒絕接受那些認為人有能力造就他們悔改的見解,或替基督作決定的觀點(約翰福音 15:16)。我們拒絕接受那些認為悔改的人比不悔改的人,較少抗拒上帝的恩典的觀點。我們拒絕接受任何認為人在稱義之前,要先有信心的觀點\*。我們拒絕接受任何憑罪人己力能在上帝面前稱義的觀點。

人不是要先有信心,然後才會得稱義。我們相信當人有信心的那刻,便得 稱義。所以信心不是稱義的先決條件。

- 8. 我們拒絕接受任何指因信稱義這教義在今天已無意義的觀點。
- 9. 我們拒絕接受那些指信徒永不會離開信心的說法(即"一次得救,永遠得救"之說),因為聖經說信徒是有可能跌倒離開信心的(哥林多前書 10:12)。
- 10. 我們拒絕接受那些虛假及褻瀆上帝的言論,就是那些指稱上帝預 定或揀選誰人受永遠的懲罰之說。因為上帝願意所有人得救(提 摩太前書 2:4;彼得後書 3:9)。
- 11. 我們拒絕接受普救主義 (universalism),該主義相信所有人都可得救,包括那些不信基督的人 (約翰福音 3:36);我們拒絕接受多元主義 (pluralism),該主義相信除了藉相信基督之外,還有其他的方法可使人得救 (約翰福音 14:6;使徒行傳 4:12)。我們拒絕接受那些認為人只要對上帝有信心、相信什麼也不相干的說法。

以上是聖經就因信稱義的恩典的教導。這是我們所信、教導及承認的。

# V 善工與祈禱

- 1. 我們相信在耶穌基督裏的信心,會引領信徒作上帝喜悅的善工, 「信心若沒有行為就是死的」(雅各書 2:17)。作為基督葡萄樹上 的枝子,基督徒會常結出好的果子(約翰福音 15:5)。
- 2. 我們相信蒙上帝喜悅之工作乃是愛的工作,因為「愛完全了律法」 (羅馬書 13:10)。可是有信心並不表示人可以自行決定什麼是愛 的工作(馬太福音 15:9),真正的信心只喜歡做合乎上帝旨意的 事。聖經啟示了上帝的旨意,特別是在十誡中,而新約聖經把十 誡的內容再次表達出來。在面對今天的道德問題,基督徒定要從 上帝的律法中尋找答案。
- 3. 例如,我們相信十誡中的第五誡教導我們,所有人的生命均是上帝的禮物。這誡命反對墮胎、自殺及安樂死。
- 4. 我們相信第六誡管理婚姻及家庭。上帝設立婚姻為一男及一女的終身結合(馬太福音 19:4 6)。只有在婚姻裏的性行為及生育才是恰當的。婚姻只有在一個情況下終結才算是無罪,那就是上帝讓配偶其中一員死亡。但是,若一個基督徒的配偶因通姦或惡意遺棄對方,他/她是可以離婚的(馬太福音 19:9 及哥林多前書7:15)。第六誡禁止一切在婚姻以外的性行為,包括同性間的性行為(哥林多前書6:9 10)。
- 5. 我們相信在聖經沒有禁止或命令的事情上(中立物),個人是可以自由作決定。可是要注意個人行使自由時,不可絆倒別人或令人犯罪。
- 6. 我們相信善工是信心的果實,必須與非信徒行使社會公義的行為分別出來。雖然非信徒的行事為人可以顯得美好及正直,但在上帝眼中並非這樣,因為「人非有信,就不能得上帝的喜悅」(希伯來書 11:6)。我們認同非信徒在社會上的義行的價值,但這些行為並不算他們已履行對上帝的責任。
- 7. 我們相信在世上,即使是基督徒最好的工作也受到罪的污染。每個基督徒仍然受罪性的困擾。所以基督徒很多時候沒有做他們期望的善工,卻繼續做他們不想做的惡事(羅馬書 7:18 21)。他們不得不承認他們所有的義都像污穢的破衣服(以賽亞書 64:6)。

然而,因為基督救贖的緣故,天父接納並把這些不完全的工作看 為聖潔。

- 8. 我們相信聖靈使每個信徒結出信心的果子,就是作善工(加拉太書 5:22 25)。聖靈給每個信徒新的屬性,使他們成為「新人」, 與聖靈夥伴作善工。聖靈藉福音激勵信徒作善工。
- 9. 聖靈亦裝備教會,給予教會一切所需的屬靈恩賜(哥林多前書 12:4 11)。在新約時代的初期,教會獲賜特殊靈恩,例如異能、 神蹟、說方言;這些恩賜與使徒的聖工有密切關係(哥林多後書 12:12)。從聖經中,我們找不到證據,指出今天我們還應該期望 這類靈恩繼續臨到教會。
- 10. 我們相信一個禱告的生命是信心的果子。基督徒藉着在救主裏的信心可以毫不疑惑地在天父跟前祈求及讚美。他們呈上自己及別人的需要和感謝(提摩太前書2:1)。上帝喜悅這些禱告,並按自己豐盛的智慧回應他們的訴求(馬太7:7,8;約翰一書5:14)。
- 11. 我們拒絕接受任何認為藉基督徒的善工可使他們取得或幫助他們建立與上帝的關係和獲得永恆救恩的言論。
- 12. 我們拒絕接受任何指上帝在聖經所啟示的道德律例不再是對與錯的絕對標準的言論。
- 13. 我們拒絕接受那些認為人可以在上帝的話語之外,自行決定甚麼是對,甚麼是錯的觀點。我們拒絕接受任何把「愛」這個字誤用,以至縱容跟上帝話語相違的行為。我們認為這些論點是撒旦的計謀,旨在模糊人對上帝旨意的認知及削弱我們對罪的良知。
- 14. 我們拒絕接受任何認為祈禱這行為是上帝施恩具的觀點。縱然上帝在回答禱告時的確會給予他們美好的恩賜,但上帝只會通過祂的話語及聖禮給予赦罪的恩典及堅固信心。而且,我們拒絕接受任何認為禱告的益處只在於幫助禱告者感覺好一點的觀點。
- 15. 我們拒絕接受上帝會接納所有禱告的觀點。我們堅持沒有在基督 裏的信心的禱告是徒然的,與在假神面前喋喋不休沒有兩樣(馬 太福音 6:7)。

以上是聖經就善工和祈禱的教導。這是我們所信、教導及承認的。

#### VI 施恩具

- 1. 我們相信上帝藉祂設立的特別方法來賜與罪人一切的屬靈福分。這些方法就是施恩具,即是在上帝話語中的福音及聖禮。我們介定施恩具為基督設立的神聖聖禮,在當中,上帝的話語與外在媒介聯繫起來,藉此使罪得赦免。
- 2. 我們相信福音是基督成為罪人的贖罪祭的好消息,藉這福音聖靈在人的心靈中動工,建立信心,否則按着其人心本質是會抗拒上帝的(彼得前書 1:23)。聖經教導我們「信道是從聽道來的,聽道是從基督的話來的」(羅馬書 10:17)。這個聖靈建立的信心使罪人更新,令他們成為承受天上永生的後嗣。
- 3. 我們也相信聖靈藉洗禮這聖禮,向罪人施予福音,給他們新生命 (提多書 3:5) 及洗淨他們一切的罪 (使徒行傳 2:38)。當主耶 穌應許「信而受洗的必然得救」(馬可福音 16:16) 的時候,祂清 楚地指出這是洗禮帶來的福分。我們相信洗禮的福分是為所有人 設立的 (馬太福音 28:19),當中包括嬰兒。嬰兒生而有罪 (約翰福音 3:6),所以需要重生,也就是藉着洗禮得到信心 (約翰福音 3:5)。
- 4. 我們相信所有參與聖餐的人在領受餅和酒時,同時領受主的身體 及寶血 基督在沒有改變的餅與酒之內,與餅和酒同在,在餅 和酒之下(哥林多前書 10:16)。這是真理,因為主設立這聖禮時, 祂說:「這是我的身體。這是我立約的血,為多人流出來,使罪 得赦」(馬太福音 26:26,28)。我們相信是基督設立這聖禮的話讓 基督臨在,而不是人的作為。當信徒領受主的真身體和寶血時, 他們也同時領受罪的赦免(馬太福音 26:28),並受安慰及被肯定 他們是屬於主的。非信徒若領受基督的身體和寶血,只會令他們 被定罪(哥林多前書 11:29)。
- 5. 我們相信主賜予祂的話語、洗禮及聖餐的聖禮是有祂的目的。祂這樣命令跟隨祂的人:「所以你們要去使萬民作我的門徒,奉父子聖靈的名,給他們施洗;凡我所吩咐你們的,都教訓他們遵守」(馬太福音 28:19 20)。主藉着上帝的話語及聖禮,保守教會並把教會廣傳世界。所以信徒應該殷勤順服並使用這些上帝設立的施恩具,使他們得益,並使他們的使命能影響別人。只有藉着這些施恩具,朽壞的靈魂才會得到信心及屬天的生命。

- 6. 我們拒絕接受任何認為人可以從聖經中的福音之外,找到上帝的 恩典和救恩的觀點。我們拒絕接受任何認為在施恩具之外可以找 到聖靈對信心作工的觀點。同樣,我們拒絕接受認為律法是施恩 具的觀點。
- 7. 我們拒絕接受那些認為嬰兒不應受洗和他們不能相信基督的觀點(路加福音 18:15 17)。我們拒絕接受那些認為洗禮一定要以 浸禮形式進行的觀點。
- 8. 我們拒絕接受任何認為在聖壇舉行聖禮只是耶穌犧牲的表徵及標記的說法,這樣的說法不接納領聖餐同時領受基督的真身體和寶血這真理。我們拒絕接受那些認為在領聖餐時,只是在屬靈的層面上憑信心領受基督身體的觀點。我們拒絕接受那些認為不信者和虛偽者在領聖餐時,耶穌的身體和寶血沒有臨在聖餐的觀點。
- 9. 我們拒絕接受變質說,這學說認為餅和酒在聖餐中完全變成基督的身體和寶血。聖經教導在我們領受餅和酒的同時;也領受基督的身體和寶血(哥林多前書10:16)。
- 10. 我們拒絕接受任何指出可以在聖餐進行時,定出基督的身體和實血在什麼時刻臨到的企圖。因此,我們拒絕接受那些認為在獻聖禮的話語完畢時,基督的身體和寶血已經臨到的觀點。我們也拒絕接受那些認為人在聖餐中吃喝時那一刻,基督的身體和寶血已經臨到的觀點。

以上是聖經就施恩具的教導。這是我們所信、教導及承認的。

## VII 教會與聖工

- 1. 我們相信只有一個聖潔的基督教會,就是上帝的殿(哥林多前書3:16)和基督的身體(以弗所書1:23;4:12)。這獨一教會的成員就是那些「因信基督耶穌,都是上帝的兒子」的人(加拉太書3:26)。所以,教會只包括信徒(或聖徒),因為上帝將耶穌的義算作他們的義,使他們被上帝接納為聖潔的人(哥林多後書5:21)。這些信徒遍佈世界各地;所有信耶穌是把他們從罪中拯救出來的救主的人,不論他們屬何國藉、種族或教會組織,都是這教會的成員。
- 2. 我們相信這個聖潔的基督教會不是一個外在可看見的組織,但她確實存在。因為「人是看外貌,耶和華是看內心」(撒母耳記上16:7),只有主「認識誰是祂的人」(提摩太後書 2:19)。只有上帝知道誰是聖潔的基督教會的成員;我們並不能分辨真信徒及假冒的。所以聖潔的基督教會並不能看見,也不等同任何單一教會組織或是所有教會組織會眾的總和。
- 3. 然而我們相信聖潔的基督教會是可以辨認的。那裏有福音傳揚、那裏有聖禮,那裏就有聖潔的基督教會,因為真正的信心是透過施恩具產生並得到保守(以賽亞書 55:10,11)。所以,施恩具被稱為教會的印記。
- 4. 我們相信主的旨意是要基督徒定期聚會,藉施恩具互相勉勵(希伯來書 10:24,25)和一同把福音傳遍世界(馬可福音 16:15)。 因為在這些可見的聚會中(例如:會眾及總會)使用施恩具,它們被稱為教會;它們之所以被稱為教會是因為有真正的信徒在其中(哥林多前書1:2)。
- 5. 我們相信上帝的旨意是要基督徒的信是一致的,一同承認聖經一切的教導(約翰福音 8:31;帖撒羅尼迦前書 5:21,22)。再者,我們相信信徒參與個別的教會組織時,都是服從該教會組織的教義及行為。要確立信仰的合一而沒有爭論,必須要洞察人心,但只有上帝才能看見人的心。基督徒並不需要在教會禮儀或組織的認知上一致,新約在這方面沒有命令(羅馬書 14:17)。
- 6. 我們相信那些在聖經的教義上合一並承認信仰一致的信徒,在情況許可下(以弗所書 4:3),他們可藉着聯合崇拜、傳揚福音、參

與聖餐、祈禱及教會工作,顯示他們之間的團契。上帝指示信徒不要參與那些容許、支持或維護錯誤教導的團契(約翰二書10:11)。當謬誤在教會中出現,基督徒應耐心地勸戒那些犯錯的人,嘗試保存團契,希望他們能從謬誤中改正過來(提摩太後書2:25,26;提多書3:10)。但上帝命令信徒不要和那些堅持及持守錯誤觀點或信念的人一同參與教會的團契(羅馬書16:17,18)。

- 7. 我們相信每一個基督徒在上帝面前都是祭司(彼得前書 2:9)。所有信徒都可透過我們的中保 耶穌基督,直接地、沒有等級地到施恩寶座前(以弗所書 2:17,18)。上帝把施恩具賜給所有信徒。所有的基督徒都要稱頌那把他們從黑暗中呼召出來,進入奇妙光明中的上帝(彼得前書 2:9)。這樣看來,所有基督徒都是福音的使者或僕人。上帝的旨意是要所有基督徒跟別人分享救恩的信息(馬太福音 28:19,20;10:32)。
- 8. 我們相信上帝也設立傳揚祂話語的聖工(以弗所書 4:11),上帝的旨意是教會應按着好的規則(哥林多前書 14:40),呼召合資格的個別信徒擔任聖工(提摩太前書 3:1 10;哥林多前書 9:14)。這些個別的信徒擔任聖工,不是因為他們擁有普世祭司職<sup>\*</sup>,乃是因為他們是奉上帝之名,而擔當這職分的基督徒(羅馬書10:15)。這些信徒被稱為基督的僕人及福音的使者,他們不是要管轄上帝的教會(彼得前書 5:3)。我們相信當教會呼召這些信徒擔任聖工,是上帝親自藉教會作這事(使徒行傳 20:28)。我們相信教會可以在這傳揚上帝話語的聖工之下,自行選擇設立不同方式的聖工,如牧師、基督徒教師及聖工的職員;教會可自行呼召教牧同工和設定事奉的地點及範圍。

<sup>\*</sup> 信徒皆祭司,是指所有信徒,都有祭司的職分,傳上帝的福音。

- 9. 我們相信教會的使命是用上帝的話語和聖禮來服事人們,通常是服事本地的信眾。我們把牧師看作是傳揚上帝話語最全面的職分。牧師被召和受訓,使他們可以在屬靈的事上作帶領、召集及牧養會眾(彼得前書5:2)。
- 10. 我們相信女性可以參與公職及其中的活動,除了那些涉及轄管男性的工作(提摩太前書 2:11,12)。這意思是女性不可擔任牧師之職,也不能擔任那些可行使權力轄管男性的教會聚會/活動的公職(哥林多前書 11:3;14:33 35)。
- 11. 我們拒絕接受任何把聖潔的基督教會等同某些外在可看見的組

織的企圖。我們拒絕接受任何指教會一定要通過特定的組織形式才能在世上工作的宣稱。

- 12. 我們拒絕接受那些錯誤的普世教會運動與看法,其認為教會真正的合一,是基於某些外在或組織性的聯合,而把承認聖經一切教導之事擱下不理。我們拒絕接受那些認為可以在教義和行事模式,未有取得共識的情況下所進行的宗教團契。這等團契一定要在聖經的教義取得共識的情況下進行,並且一定不能容忍任何謬誤的行為或行事模式。
- 13. 我們拒絕參與任何在宗教方面跟基督信仰有衝突的組織,例如某些會社。

以上是聖經就教會及聖工的教導。這是我們所信、教導及承認的。

### VIII 教會與國家

- 1. 我們相信不僅教會,國家,也就是所有政府掌權的,都是上帝所設的。「凡掌權的都是上帝所命的」(羅馬書 13:1)。所以,基督徒因為良心的原故,要順服管轄他們的政府(羅馬書 13:5),除非政府命令他們不順從上帝(使徒行傳 5:29)。
- 2. 我們相信上帝給予教會及國家不同的責任。上帝委派教會的責任 是:呼召罪人悔改,宣佈透過基督在十字架上而得的赦罪恩典, 和鼓勵信徒能過基督樣式的生活。其目的是引領上帝的選民藉信 基督得到永生的救贖。上帝委派國家的責任是:維持良好的秩序 及和平,懲罰犯錯的人和安排一切社會事務 (羅馬書 13:3,4); 目的是「使我們可以敬虔端正,平安無事的度日」(提摩太前書 2:2)。
- 3. 我們相信上帝只給予教會祂的話語和聖禮,來執行她被委派的目的(馬太福音 28:19,20)。聖靈藉着律法與福音、罪與恩典,及上帝對罪的忿怒和上帝在基督裏的憐憫等信息,令人回轉。我們相信國家是藉着法律及賞罰去達致她被委派的責任。這些律法及其中的賞罰是在理性思維的亮光下設立及執行的(羅馬書13:4)。理性思維的亮光包括對上帝、律法的明明可知的知識和良心。
- 4. 我們相信只有教會及國家各自在上帝給予的特定範圍中運作,及使用上帝交託的工具的情況下,教會與國家合宜的關係才得以保持。當國家執行其責任時,教會不應行使其公民權利或加以阻礙。國家不應成為福音的使者,或阻礙教會傳福音的使命。教會不應企圖使用社會的公民法及武力去引領人歸信基督。國家不應尋求以福音作為治理的工具。另一方面,只要教會及國家保留在其特定的範圍內和使用交託給她們的工具,她們可以互相合作。
- 5. 我們相信基督徒是教會和國家的公民,應當在兩個領域裏忠心地 履行他們的責任以事奉上帝(羅馬書 13:6,7)。
- 6. 我們拒絕接受國家一切限制宗教自由的企圖。
- 7. 我們拒絕接受任何認為教會應直接指導及影響國家怎樣去執行 其責任的做法。

- 8. 我們拒絕接受任何教會向國家尋求財政援助,藉此達到其拯救的 目的的企圖。
- 9. 我們拒絕接受任何認為公民可根據個人判斷去隨意不遵守國家 法律的觀點。

以上是聖經就教會及國家的教導。這是我們所信、教導及承認的。

### IX 耶穌再臨和審判

- 1. 我們相信耶穌 真神及真人 由死裡復活並升到父上帝的 右邊,定會再臨。肉眼可看到祂的再臨,情況就如祂的門徒看見 祂升天一樣(使徒行傳1:11)。
- 2. 我們相信沒有人可以知道耶穌再臨的確實時間。再臨的時間,連 天上的天使也不知道(馬太福音 24:36)。可是,我們的主給我們 兆頭叫信徒時常期望祂的再臨(馬太福音 24:4 14)。祂叫信徒警 醒及謹慎,以至那日臨到的時候他們不致於全沒預備(路加福音 21:34)。
- 3. 我們相信耶穌再臨的時候,這現今的世界將會完結。「但我們照 祂的應許,盼望新天新地,有義居在其中」(彼得後書 3:13)。
- 4. 我們相信耶穌再臨的時候,全世界皆會聽到祂的聲音,所有已死的都要復活,就是說他們的靈魂會跟他們的身體再次聯合起來 (約翰福音 5:28,29)。與那時活着的,那些復活的將要到這審判的寶座前。所有不信的人會被定罪到永恆的陰間。那些藉信心得到基督寶血潔淨的人,將會得榮耀並與耶穌在天上得享上帝的福樂 (腓立比書 3:21)。
- 5. 我們拒絕接受那些說基督會在地上統治一個有形的國度,歷時一千年的觀點。這個說法(千禧年論)並沒有充分的聖經根據,這論說錯誤地引導基督徒把他們的期望建立在一個地上的基督國度之上(約翰福音 18:36)。我們拒絕那些非聖經的宣稱,認為在審判日之前,基督徒的身體將由地上被移走(或稱為「被提」)。同樣,我們拒絕接受那些非聖經的宣稱,認為所有的猶太人在末後的日子將會悔改歸正。
- 6. 我們拒絕接受那些認為等待一個敵基督的出現,就是末世開始的 教導。在聖經中所提到有關敵基督的特徵已經在教皇權這建制中 實現(帖撒羅尼迦後書 2:4 10)。我們拒絕接受那些把教皇權視 為敵基督,是一個只應用在宗教改革時期的意見。
- 7. 我們拒絕接受那些不承認身體復活和永恆的陰間為事實的看法。我們拒絕接受那些指死去的人的靈魂會以其他的身體,回到地上(投胎說 reincarnation)的說法(希伯來書9:27)。

8. 我們拒絕接受任何把新約聖經對耶穌第二次來臨、末世及審判的 描述,解釋為比喻,並指耶穌再臨,不是末世,而只是歷史進程 的看法。

以上是聖經就耶穌再臨和審判的教導,這是我們所信、教導及承認的。



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